

*The most effective form of Education is that a child
should play among lovely things.*

Plato



ARIVU - where LEARNING meets FUN!

SUMMARY REPORT OF 60 CASE STUDIES



Arivu Disha Programme



Report prepared by Phicus Social Solutions

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 1 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 3 |
| 2 | INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| 3 | STUDY OBJECTIVES | 5 |
| 4 | METHODOLOGY & SAMPLING | 5 |
| 5 | STUDY FINDINGS | 8 |
| 5.1 | Impact as perceived by Students | 8 |
| 5.2 | Impact on Students as observed by Teachers..... | 12 |
| 5.3 | Impact on Students as observed by Parents..... | 15 |
| 6 | SUMMARY OF FINDINGS | 17 |
| 7 | INTERESTING CASE STUDIES..... | 19 |
| 8 | REFERENCES | 24 |
| 9 | ANNEXURES..... | 25 |
| 9.1 | Annexure 1 - One-To-One Questionnaire: Students..... | 25 |
| 9.2 | Annexure 2 - One-To-One Questionnaire: Teachers..... | 25 |
| 9.3 | Annexure 3 - One-To-One Questionnaire: Parents..... | 26 |

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, the knowledge of English is considered to be an uncompromising skill in one's life. It has become the language of the education system, national media, corporate business, judiciary and bureaucracy. In the absence of any national language in India, and with the existence of several regional vernaculars, English remains the lingua franca.

The importance of the role of English in a student's life cannot be denied. In modern times, access to large number of books, availability of information, attaining higher education and getting jobs becomes possible and easy with an adequate knowledge of the language. Recognising the demand for the language, English has also been introduced in most of the State run government schools. Despite English being taught, students studying in government schools in India still struggle with the language.

Identifying the crisis, **headstreams**, a not for profit organisation that works for children in the space of education, launched a programme called 'Arivu', in Karnataka. Arivu's focus is on improving English reading and comprehension for middle school children (class VI, VII and VIII) in Karnataka. Unlike the traditional teacher led instruction and rote learning methodologies, Arivu's focus has been digital literacy and play based learning methods. Along with improving English learning outcomes, the programme intends to make a contribution to the development of life skills among students.

The programme was implemented in September 2015 across 30 schools of Bangalore, Hosakote and Kolar. In six months, the Arivu programme directly benefitted over 1300 students of class VI enrolled in the state government schools.

In March, 2016 headstreams conducted 60 case studies of selected students to study the impact of the programme on students. For each of these students, data was gathered from the student himself / herself, their parents, a teacher and the respective Arivu facilitator. Highlights of the report includes the programme impact vis-a-vis students' improvement in English learning, improvement in their life skills particularly their level of confidence and effectiveness of the programme components like plays based learnings, activities and digital sessions conducted as a part of the Arivu programme.

Findings from the case studies show that the programme has benefitted the students substantially. As a result of the programme, as many as 95 % students stated that they learnt something useful from the Arivu classes. 85% students reported an ability to follow instructions in English and 63 % of the students confirmed their ability to respond in English. As per the teachers' observations and feedback, confidence level of 72% students increased as a result of the programme. Based on the responses collected from parents, significant behavioural changes were observed in 77% students, which included improvement in their attendance at school and increased interest in studies. Other benefits of the programme have been also detailed in the report.

2 INTRODUCTION

Given the positive and tangible impact of English, the language has been introduced at initial stages of schooling across most government schools in India. In Karnataka, students start learning English from class I. However the focus on English increases only in Class VI when students are made to appear for an English examination in the school. For most of the students who study in government schools, English is a difficult language given students' socio-economic backgrounds, newness of the language and also because the primary medium of learning at state schools is in state or local language.

The latest ASER report 2014, highlights disheartening national and state level data. Only about 25% of children enrolled in class V could read simple English sentences. This number is virtually unchanged since 2009. As per the ASER Karnataka state report 2014, in class VI, 4% children cannot even read letters, 6% can read letters but not more, 11% can read words but not class I level text or higher, 24% can read class I level text but not class II level text, and only 55% can read class II level text.

Clearly there is an urgent need to revisit how English is taught in these schools, the quality of instruction and books and other learning aids. Recognising the need to help students learn English using effective and alternative methodologies, the 'Arivu' programme was born. The programme is based on the belief that children learn best when they are allowed to observe, explore and engage. This is translated into Arivu facilitated classrooms where the role of Arivu teachers is that of facilitators, who facilitate learning through play and digital medium.

The core objectives of the programme are to improve English language skills in listening, speaking and reading, to make English language meaningful by fostering joy in learning and to build life skills of students including their confidence levels, self-awareness, personal relationships, behaviour and attitudes towards others.

A glimpse of the Arivu programme

- 3 years English learning and digital literacy programme
- Works with children of class VI to VIII enrolled in Karnataka government schools
- Focus is on English reading, listening, comprehension; digital literacy and life skills
- Child centred programme steered by trained facilitators
- Use innovative teaching methodologies, particularly play based learning
- Leverage digital technology in the form of tablet based modules and language applications
- Arivu curricula designed by experts skilled in alternative education and learning processes - CERTAD, SNEHADHARA and AAROHI.

As of April 2016, the Arivu programme has reached out to over 1300 students since its inception in September 2015. Key Program Sponsors include: Mphasis Pvt. Ltd (a global Software services and solutions company who is the sole funder of this Project), the Department of State Educational Research and Training (DSERT) and District Institute for Education and Training (DIETs). Active on the ground support, participation and engagement has been provided by the Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and beneficiary government schools in Karnataka.

The programme was launched by headstreams in September 2015. Between September 2015 and March 2016, 21 Arivu sessions were completed in each of the 30 schools in Bangalore, Hosakote and Kolar. To get a valuable insight into the programme's effectiveness, 60 case studies

were conducted in March 2016 with an objective to understand views and experiences of beneficiaries, the students. Alongside students, their teachers and parents were also interviewed to capture their observations of the students in school and at home.

This study has been designed and reported by Phicus Social Solutions, a Section 8 organization that focuses on building capacity in the development sector.

3 STUDY OBJECTIVES

Over the past year, the Arivu team has been working tirelessly to successfully design and implement the programme in three districts of Karnataka including Bangalore, Hosakote and Kolar (marked in the map- Figure 1).

Research and ongoing project tracking have been embedded into the program from its inception. Given that the programme completed six months since the time it was rolled out in schools, the primary goal of conducting the case studies was to have a better understanding of the programme impact on students.

