KENDRA PRAMUKH ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME (KPALP)

RESEARCH FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE KPALP PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION & IMPACT

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Study of UNICEF -

Kendra Pramukh Academic Leadership Programme (KPALP)

(Research for the evaluation of the KPALP programme Implementation & Impact)

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Abbreviations

ALP   Academic Leadership Programme

APPEP   Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project

BRC   Block Resource Centre

BRP   Block Resource Person

DPEP   District Primary Education Project

DIET   District Institute of Education and Training

CRC   Cluster Resource Centre

CRP   Cluster Resource Person

KP   Kendra Pramukh

KPALP   Kendra Pramukh Academic Leadership Programme

PLC   Professional Learning Community

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Executive Summary

It is widely acknowledged that school-based, ongoing, and practice-based teacher professional development is crucial in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Pedagogic decentralisation is advocated as a strategy for developing school teachers as professionals (Sayed & Sarangapani, 2020; Sayed, 2010; Hoppers, 1998). Through the DPEP programme, DIETs and BRCs/CRCs were established in India to facilitate educational decentralisation and teacher professional development. However, programmes have not succeeded in transforming teachers' practices or developing robust professional development models through these institutions. In actuality, the professional identity of the mid-level functionaries - Cluster Resource Persons / Kendra Pramukhs - needs to be adequately defined, and their roles have become more administrative than academic. As a result, teachers' professional development is frequently limited to one-time workshops that are disconnected from their classroom contexts and do not offer school-based or local support and mentoring. Additionally, career advancement opportunities are essential for establishing the professional identity of a school teacher and motivating teachers. In India, the majority of teaching careers are flat. Few formal opportunities exist for educators to demonstrate their skills and abilities in specialised or leadership positions (UNESCO, 2022). The formation of an academic identity for mid-level functionaries is a crucial stage in the creation of career advancement models for teachers.

UNICEF, with CEQUE as the implementing partner, designed and implemented the Kendra Pramukh Academic Leadership Programme (KPALP) to improve the quality of the school support provided by the Kendra Pramukhs (KPs) or Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs) to teachers to improve the teaching-learning process and, consequently, student learning levels.

This report is the study of the processes and impact of the KPALP. The objective of this study was to analyse the programme design and its implementation design and adoption via an in-depth qualitative study of the programme in one district and understand the impact on the field concerning changes in KPs knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices, school-level processes, teacher practices, the support provided during the pandemic and the operation of the Professional Learning Communities(PLCs) established for KPs.

A qualitative study to examine the impact of the programme on KPs' knowledge, attitudes and practices and the programme implementation was conducted. The data collection primarily consisted of in-depth interviews with various stakeholders of the KPALP in one of the districts where the KPALP ran. Interviews were conducted to obtain detailed and in-depth insights into the KPs' development of skills, changes to their attitudes and practices, and the impact it had on the teachers and schools. Palghar was selected as the district as the intervention started early in this district; the district ran a PLC for KPs and is a predominantly tribal area. Additionally, Palghar was the longest-running and focused district for KPALP and several initiatives within the larger programme were piloted Two separate interview schedules were prepared, one for KPs and the other stakeholders. The Interview schedule probed stakeholders on five aspects of the programme, including their perceptions, opinions and learnings about the programme in general, the capacity building received through the KPALP, teacher support processes, teacher practices and scaling and sustainability ideas related to the programme.

The evidence gathered showed that the KPALP was successful. KPs have developed the skills and knowledge of mentoring based on the professional development they have received and have altered their attitudes towards mentoring to build positive relationships with teachers, resource persons, block leaders, and even students. Stakeholders were able to identify specific improvements in KPs' skills, attitudes, and practices at all levels of the system, from the school to the block level. In the five blocks we visited in the Palghar district, the programme appears to have diffused into the system and permeated.

Specifically, KPs improved their data analysis, classroom observation, teacher feedback, and action plan preparation skills. In each of these domains, all ten KPs we interviewed were able to reflect on their learning and identify specific behavioural modifications and adjustments to their practices as a result of KPALP's capacity building. Teachers must modify their knowledge, attitudes, and practices for sustained practice improvement (Sarangapani, 2021). There is abundant evidence that school-level processes concerning teacher support have improved. In each school we visited, teachers remarked that they were motivated to try new ideas, welcomed the KPs, and valued the nature of the support they received. Highlighted were classroom observations, teacher feedback, and collaborative action planning based on a shared understanding of objectives. However, KPs reported that their current authority did not permit them to approve funds for minor repairs and purchases, occasionally impeding their mentoring

process. Forming relationships is a crucial aspect of change that facilitates the spread and adoption of programmes (Daly, 2015). In many instances, the results indicate that relationships between KPs and teachers, principals, and cluster/block resource officers have improved.

Teachers adopting active pedagogies was particularly evident in the pedagogical ideas that the KPs were exposed to, as teachers exhibited a strong desire to innovate and introduce new concepts in the area of expressive talk and writing. We observed that simple scaffolds, such as templates and frameworks/models, assisted KPs in proposing these ideas to teachers and enabled teachers to implement and experiment with the new pedagogical ideas. However, we found little evidence of KPs providing such assistance without the assistance of experts like CEQUE. There is a significant knowledge gap among KPs regarding research-based ideas for foundational literacy and numeracy, as evidenced by the little changes to teachers' pedagogy, particularly in regard to numeracy. Therefore, relevant professional development in the area of foundational literacy and numeracy is essential for all levels of teacher support, including DIET faculty, block-level officers and KPs. It was observed, however, that the PLC provided a conducive environment for KPs to acquire such knowledge. Teachers also demonstrated a more nuanced understanding of the issues related to the education of tribal children and were able to identify specific language communication-related issues and work with the KPs to find solutions.

During the COVID-19 quarantine and lockdown, the MFs and KPs interviewed displayed leadership. Many KPs were able to contribute to the development of resources for online transactions, the modification of the mode of training and support, and the collection of data to determine the educational requirements of students. However, KPs were helpless regarding the lack of resources and devices among students, and they expressed genuine concern for the learning loss they observed once schools reopened.

The PLC was an effective social learning environment for KPs. It provided a venue for both peer-to-peer and expert-to-peer learning. In addition, the PLC was used to discuss issues and seek collaborative solutions. The PLC enabled ongoing support for KPs and encouraged KPs to transform cluster meetings into additional learning meetings and a PLC for teachers. Instead of traditional workshops, professional development is most effective when social learning opportunities are created, according to research (Daly, 2015). The mid-level functionaries' roles

have always needed to be defined (Goi, 2011), and the PLC was able to develop the KP's professional identity and bring role clarity. KPs, through their sharing discussions, were able to validate their practices and understand their role clearly as providing academic support to teachers as they were able to to see the results of their changes in practice. Such a building of professional identity will enable the way towards creating career pathways for teachers.

The dissemination of such concepts throughout the state is still a question that needs to be talked about and answered. Concerning the expansion of the programme and its incorporation into the general public school system, there are a lot of questions that still need to be answered. On the one hand, the State is questioning the affordability of this cadre from a financial standpoint, as evidenced by the fact that it was not actively recruiting into the KP cadre and consequently increasing the responsibilities of KPs to manage more clusters. On the other hand, KPs have stressed the importance of being allotted to smaller clusters to pay more frequent visits to schools. The long-term impact of such a programme hinges on the policies and practices adopted by the State towards the KP or cluster resource person cadre.

The KPALP has fundamentally achieved the objectives that it set out through the design, development and implementation of the programme, bringing about change in KPs attitudes and practices and thereby positively impacting on teachers' practices and students' learning. What needs to be investigated further are approaches that are more systemic in nature and discussions at the policy level regarding how to carry out such a programme on a larger scale while preserving the quality of the outcomes. Cohen and Ball (2000) argue that innovations that have aimed to alter classroom practice or instruction have typically not had sustained success as much as curricular reforms like textbooks and standardised testing. The "scaling-up" of the KPALP is an important next step for the programme, and strategies need to be deliberated on in collaboration with multiple organisations working to improve teacher support across India and, of course, the state government systems that will implement the programme at scale.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In the context of the developing world, decentralisation of educational processes has been a central theme of educational policy and reform strategy over the past three to four decades. The justifications for educational decentralisation range from the need to democratise and transform education management and governance to modify classroom practices and pedagogy (Sayed, 2002). The primary objective of decentralisation has been to improve the quality of education and student learning, although the aims and purposes of decentralisation varied across programmes and policies. Although infrastructure and resource availability are factors that influence the quality of education, research (Hanushek, Piopiunik & Wiederhold, 2020) and policy documents (GoI, 2012; GoI, 2020) indicate that the teacher and her work have the greatest impact on education quality. Therefore, teacher professional development is one of the primary areas of emphasis for enhancing the quality of education and the learning of students. Creating spaces for teachers through resource centres (Giordano, 2008) as a platform for constructing and sharing professional practice and resources, as well as for professional development and localised academic support, has been the objective of numerous programmes in India and other developing nations.