The objectives of the impact study were to understand:

- Did the programme help students learn English?
- Did students enjoy Arivu classes?
- Have alternative pedagogies used in Arivu, specifically, play based learning and digital learning methodologies been effective?
- Can students follow instructions, respond or interact with others in English as a result of the programme?
- Has the programme helped in enhancing their confidence levels?
- Has there been any other behavioural change or change in social skills among students as a result of the programme?

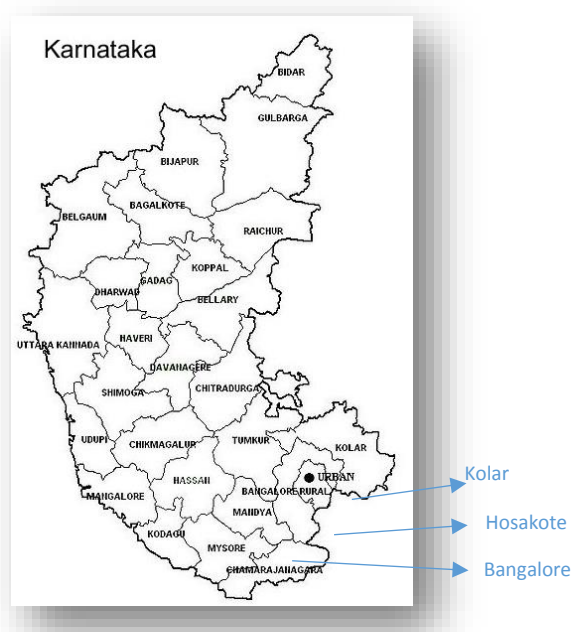


Figure 1 (Source: www.janmsidh.com)

4 METHODOLOGY & SAMPLING

5 teams comprising of 15 trained facilitators spent 2 weeks visiting schools and interviewing 60 students, their teachers and parents. To understand the impact of the programme on the students, facilitators also interviewed their teachers and parents / any other family member where the parents were absent.

Students were identified based on their performance on the baseline assessment, which was conducted in October 2015. As per the baseline, students were categorised into 5 levels based on their ability to identify English alphabets,



read words, comprehend word meaning, read simple sentences and comprehend the meanings of the sentences in English. For the case studies, students at the two ends of this spectrum were selected – i.e. from the beginner levels (who could not / or could only identify lower or upper case English letters and not more) and the most advanced level (who could qualify to the last level of the assessment, which is reading and comprehending simple sentences in English). Out of the shortlisted candidates (selection based on their baseline assessment performances), case studies were further narrowed down to 60 students (Table 2A, 2B and 2C) based on the following parameters:

- Noticeable improvement in English (speaking, listening, reading and comprehension)
- Participation in class (response to instructions, interaction)
- Interest in Arivu activity and digital learning sessions
- Confidence level

Sample size of 60 identified students of class VI, who were typically 11-12 years of age, were selected proportionately based on the number of schools per district, ensuring equal representation of both boys and girls (Table 1).

| Table 1- Selection Framework | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|-------------------------|------|---------------------------|------|------------------------|
| Bangalore (24 case studies) | | Kolar (24 case studies) | | Hoskote (12 case studies) | | Total -60 case studies |
| Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Gender break up |
| 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 6 | 6 | 60 |

Table 2A

List of students selected from Bangalore District

| Sl | Name of the student | Gender | Location of School | Sl | Name of the student | Gender | Location of School |
|----|---------------------|--------|--------------------|----|---------------------|--------|--------------------|
| 1 | Raju Kumar | M | Munnekolala | 13 | Manoj .M | M | J.C Nagar |
| 2 | Aishwarya | F | Benninganahalli | 14 | Muruli Mohan | M | A.Narayanapura |
| 3 | Arun Kumar | M | K. R Puram | 15 | Mushtaq Ali | M | Ganganagar |
| 4 | Bhoomika | F | Hoodi | 16 | Nagarajmani | M | Kaval Byrasandra |
| 5 | Bhoomika | F | Ganganagar | 17 | Pavithra | F | Murphy Town |
| 6 | Bindu.M | F | Ganganagar | 18 | Prince Raj | M | Kaverinagar |
| 7 | Deekshita | F | Chikkadevasandra | 19 | Pundari | F | J.C Nagar |
| 8 | Gunwati | F | B.Channasandra | 20 | Ranjith Kumar | M | B. Channasandra |
| 9 | Javeria Khanum | F | Kaverinagar | 21 | Ranjitha | F | Munnekolala |
| 10 | Madan | M | Chikkadevasandra | 22 | Savithri | F | A.Narayanapura |
| 11 | Madhushree | F | K. R Puram | 23 | Thilak | M | Hoodi |
| 12 | Majnesh | M | Kaval Byrasandra | 24 | Thirumalesh | M | Murphy Town |

Table 2B**List of students selected from Kolar District**

| Sl | Name of the student | Gender | Location of School | Sl | Name of the student | Gender | Location of School |
|----|---------------------|--------|--------------------|----|---------------------|--------|--------------------|
| 1 | Anusha | F | Belluru | 13 | Rajesh | M | Belluru |
| 2 | Anusha. R | F | Narasapura | 14 | Saniya Mirza.S | F | Millathnagar |
| 3 | Bushra Taj | F | S.S Makhan | 15 | Saniya Taj.A | F | Dargha |
| 4 | Dhanush.D | M | Sugaturu | 16 | Santosh K.M | M | Vokkaleri |
| 5 | Dinakara K.L | M | Harati | 17 | Shabaz Pasha | M | Narasapura |
| 6 | Gagan .R | M | Vemagal | 18 | Sheikh Arbaz | M | Rahamath Nagar |
| 7 | Ganesh. M | M | Suluru | 19 | Shivmani | M | Kyalanur |
| 8 | Malleswari | F | Suluru | 20 | Sirisha .M | F | Sugaturu |
| 9 | Muskan Taj | F | Rahamath Nagar | 21 | Sushma M | F | Kyalanur |
| 10 | Nadeem Pasha | M | Millathnagar | 22 | Syed Khaja | M | Dargha |
| 11 | Nayana H.N | F | Harati | 23 | Syed Mudassir | M | S.S Makhan |
| 12 | Padma V.C | F | Vemagal | 24 | Tejasree.A | F | Vokkaleri |

Table 2C**List of students selected from Hosakote District**

| Sl | Name of the student | Gender | Location of School | Sl | Name of the student | Gender | Location of School |
|----|---------------------|--------|--------------------|----|---------------------|--------|--------------------|
| 1 | Anusha S.B | F | Shivnapura | 7 | Rakshit.S.M | M | Shivnapura |
| 2 | Karan Chowdari | M | Doddahulluru | 8 | Sadiya .C | F | M.V Extension |
| 3 | Kiran Kumar .S | M | M.V Extension | 9 | Sindhu M | F | Dasarahalli |
| 4 | Kubra | F | M.V Extension | 10 | Srihari | M | Nandagudi |
| 5 | Mahima Kumari | F | Doddahulluru | 11 | Subramani D.N | M | Dasarahalli |
| 6 | Mythri | F | Nandagudi | 12 | Vinit | M | Hoskote Town |

Prior to conducting the case studies, the interviewers were trained in conducting interviews, research ethics, questionnaire administration, recording and transcribing responses. Since interviewers (facilitators of the programme) were familiar with the local language and respondents, language and building rapport was not a barrier for effective communication.

One on one interviews were separately conducted with students, teachers and parents. Semi-structured questionnaires were prepared to capture both qualitative and quantitative data (The questionnaires are appended in Annexures 1, 2 and 3).



5 STUDY FINDINGS

This section outlines the positive shifts made by the Arivu programme in six months since its implementation. This section has been further divided into three sub-sections:

Section 5.1: Impact of the intervention on students as perceived by the beneficiaries themselves

Section 5.2: Impact as observed by their teachers

Section 5.3: Impact as observed by their parents / family.

5.1 IMPACT AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS

To understand the impact of the programme on the beneficiaries, students were the first set of stakeholders who were interviewed. One to one interview was conducted with each child in the sample within the school premise. While majority of the respondents were natives of Karnataka,

some of them were also migrants from other states speaking Hindi, Telugu and other languages.



The interview was conducted in English, Kannada and Urdu/ Hindi to ensure that the students followed the questions properly. Most of these respondents belonged to lower or lower middle class background whose parents are mostly unskilled workers engaged as daily wage labourers, domestic workers, porters, drivers, factory workers, etc. Whereas in most of the cases, these students are first generation

learners, in few cases they get help in studies at home from their siblings or any other member of the family who has been to school.

Responses and experiences as shared by the students pointed out to the successful impact of the programme and several opportunities that came along their way as a result of this. The findings from the interviews are listed below.

Better English learning outcomes

The Arivu programme had a positive learning outcome. English, for most of the students, was a difficult subject. Given their background, there was no influence of the language or scope to learn this language beyond the school premise. In most of the cases, their parents being illiterate spoke only in native languages.

In Karnataka, English as a subject is introduced in the government schools from class I. These government schools being non-English medium, the primary mode of teaching any subject or communication between teachers and students or among students is in the local language. Except in few cases, even in the English class, for the convenience of students, the text from English books are taught and explained in the local language.

At the beginning, when the Arivu programme started in selected schools, it was a challenge to give simple instructions or make the students understand in English. In most of the cases, students' knowledge of the language was limited to identification of alphabets or only simple

words. In six months, there was a shift in the scenario. Students were gradually able to understand instructions in English and respond in English. Interviews with the students revealed that through the various activities and games they played in Arivu classes, they learnt new English words and sentences. They also learnt names of body parts, kinship terminologies, time and direction, names of colours and transport in English etc.

Like many students in his class, English language proficiency of Nagrajmani, a student of class VI at a government school in Kaval Bysandra, Bangalore was abysmally low. When the English baseline assessment was conducted by headstreams in October 2015 to assess students' level of comfort in English reading and comprehension, Nagrajmani was unable to even identify the lower and upper case English letters.

However, today Nagrajmani sounds more confident and believes that he learnt English from the weekly Arivu classes conducted in his school. "I know English letters and can even sign my name in English. I can also follow simple instructions in English" says the student.

[Opportunity to play, enjoy and learn](#)

In the academic space, often 'learning' and 'play' are seen as two different activities. As a result of this dichotomy, the education sector seems to have largely depended on the former, ignoring the benefits of play on learning. This has led to undue pressure on children who suffer from being deprived of play, often leading to declining childhood health, increasing obesity, mental illness, depression, anxiety and stress amongst children. Various studies and research emphasise the significance of play in helping children think and understand from real life situations, evoke curiosity and imagination, resulting in an increased thirst to know and learn. In India, unfortunately, educational institutions have not embraced play as a significant learning method / aide / mode.



Headstreams' Arivu programme is paving a way towards alternative methods of teaching and learning by focussing on play based learning. Through games, digital medium, dance, songs, role-plays and various other activities children are introduced to the world of knowledge.

A question asked to every student during the case study interview was: “Why do the facilitators come to their school every week?” All 60 students who were sampled in the case study unanimously said that the facilitators came to their class to play with them and help them to learn English. Students easily recollected and pointed out to a number of games and activities when they were asked to highlight the Arivu sessions and activities they liked the most. Some of the favourite activities, as mentioned by the students include:

- ➔ Playing games on Tablets (games like Paper Toss, transport, ball, memory game, card game, magic box, ninjump etc.)
- ➔ Learning songs and dance (examples: ‘WH’ words songs, ‘when you are happy and you know it....’ gumbala song, chicken dance, ‘chai chai coffee coffee...’ etc.)
- ➔ Listening to stories (like the crow story)
- ➔ Doing activities (sessions on smells and taste, garbage activity, drawing and colouring body parts, family tree etc.)

Increased level of confidence

A major finding from the case studies was the impact of the Arivu programme on the motivation and confidence levels of the students. Child-centred Arivu sessions helped to move students out of passive learning modes into highly motivated and engaged learning. By introducing fun-filled activities and games, students were made to gradually love the language and feel at ease.

Though most of the students were aware of the advantages of being able to speak in English, lack of confidence inhibited them from speaking freely in English. In the Arivu class, students learnt new English words which helped them construct simple sentences in English. In addition to learning new words and sentences, Arivu sessions helped to build self-confidence among students through stories, role plays, games, expressions and lessons on self-awareness, all of which had a positive effect on the students’ ability to learn English and feel more confident about the subject.

This change in their level of confidence stood out predominantly in Arivu classes, where facilitators observed shy students turning to be extroverts. Though not every student showed an equal pace of progression, but the fact that they responded to the interview questions and shared their opinions, likes and dislikes without any hesitation during the case study interviews indicated positive development.

Majnesh studies in a government at Kaval Bysandra in Bangalore. He surprised the interviewers by reading the entire questionnaire in English without anyone’s help! His mother Kanta who works in the same school as a non-teaching staff, observed her son speak in English with his sibling and other cousins who study in English medium schools.