Between 1984 and 1996, the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP) established teacher centres in India. In the 1980s, the APPEP was a large-scale programme that transformed teachers' pedagogies. The primary goals of the teacher centres were to enable teachers to adopt active pedagogies through the use and creation of local resources, to provide a professional space for teachers to share resources, ideas, and their practise, to facilitate networking between teachers, and to provide continuous in-service training and pedagogical support for teachers throughout the academic year. The initial in-service training was provided through the DIETs by university faculty and state resource persons (Thirumalai & Sarangapani, 2018). The study of the APPEP programme revealed that teachers found the local pedagogical support and two-way communication between teachers and experts provided by the teacher centres throughout the school year to be the most beneficial in transforming their pedagogies (Thirumalai, 2022).

Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) were established on a large scale as part of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the subsequent Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to support teachers and decentralise the management and governance of education. Some of the problems of the BRCs and CRCs have been the lack of sufficient resources, access to expert pedagogues, lack of training to CRPs for providing academic support, a shift in BRPs & CRCs focus to administrative tasks, and difficulty accessing the centres, particularly for those teachers working in remote areas, resulting in an inability to produce meaningful change in practise and provide a platform for teachers to develop as a community of practice (GoI, 2011). In Maharashtra, through the DPEP programme in the late 1990s, the KPs role was established, and each KP was to lead ten schools. In addition, Singh, Rind, and Sabur (2020) note the need for more knowledge and research on the nature of support, particularly for mid-level functionaries and institutions, concerning effective CPD practices. For decentralisation reforms to affect the quality of education, Yusuf Sayed's (2010) comparative study of decentralisation processes in Asia, including India and East Africa, argues for developing "a pedagogic model of devolved governance" (p. 62), essentially advocating for a focus on teachers and teaching and learning. The principles of teacher resource centres must then become the focus of educational reform strategies for BRCs and CRCs, including the creation of a space for accessing, sharing, and using educational resources; the provision of a platform for sharing professional practise, professional development, and continuous pedagogical support; and the provision of a forum for sharing professional practice, professional development, and continuous pedagogical support (Sarangapani & Nawani, 2013, Newman et al., 1981).

1.2 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to document and analyse the processes and impact of the UNICEF KPALP, which aims to improve the quality of the school support provided by the Kendra Pramukhs (KPs) or Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs) to teachers to improve the teaching-learning process and, consequently, student learning levels.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Objectives

The six-month qualitative study investigated the design and adoption of the programme by examining its implementation in one district. The district was chosen based on the maximum implementation duration in collaboration with key stakeholders at all programme levels.

The study's objectives were:

1. Analysis of the programme design and its implementation design and adoption via an in-depth qualitative study of the programme in one district, including experiences of programme stakeholders (government and UNICEF/CEQUE) via interviews.

2. Understand the impact on the field concerning,
   a. change in KP knowledge, attitudes, and perspectives regarding teacher support;
   b. change in school-level processes;
   c. change in teacher practice concerning the principles of active learning pedagogies;
   d. nature and quality of support provided during the pandemic; and
   e. operation of the PLCs established for KPs

1.3.2 Literature Review

Teacher Academic Support

The following principles and characteristics govern in-service professional development: contextual relevance, enhancement of active learning and development, provision of continuity and sustained learning, promotion of collaboration, provision of support, provision of space for reflection, and modelling practices (Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017). Professional development must be relevant to teachers, practice-based, recognise teachers' autonomy in planning their learning and development, and assist teachers in reflecting on their practice and education (Thirumalai, 2022).