Acquired skills in technology

Recognising the advantage of digital learning, headstreams introduced Tablets as a learning tool in the Arivu programme. It is said that people remember “20% of what they see, 40% of what they see and hear and about 75% of what they see, hear and do simultaneously.” (Lindstrom 1994). Hence digital learning classes opened opportunities for students to watch videos, play digital games and explore varied digital applications that evoked interest in them which further strengthened their understanding of the English language.

It became evident from the responses during the interview process that students enjoyed digital sessions. According to the students, being able to play and learn through Tablets was the best thing about the Arivu programme. For many students, who did not even use a phone at home, this was an unique experience! Games like Nin-jump, Auto-rickshaw game, Bike race, Endless

ABC, joining the dots, matching objects, puzzles, listening to songs and rhymes were some of the things mentioned by students which they enjoyed doing during the digital sessions.

Out of the 60 students, 93 % students agreed that they could use Tablets without difficulty. Only 7 % students expressed some difficulty in handling tablets. For majority, it was their first interface with a Tablet, yet students seemed to have got control of it as they were provided with clear instructions by the facilitators during the Arivu classes. As told to the facilitators by students, “it is simple to use a tablet, and prior instructions in the initial classes have been very useful.”

A class VI student at Narasapura in Kolar, Anusha. R feels “English is easy than before.” Her learnings from the Arivu classes were many including sense of directions, good habits like importance of throwing trash in a bin and keeping her surroundings clean. Anusha is also digitally empowered now. Arivu digital sessions helped her to learn English from Tablets. She can easily operate, play games and watch videos on a tablet.

Anusha communicated her admiration for Arivu classes and appreciated the way facilitators conducted the classes and explained to them. According to her, she followed instructions that teachers and facilitators gave in English, however she thought she was not fully prepared to speak in the language with others; Sometimes it was difficult to speak and pronounce certain words in English.

Better understanding of instructions and ability to communicate in English

As per the case study finding, 85% students agreed that they were able to follow instructions in English. This was indeed an achievement compared to the levels the students started from at the beginning of the programme. Giving instructions in English was a challenge that Arivu facilitators faced in all the schools across the three districts of Bangalore, Hosakote and Kolar. In a short time, students showed a good improvement in their ability to understand and follow instructions in English. However, compared to the large percentage of students who reported to have improved in their ability to follow instructions, only 63 % of the students confirmed their ability to respond in English. For the remaining 37% students, they were either very conscious or feared making errors while speaking in English. They often underestimate their learning abilities.

The findings of the case studies did suggest that improvement in students’ reading, listening and understanding skills were higher than their speaking skills. As understood from some of their responses, the ‘fear factor’ was the greatest hindrance in their efforts to even try to speak in English. Nevertheless, the progress made in such a short period since the inception of the programme is heartening.

Grooming and preparing for the future

Recognising the importance of equipping students with values and social skills, the Arivu curricula is value loaded. Students were discouraged from engaging in any insensitive behaviour, practising any discrimination, keeping their surroundings dirty etc. These values were inculcated through games, dramas, activities and team work. Even during the digital sessions, students were exposed to games like paper-toss that indirectly suggested that one should throw any unwanted waste in a bin. This is just one of the many examples. Awareness of the self and body, respecting others emotions, giving up bad habits were examples on life skills training which the students recalled and mentioned during the course of the interviews.

Positive Impacts of Arivu programme as reported by the Students – a glimpse

- 100% students believed that they played and simultaneously learnt in Arivu classes
- 95 % students agreed to have learnt something from the Arivu classes
- 93 % students found it easy to use Tablets. Only 7% faced some difficulty in using tablets
- 85 % students reported to be now able to understand instructions in English
- 63% students said they could communicate in English in the classroom

5.2 IMPACT ON STUDENTS AS OBSERVED BY TEACHERS

Interviews were conducted with teachers of the school to understand the impact of the programme on students. The interview questions for the teachers were framed mainly to understand the kind of changes they observed in students as a result of the Arivu intervention. For the purpose of this study, class teachers and subjects teachers particularly English, Science and Maths teachers were interviewed to trace the improvement of the child either in their overall academic outcomes or in English / any other subject and life skills.

Response from teachers were collected separately for every student. The findings of the study are mentioned below.

Improvement in English and other subjects

As per the teachers' observations, 62 % students showed improvement in English and other subjects as a result of the programme. Their improvement as understood and measured by the teachers, was either in terms of increasing academic scores, or improved understanding of instructions given to students in the classrooms. As informed by the teachers, some of the students who were never active in classrooms or never showed any interest in English, demonstrated progress. A positive change was also observed in more diffident students who hesitated to speak or interact with their peers or teachers.

Through various innovative methods of teaching, Arivu successfully evoked interest among students who showed interest in learning and started following instructions. As noticed by the teachers, unlike before, due to the programme intervention, students got better scores especially in English, participated in school extra-curricular activities and used more English words in their conversation. Some of the English teachers noticed that students were able to identify words and sentences in English, as a result of the programme implementation.

Arivu intervention made a positive impact on the performance of students. English teacher, Ms. M.S Bhagya from GGMS School at Hoskote Town in appreciation of the Arivu programme said: "I like your programme. I refer to the Arivu materials to teach students of other classes." She mentioned, her students of class VI like Khubra, have made progress. Khubra's pronunciation improved. She correctly followed instruction in class, like, 'copy words from the board', 'take dictation', 'write the opposite words', 'keep silence' etc. She spoke in English with her teachers.

Unfortunately, substantial progress was missing in the case of 22 % students, according to the teachers. Some of these students lived in poor socio-economic conditions, less supportive and disturbed families. Teachers were not able to trace any change for 13 % students as this category of students did not show any change- either in terms of performance or non-performance. They

have either been achievers always or always have had academic problems. For the remaining 3 % students, teachers' feedback was not available.

Increased participation and interaction in classroom

According to teachers who participated in the study, traditionally, involving students to participate in classroom was often a challenge. Many students were unenthusiastic and unwilling to interact.

The reason for lack of involvement and participation were many including - degree of students' motivation in learning, attitude towards and interest in a subject, competence of teachers, learning facilities, methods and effective use of techniques and approaches, to list a few. The Arivu programme which rightly identified these gaps, designed the programme in a way that provided active learning opportunities to students. Unlike traditional pedagogies, where teachers led the classroom and students were expected to be passive receivers of information, Arivu classroom introduced students to an environment where learning was a two way process between facilitators and students. Through interactive sessions, group activities, discussions, skits, problem-solving tasks or conversations, students engaged in a spontaneous process of interaction and communication with others.

In case of 63 % of students, teachers noticed improvement in their communication skills and classroom interaction. These students absorbed the art of communicating their ideas. Unlike before, they were encouraged to ask questions in class and interact with teachers and other classmates. As a result, took initiative to participate, showed interest and aptitude to learn.