Giordano's (2008) evaluation of these resource centres revealed that many still needed to meet the goal of in-service professional development. The main reasons noted were the need for more relevance of training to classroom practice, minimal support to apply learning in classrooms, a focus on individual teachers rather than whole-school improvement, and, in some cases, teacher absence from local training. Accessing and utilising the teaching-learning resources was an additional area the resource centres needed to meet their objectives. According to the findings, accessing the physical centres, creating resources, and transferring them for classroom use were difficult. Further administrative and organisational issues, such as the training of cluster resource persons and the attachment of an excessive number of schools to a cluster, negatively impacted the resource centres' functionality. Finally, Giordano (2008) identifies cluster-based teacher training and support, as opposed to one-time centrally-based workshop-based training, whole-school improvement, and active involvement of local stakeholders as successful school strategies for resource centres.

Vesico's (2008) international review of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) revealed that PLCs positively affect teachers' pedagogical practices, collaborative work, authority, and continuous teacher learning. In his study of resource centres in Southern Africa, Hoppers (1998) notes that local authorities, including teachers, must own TRCs and their pedagogical development processes to facilitate local pedagogical decision-making and locally initiated activities (Thirumalai, 2022).

Continuous professional development has only recently entered policy documents in India. The landscape is populated by numerous actors, such as NGOs, EdTech companies, and government agencies, and remains uncertain and marginal. Although the function of the BRCs was to provide in-service training and the function of the CRCs was to provide continuous local pedagogical support, these functions have yet to be effectively implemented in most parts of the country (Singh, Rind, Sabur, 2020). Headteachers need more time and training to provide academic support, and CRPs rarely engage with classroom practices to provide relevant support, according to Parul (2019). In their 2010 study on the effect of training on primary school teachers in rural West Bengal, Jalan and Panda(2010) found a wide range of training effects. Specifically, when resource persons engaged in subject demonstrations and supported teachers in adopting learner-centred practises, the impact on student outcomes was greater

(Singh, Rind, & Sabur, 2020), indicating that continuous academic support does improve the effectiveness of teacher training. A recent study on the participation of mathematics teachers in an online CoP revealed that continuous academic and pedagogical support and engagement with teachers' classroom practises positively affected teachers' professional development (Thirumalai, 2022).

Career Trajectories

It is acknowledged that entry requirements, career mobility, and compensation structures can assist education systems in attracting, retaining, and motivating effective teachers and school leaders. The policies and practises that shape career pathways in ways that enable teachers and leaders to exercise their agency and autonomy are crucial and complex, and different countries have implemented a variety of career pathways. Career structures outline the various professional positions available to teachers, a description of their tasks and responsibilities, and the rules governing their advancement. Both vertical and horizontal career structures and paths are possible to design. Many OECD nations (Estonia) have defined multi-stage vertical career paths, while others (Slovakia) have both vertical and horizontal multi-stage career paths (OECD, 2019).

Implementing career structure reforms necessitates the consideration of multiple factors (OECD, 2019), including (1) using a competency-based framework to evaluate teacher performance; however, the teacher standards themselves must evolve in collaboration with teachers and other stakeholders. (2) Teacher evaluations should not be directly tied to student performance, as this leads to unintended consequences such as teachers teaching to the tests/examinations. (3) Certification and professional development as a criterion for career advancement are among the most transparent methods for evaluating teachers. However, the eligibility of institutions to offer certification programmes and the quality of these programmes must be regulated. (4) Specialized capacity building and professional development as a criterion for horizontal career advancement are more effective, particularly for those assuming leadership responsibilities such as mentors and principals. (5) Providing school teachers with a balance of autonomy and support and opportunities for collaboration facilitates their career advancement. (6) For teachers to be effective both in and out of the classroom, they must balance their workloads and work hours to tackle various tasks. (7) Well-designed self-reporting

mechanisms and evaluation processes effectively motivate teachers, foster collegiality, and respect teacher autonomy.

In India, a teacher's career is predominantly flat (UNESCO, 2021). There are few formal opportunities for educators to demonstrate their skills and abilities in specialised or leadership roles. Numerous contractual teachers view regularisation as a career advancement. Primary school teachers advancing to a position as a cluster resource person, deputed for a specific time, typically with no additional salary increase, is currently practised in a few states. Similarly, secondary school teachers' movement to BRC or DIET positions is considered a career advancement. There are processes outlined for progression to BRCs and DIETs, but they are not policies. However, it has been observed that female primary school teachers are reluctant to take on additional responsibilities when they are posted in remote areas or when their daily work-related travel increases. Fundamentally, the system must support career advancement to ensure that working conditions and workloads are conducive to effective practice (UNESCO, 2021).

In India, teacher promotions have long consisted of financial increases and advancement to administrative positions such as supervisor, principal, and teacher. These promotions are frequently proportional to the number of years of teaching experience in the system. There have been several attempts to modify and incorporate additional promotion criteria; however, teacher unions strongly opposed the addition of performance-based criteria for promotion, fearing the unpreparedness of the system to implement such processes fairly. Many state governments have attempted to use academic achievement as a teacher promotion criterion. In a few states, teachers must pass an examination or complete additional coursework to enter the BRC-CRC cadre (UNESCO, 2021).

Fundamentally, both international and Indian literature indicates that continuous academic and pedagogical support by CRPs is a crucial factor for ensuring teachers' effective and impactful continuous professional development and an essential element for designing and implementing robust career pathways for teachers. However, there needs to be more research and understanding on the design and implementation of such programmes, making studying the KPALP programme essential for gaining insights into developing effective CPD programmes

that can be scaled through the already established CRCs and the newly recommended school complex structures.

1.3.3 Research Questions

The research questions formulated for this study included

RQ1 How has the KPALP (design & implementation) been adopted on the ground based on the experiences shared by the different participants and stakeholders?

RQ2 What is the impact of the programme concerning
1. changes in KP's knowledge/skills, attitudes and practices?
2. change in school-level processes?
3. change in teacher practice concerning the principles of active learning pedagogies?
4. nature and quality of support provided during the pandemic?
5. operation of the PLCs established for KPs?

1.3.4 Research Approach

A qualitative study to examine the impact of the programme on KPs' knowledge, attitudes and practices and the programme was conducted. The data collection primarily consisted of in-depth interviews with various stakeholders of the KPALP in one of the districts where the KPALP ran. Interviews were conducted to obtain detailed and in-depth insights into the KPs, skills development, changes to their attitudes and practices, and the impact it had on the teachers and schools.

Palghar was selected as the district as the intervention started early in this district; the district ran a PLC for KPs and is a predominantly tribal area. Two separate interview schedules were prepared, one for Kendra Pramukhs and the other stakeholders (See Annexure). The interview schedule probed stakeholders on five aspects of the programme, including their perceptions, opinions and learnings about the programme in general, the capacity building received through the KPALP programme, teacher support processes, teacher practices and scaling and

sustainability ideas related to the programme. All interviews were conducted in Marathi and later transcribed and translated into English.

The following interviews were conducted: (1) Ten Kendra Pramukhs (KPs) were interviewed, and (2) two master facilitators/coaches(MF), as shown in Table 1.1.
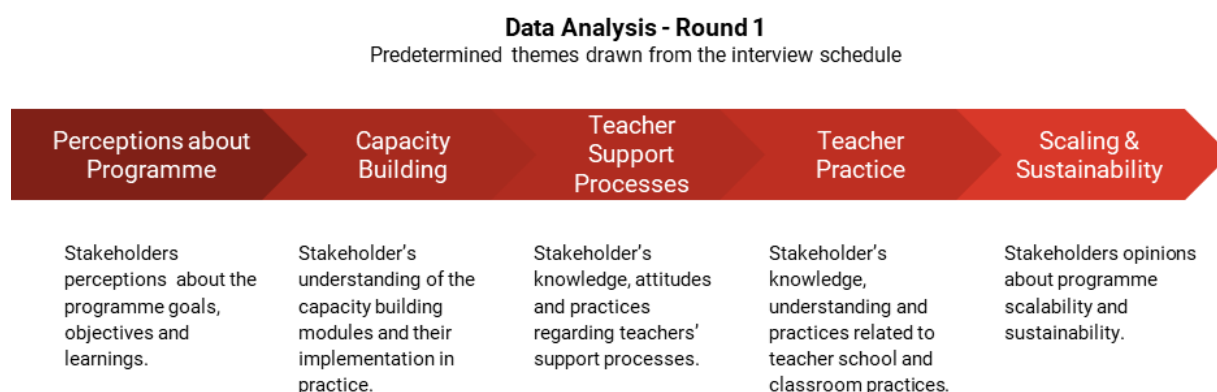
Table 1.1 Profile of the Kendra Pramukhs						
Interview Code	Block / District	Gender	Professional Qualifications	Age (years)	KP Experience	KPALP Training
KP1	Palghar	Male	B.Ed.	Above 50	Up to 10 yrs	2016
KP2	Palghar	Female	MA & B.Ed.	Above 50	Above 21 yrs	2016
KP3	Palghar	Male	B.Ed.	Above 50	Above 21 yrs	2018
KP4	Vikramgad	Male	B.Ed.	Above 50	Up to 10 yrs	2016
KP5	Jawhar	Male	B.Ed.	Above 50	Up to 10 yrs	2016
KP6	Jawhar	Male	B.Ed.	Above 50	Above 21 yrs	2016
KP7	Jawhar	Male	B.Ed.	Above 50	11 to 20 yrs	2019
KP8	Dahanu	Male	B.Ed.	Above 50	Up to 10 yrs	2016
KP9	Vasai	Female	MA & B.Ed.	Above 50	11 to 20 yrs	2018
KP10	Dahanu	Male	MA & B.Ed.	Above 50	Up to 10 yrs	2016
MF1	Palghar /Pune	Male	D.Ed	Above 50	Up to 10 yrs	2018
MF2	Palghar /Pune	Female	M.Ed & MPhil	41 to 50 Years	Up to 10 yrs	2017