Only in case of 28% students, there was no change in their participation in the classroom, as per teachers' observation. For the remaining 5 % and 3 % students, teachers could not trace their change and were unavailable to respond respectively.

Mr. Mohammed Hayath teaches Social Studies at S.S Makan School in Kolar. According to him, Arivu significantly changed the classroom environment. Students easily got distracted in class and never listened. Their participation was low. Due to Arivu programme, students gradually started participating in the class. The Arivu facilitators and their style of teaching fostered a positive learning environment. "Class VI students are over enthusiastic on Wednesdays. Their attendance on Wednesday is the maximum as students do not like missing the Arivu class held on Wednesday. Students also liked to share their learnings from the Arivu class with one another and with other teachers in the school. Arivu has been a great motivator!"

Development in life skills

Life skills have increasingly become a subject of academic research. However, there are concerns due to gaps in its implementation at schools, where the key focus is on building cognitive skills through greater emphasis on reading and writing. Hence, building life skills of students is one of the key objectives of the Arivu programme. It is believed that life skills education (LSE) in schools, can positively impact students by helping them -

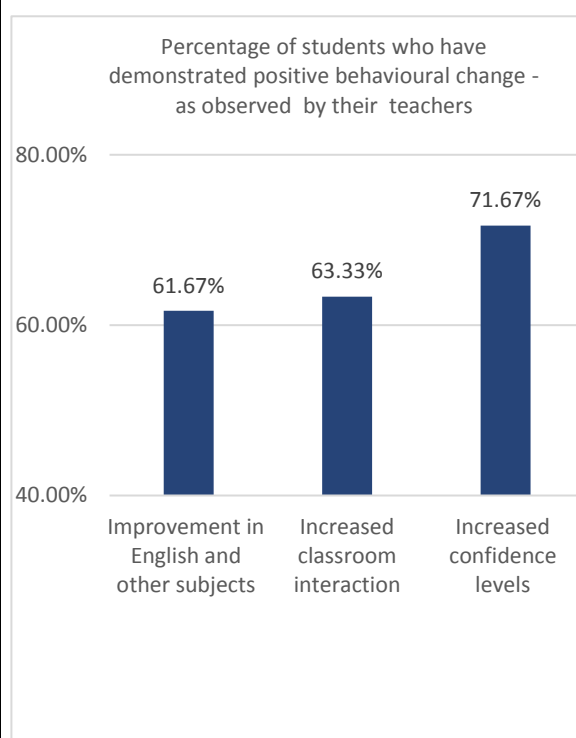
- Overcome social, emotional and mental health barriers
- Strengthening their social relationships by resolving interpersonal conflicts
- Making students responsible decision makers at school, at home and in the community
- Improving their academic performances

Arivu's life skills training to students includes awareness of the self, awareness of one's body and emotions, ability to show empathy to others, engage in positive relationships and so on. Some of the key techniques used typically in LSE are experiential methods that encourage learning through games, role plays, debate, discussion etc. The objective of such methods is to develop creativity of students, help them to recognise their talents and abilities, make them confident and self-aware and thereby help them to set goals in life.

The Arivu programme successfully implemented these techniques in the classrooms. As a result of the programmes' focus on life skills, students emerged as confident individuals. Schools teachers were in agreement that the programme helped students by enhancing their self-confidence. As many as 72% students seemed more confident now compared to what they were before the programme intervention. Students who hesitated to interact in class, now raised their hands to get their doubts clarified or answer to questions. In case of only 18 % students, teachers did not see improvement in their self-confidence.

Class VI students of Vemagal School in the Kolar district were reluctant to participate in school activities. They never volunteered to speak or answer in the class. Mathematics teacher, Ms. Vijay Kumari believes that the Arivu programme brought about a significant change in students. Students left behind their inhibitions to perform or speak in front of others. Now, class VI students of the school participate in various school programmes including quiz competitions organised during the school assembly.

Teachers' impression of the impact of the Arivu programme on students- A Summary



Other broad changes observed in students

- Increase in students' attendance in school especially on the days of the week when Arivu sessions are held
- Innovative teaching methods and techniques used in the Arivu classrooms generated excitement and positive energy in the classroom
- Students' perception about English as a difficult language changed. They feel more confident and like the subject
- Arivu programme created a democratic space that gave liberty to students to think and question freely.
- As a result of learning English through Tablets, students' felt more empowered technically
- It strengthened their personal relationships with their teachers
- It opened new avenue to pursue their hobbies like drawing, dancing, singing etc.

5.3 IMPACT ON STUDENTS AS OBSERVED BY PARENTS

Given that the Arivu programme went beyond English skills to impact life skills as well, a parents / family were a critical respondent group in this study. The focus of these interviews was to understand if they aware of the Arivu programme, did they notice any behavioural change in their wards or observed their children speak in English at home with friends or family members. Findings of the interviews are listed below.

Increased engagement in constructive activities

Majority of the parents who were interviewed felt that the programme significantly benefitted their children. Take-away from the Arivu classrooms were regularly shared with parents, who felt that their wards were constructively engaged at home as a result of the programme. In many cases, children also involved their parents while doing Arivu worksheets.

In the case of 72% students, parents seemed to be aware of the weekly Arivu classes and activities conducted. Parents of these students spoke about the excitement that the programme generated in children. Out of the many things, parents spoke about the digital sessions which seemed to be the major 'attraction' for children who looked forward to attending the weekly Arivu activity and digital sessions. Along with their parents, children shared about the learnings with their extended family and neighbours.

Only in few cases parents' seemed not to be aware of the Arivu programme, on account of their absence from home for longer hours due to work or unawareness due to their illiteracy. However, in 85% of the cases, parents (including those who did not hear about the programme from their children) noticed their children being involved in different activities like reading, writing, drawing, colouring and singing songs in English.

Positive behavioural change

Along with bringing about an improvement in the learning outcomes of students, Arivu also tried to promote key social skills among students through its value based curriculum. Awareness of self and others, managing emotions and behaviours, facing –up and overcoming challenges to keeping their surroundings clean were some of the elements that the programme introduced through its life skills component in the lives of students.

In the case of 77 % of the students, parents confirmed that they noticed behavioural change in children, as a result of the Arivu intervention. As mentioned to them, children were more interested in studies now. Some of them would not even eat their meals till they finished their worksheets or reading a book. Few students who did not enjoy going to schools then now waited eagerly for the weekly Arivu classes, and as a result their attendance in school improved. At home, children talked about the benefits of maintaining hygiene and cleanliness. As compared to before, parents felt that their children were smarter and more confident.

Ability to speak in English and share learnings

Most of the parents interviewed had no formal education. However, they expressed their aspirations for their children to be educated and learn English. They seemed to be aware of the advantages of learning English. They expressed their pride when they heard their children speak in English.

Given that most of the students were first generation learners of English, their opportunity to speak and converse in English with parents and family was limited. However, parents of 63% students reported to have heard their wards speaking in English at home or in the community, with friends or others. According to parents, children often used English words even while

conversing in their mother tongue. When they interacted with siblings or friends who studied in English medium schools, children spoke in English.

Parents reported that children also shared their learnings from the Arivu classes with others in the family and neighbourhood. They shared songs and games learnt at school with siblings and friends. While doing worksheets, children also involved parents if required.

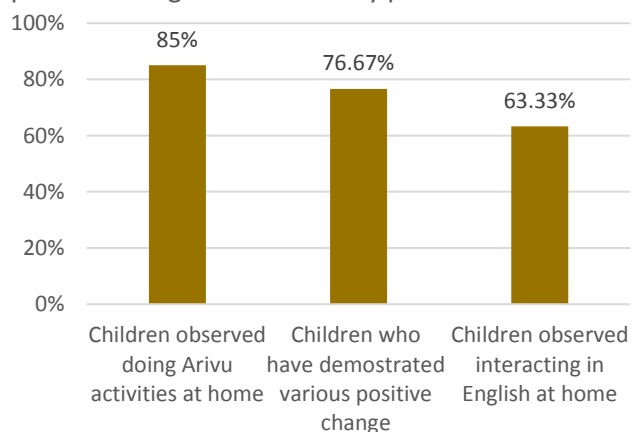
One cannot miss the spark in Nayana's eyes when she talks about the Arivu sessions.

Nayana H N goes to a school at Harati in Kolar. Nayana's mother, Shamla mentioned that since the Arivu sessions started in her school, her daughter never liked missing it. Once, she even refused to attend an important family function that was coinciding with the Arivu class. Shamla knew about the Arivu programme. "*Anna and Akka* teach words, songs, dance, games and other activities in English. They also give Tablets to the students to play games", said Shamla. All that she learnt in school, Nayana practised at home. She shared her learnings with parents and asked questions (to her parents) in English –like their names, age, likes and dislikes.

Nayana's Social Science teacher, Mr. Govindappa, informed that Nayana was a smart child. She made an 85% improvement in all the subjects. Nayana communicated in English with her friends. Like Nayana, other students in her class also recalled and repeated new English words and songs they learnt during the Arivu sessions in other periods.

Parents' impression of the impact of the Arivu programme on students- Summary

Percentage of students who have shown positive change as observed by parents



Other broad benefits of the programme on students as observed by parents

- The Arivu programme created an environment at home that fostered learning
- Since many parents felt inadequate in teaching roles, Arivu facilitators provided an additional support and encouragement to their children
- Due to lack of literacy, parents who were not able to involve themselves in their children's education were now being involved in their education by children themselves.

6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Most of the teachers, parents and students saw a great value in the programme. Students unanimously associated the Arivu programme with activities, fun and learning. Facilitators successfully created a democratic space in the classroom where students had the liberty to address facilitators as *Akka* and *Anna* (which means older brother and older sister in Kannada) and not as teachers. This informal environment indirectly helped students as they enjoyed the freedom to speak up their mind, think and question out of the box!

Core to the Arivu programme has been alternative teaching and learning methodologies. Learning fused with fun and play, including use of tablets created an environment that constantly evoked curiosity and imagination. Unlike the traditional 'chalk and talk' method where teachers led the learning process, Arivu's philosophy is to promote a child-focussed learning process where the role of teachers is that of facilitators. These are some of the main factors leading to Arivu's success in the first year.

The intervention as desired improved students speaking, reading and comprehension skills in English. Student's ability to identify simple English words and sentences, ability to understand English instructions in classroom were acknowledged both by the teachers and beneficiary students themselves.

Whereas the Arivu programme is about improving English learning outcomes, promoting life skills among students has been one of its critical components. In a span of six months, students grew as confident individuals who did not hesitate to interact within or outside their comfort zones. Parents and teachers also confirmed that students used English words or tried to speak in English. This was certainly a new trend given that students studied in state run government school where the instruction of teaching was predominantly in local languages. Even at home, students had limited or no scope of being exposed to English language. In a short time, students showed progress.

The findings of the case studies do suggest that students made progress, but fear and lack of practice in speaking and reading affected their fluency in conversational English. Whereas many students understood instructions in English, some of them were still hesitant to speak in English.

It also became obvious that students who got motivation at home and school were the students who showed fast progress compared to those who did not. Students from lower socio-economic family backgrounds did not often get the kind of encouragement from their families which in turn possibly affected their enthusiasm and progress. Arivu facilitators successfully developed a strong bond between students and themselves that acted as a catalyst to the success of the programme. However additional encouragement from other teachers and family members in future would amplify the change.



*Children LEARN as they PLAY. Most importantly in PLAY
children LEARN how to LEARN.*

Fred Donaldson

7 INTERESTING CASE STUDIES

ENGLISH IS EASY!

In the Arivu class, Rakshith's voice overpowers any other sound. He does not get tired raising his hands to answer each and every question asked by the facilitators.

A student of a government school at Shivnapura in the Hosakote district of Karnataka, Rakshith S.M loves to attend Arivu classes. According to him, English was a difficult language. Arivu programme made it simpler to learn and understand. "I feel it is an easy subject and I can understand English" says Rakshith. Out of many interesting sessions, his favourite sessions were those where he could dance! He also enjoyed the classes where he learnt about directions and symbols.

Rakshith's parents, Bhaghyamma and Mallesh, are proud to see the development in their son. They want him to study well and get a good job. Parent's shared that Rakshith regularly keeps them updated about the Arivu sessions and what he learnt. They (parents) said: "When he explains his work and lessons learnt to us in English, we feel very proud of him." According to them, Rakshith has been lucky to get this opportunity and they are grateful to God for this.

As far as Rakshith's English teacher, Ms. Ashalalatha is concerned, she is very satisfied with Rakshith's performance. He is good in academics, he is active in class and has strong leadership qualities.

"ARIVU SHOULD CONTINUE" SAYS PARENT

Sadiya is one of the very few students who responded to the case study questionnaire fluently in English. "I like everything about Arivu", said Sadiya. Her learnings from Arivu classes are many including new English words, sentence formation, awareness on emotions, games like the 'dot game' where she could create her own shapes.

Sadiya.C studies in a government located at V.V Extension in Hosakote. Sadiya's English teacher, Ms. Sumalatha B.S observed her making good progress in studies. Sadiya can properly construct sentences, frame questions, identify words and follows instructions in English.

Sadiya's mother, Nafeesa Begum also noticed significant changes in her daughter over the last few months. Sadiya became punctual and regular to school. She also became very particular about hygiene and cleanliness. Sadiya's parents want her to continue her studies to PUC. They are of the opinion that a programme like Arivu should continue as it can help their child do well in education in the future as well.

GAINING CONFIDENCE

A class VI student of a government at Millathnagar in Kolar, Sania Mirza, would not easily talk to an outsider. The Arivu programme has helped her become far more confident in her interactions with various people.

The Arivu digital sessions have made her confident in handling the Tablet. Sania says, she likes to play 'Endless ABC' game on the Tablets. By joining letters, she gets excited to see formation of new English words. It is not very difficult to follow simple instructions in English. However, Sania hesitates to speak in English because she fears making mistakes. Sania's teacher has been impressed with Sania's confidence levels and other improvements. As informed by her teacher, Sania presented a two-page speech on '*Swachh Bharat*' in school and "did a fantastic job"! In school and at home, she also helps her class-mates and neighbours complete their assignments.

EXPOSURE TO NEW LEARNINGS

Shahbaz, Rajesh, Nadeem, Muskan and Santosh are students from the Kolar district of Karnataka. Though they study in different schools, their gains from the Arivu sessions have been alike.

Unanimously the students agreed that the Arivu programme has been an incredible window to gather new information and knowledge. They have been familiarized with the English words for various parts of the body, time and direction, different odour, songs and dance. Whereas they do not have any major concern or suggestions to make the programme more effective, they certainly had difficulties with the 'smell session' where they had to practically smell and guess different edibles like rotten vegetables. Such real life experiments and 'learn by doing' methods are integral to the Arivu programme.

Like his friends, Shahbaz also believes that the Arivu programme helped him learn what he did not know. Muskan Taj, particularly feels happy when the facilitators come to their class and greet them with warmth and affection. Indeed, facilitators have been able to develop a strong 'connect' with the students.

THIRST TO LEARN

"Malleswari does not eat till she completes her worksheets and assignments", says Malleswari's mother, Pushpamma. A student from Sulu in Kolar district, Malleswari wants to pursue higher studies in Bangalore. She is very excited about the Friday Arivu sessions and shares her lessons with her parents. She talks to her younger brother in English.

Malleswari explains, she likes Arivu classes because from the various lessons and activities they do, students are made to learn and relate to things around them. She gives the example of the "smelling session" where they were made to smell food and objects from their everyday life. She further explains that from English songs she has learnt prepositions.

Malleswari's English teacher, Mr. Prabhaker, also gave positive feedback about her. He said: "compared to the previous year, Malleswari has improved in studies. She writes well and takes responsibility in class".

"IF A CHILD CANNOT LEARN IN THE WAY WE TEACH, WE MUST TEACH IN A WAY THE CHILD CAN LEARN"

A very powerful impact of the programme has been to introduce an alternative pedagogy of learning that has particularly helped students who have been less motivated. Savithri, a student of A. Narayanapura School in Bangalore, said: "I feel bored in all other classes except Arivu class. I feel happy when you (facilitators) come to teach us".

When interviewed, class teacher and English teacher, Ms. Nirmala .K, said that Savithri struggled to follow what was taught in the class. As also observed by the facilitators, Savithri has been a quiet student who did not talk to anyone during the initial days when the programme started in the school.

However Savithri enjoys learning English through tablets, songs, dance and drawing. She like to do worksheets in class and at home. Savithri's mother, Yellamma, who is a house keeper, has also noticed her daughter become active at home. Yelamma thinks Savithri will learn more if Arivu facilitators continue to teach her in school.

LEARNING EMPOWERS

Ms. Jalajakshi, English teacher in Hoodi School Bangalore strongly believes that the Arivu programme has benefitted her students. Thilak is one such example. Compared to the previous (academic) year, his scores have improved from C / C+ to B/ B+. Initially, he would simply nod his head and copy instructions from the board without understanding. Now, Thilak observes, understands and produces good quality work. Though Thilak confesses having difficulties in speaking flawless English but he does not give up trying! Even at home, "he would be studying and speaking in English", says his sister Sukanya. Initially he could not read in English. Now, he "joins letters, recognises the sounds of the letters and identifies the words".

Thilak has also acquired leadership qualities. He always encourages his fellow class-mates to participate in various activities.

WORLD OF CREATIVITY

One cannot easily find Arun hanging out with friends, but it is not unusual to find him in some corner of the school, building a sand castle or creating a piece of art! It is best to describe him as a dreamer. He lives in his own world of imagination. He can surprise anyone with his wits or humour.

Arivu gave him the opportunity and space to live and learn in the world of creativity. Arun's teacher, Ms. Thresia, who teaches English and Kannada in K.R Puram School in Bangalore, lauds the programme for the creative methods it has employed such as story telling. In Arun's case, his concentration and interest levels have increased as a result of the programme. Elder sister Jyothi who helps him with studies says: "Arun eagerly waits for the weekly Arivu sessions. He sincerely studies and completes his Arivu assignments at home".

HELPING STUDENTS WITH LOW SELF ESTEEM

Arivu facilitators have been able to successfully create an environment where there is no pressure on students to perform perfectly and mistakes are accepted. This has certainly benefitted students, especially those who have been less motivated or have low self-esteem.

While conducting the survey, it was found that students particularly from poor economic conditions were victims of social indifference even at school. Ranjitha, Bhoomika and Madan, students from Bangalore, certainly needed extra attention and motivation. As per teachers, they have not shown any progress. Their participation in school, interaction and confidence levels are also below average.

However, these students enjoy being a part of the Arivu sessions. They have been able to reflect on the questions and satisfactorily answer to all the questions asked during the case study interview. Bhoomika said: "you teach us English, give us tablets and make us happy." Ranjitha seems to like Arivu classes because she has learnt songs and for Madan, he finds joy in learning and playing with tablets. Arivu programme wants to bring out the best in every student not through fear in learning but by spreading joy and happiness through play.

ENGLISH IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Muruli's family migrated to Bangalore from Hosur in Tamil Nadu. He has been studying in A. Narayanapura School in Bangalore from class V.

Son of a single mother, Muruli Mohan shares the responsibility of managing his mother's small shop that sells a variety of items. "English helps him to interact with customers who cannot speak in Telugu or Kannada", says his mother, Selvi.

According to the teacher, Ms. Nirmala, Muruli is a naughty but active and sincere student. Recently he performed in a play, which is worth appreciation. What makes the programme interesting and unique from any other class is the application of digital medium. However Ms Nirmala thinks that the use of English in conversation is limited to English and Arivu classes only. To be able to speak good English, students need to interact in English with their friends and teachers more often.

FROM BETTER TO BEST

"I have learnt many things I did not know, from the Arivu sessions including names of body parts in English and new words", says Deekshita. Deekshita's teachers at the

Chikkadevasandra School in Bangalore gave very positive feedback about her which are supportive of the fact that she has always been a good student and active in class. She has always been the first person to respond to questions in class. She speaks fluently in English. She is a good speaker as well as a good listener; “Deekshita is brilliant!” teachers remarked.

The Arivu intervention has added to her list of skills and qualities. When asked about her favourite activity in the Arivu class, she says she likes to do the worksheets they are given in the Arivu sessions. She has learnt to operate a tab which has helped her to learn more words and English. Deekshita’s father is a Carpenter. Mother is a house wife. They share that in addition to household work, their daughter, now spends more time reading story books and playing.

ENGLISH HELPED TO CONNECT

Raju joined his school located at Munnekolala in Bangalore a year ago. He is a migrant from Bidar. His mother tongue being Telugu, communicating in Kannada or English was a challenge for him. But Arivu opened an opportunity for him to learn English and communicate with others. In a short span of time he also learnt Kannada.

“In the beginning, language was the biggest barrier for him”, recognises his class teacher, Ms. Shuba. Now Raju can speak in English and Kannada. He is a hardworking student who does not stop trying to speak in new languages. Like Raju, the energy and excitement of learning something new from Arivu got translated among other students of class VI. Especially on Wednesdays, students are fully engrossed with activities- writing, colouring, cutting, sticking and getting ready for the Arivu sessions.

Raju father Gopal Rao, who sells food in a road side stall and mother Savitha, talked about the significant changes that they have observed in their son over the last few months. Among many things, he became more regular to school, sincere about his homework and studies.

8 REFERENCES

- ASER.(2015). 2014 Annual Status Of Education Report. Retrieved from <http://img.asercentre.org/docs/Publications/ASER%20Reports/ASER%202014/National%20PPTs/as2014indiaenglish.pdf>
- Carter, Sussane (2002). *The Impact of Parent / Family Involvement on Student Outcomes: An Annotated Bibliography of Research from the Past Decade*. CADRE
- Civic Enterprises with HART Research Associates and CASEL. The Missing Piece: A National Teacher Survey on How Social and Emotional Learning Can Empower Children and Transform Schools. Retrieved from <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/513f79f9e4b05ce7b70e9673/t/526a2589e4b01768fee91a6a/1382688137983/the-missing-piece.pdf>
- Dutta, Usha and Bala, Neeru (2012). *Teaching of English at Primary Level in Government Schools*. NCERT. Retrieved from http://www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/del/publication/pdf/english_primary_level.pdf
- Jagriti: An information tool to empower rural Indian women. Summary Report of Impact Created*. Phicus Social Solutions (2015).
- Srikala, B; Kishore Kumar KV (2010). 'Empowering adolescents with life skills education in schools - School mental health program: Does it work?'. *Indian Journal Of Psychiatry*, 52(4), 29 December. Retrieved from <http://www.indianjpsychiatry.org/article.asp?issn=0019-5545;year=2010;volume=52;issue=4;spage=344;epage=349;aulast=Srikala>
- Sullivan, Anabay; Tolani, Nitika and Trivedi , Malini (2005). *Educating 'Out-of-School Girls': An Assessment of the Pehchan Project in Rajasthan*. UNICEF
- Suresh, Venna; Subramoniam Vivek.(2015) ' Life Skills Education in School Setting'. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities*, III (V), July. Retrieved from <http://ijellh.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/70.Veena-Suresh-paper-done.pdf>

9 ANNEXURES

9.1 ANNEXURE 1 - ONE-TO-ONE QUESTIONNAIRE: STUDENTS

- 1) We come to your class every week. Why do you think we come to your class every week?
- 2) We play games and do various activities with you. Do you agree?
 - Yes.....what kind of games/ activities do you do?
 - No
- 3) What have you learnt from these games/activities? For example, when you play cricket, you learn to ball and bat.
- 4) What do you like about these classes?
- 5) Is there anything that you don't like about these classes?
- 6) Do you use tablets in Anna's/Akka's class?
 - Yes.....what do you do with the tablets?
 - No
- 7) Do you find it easy or difficult to use these tablets?
 - Easy... Why?
 - Difficult..... why?
- 8) When we speak in English, do you understand?
 - Yes
 - No..... why?
- 9) Do you also respond in English?
 - Yes
 - No..... why?

9.2 ANNEXURE 2 - ONE-TO-ONE QUESTIONNAIRE: TEACHERS

- 1) Your general observation about the child in classroom. (Is he/she shy? Does he participate in class activities? Does he interact with teachers and other students?)
- 2) Arivu programme tries to make English learning easy and fun through play way methods, through tablets. Do you think it has helped your student in the following areas:

| | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| a. Improvement in English language scores (ask to English teacher) | Yes/no/ can't say | If yes, explain how |
| Maths scores / EVS scores (ask to related subjects teachers) | | |
| b. Better understanding of instructions in your subject | Yes/no/ can't say | If yes, explain how |
| c. Interactions with others in English (ask only to English teacher) | Yes/no/ can't say | If yes, explain how |
| Interacting more with others (ask to other subject teachers) | | |
| d. Is he/she confident (speaks up, does not hesitate to participate in activities etc.) | Yes/no/ can't say | If yes, explain |

9.3 ANNEXURE 3 - ONE-TO-ONE QUESTIONNAIRE: PARENTS

- 1) Does he/she like going to school?
 - Yes.....why?
 - No.....why?
 - 2) Has your child told you about any new programme in his/her school?
 - Yes..... What have they told you about Akka/ Anna class?
 - No....
 - 3) Did you notice your child do some worksheets/ activities or games at home which they get from Akka/ Anna?
 - Yes.....Does your child take your help to do these?
 - No
 - 4) Do you or any one (like a tutor) help him/her with his /her studies?
 - Yes....Who helps?
 - No
 - 5) Do you think there has been any significant change in your child over the last few months? What changes?
 - Yes... what changes have you noticed?
 - No...
 - 6) Do you hear him/her speak in English?
 - Yes...Why do you say so?
 - No...
-