The stakeholders interviewed included
1. 6 teachers from schools, two head teachers and one block resource person
2. Two persons from UNICEF coordinating the programme
3. One person from CEQUE, the organisation involved in developing and implementing the KP programme.
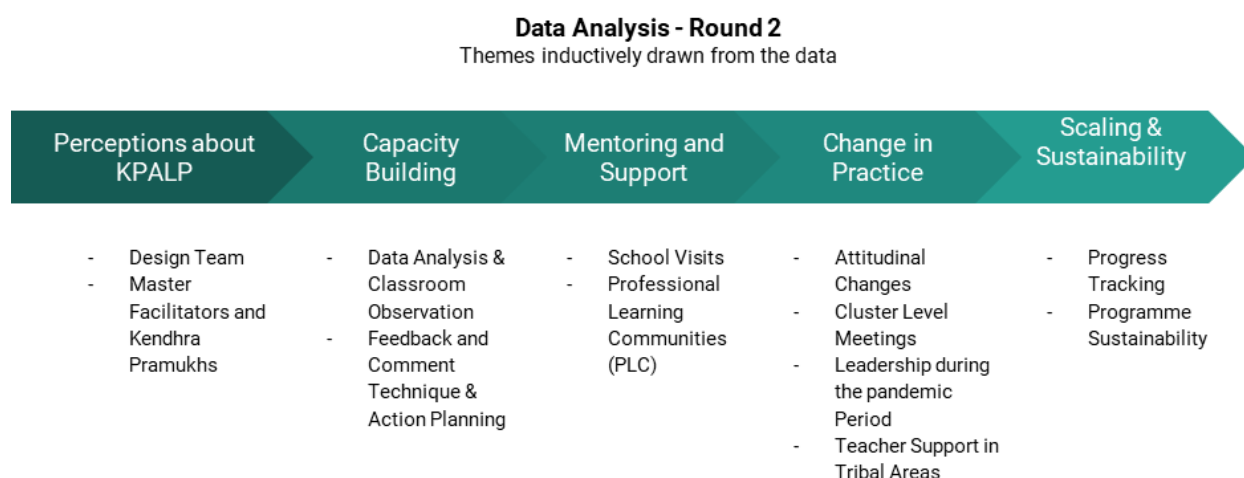
4. One SCERT person who played the role of coordinator for the KPALP programme.

The interview data were analysed following a hybrid approach. In the first round, data was analysed with predetermined themes drawn from the interview schedule (See Figure 1.1).

Data Analysis - Round 1
Predetermined themes drawn from the interview schedule

Perceptions about Programme	Capacity Building	Teacher Support Processes	Teacher Practice	Scaling & Sustainability
Stakeholders perceptions about the programme goals, objectives and learnings.	Stakeholder's understanding of the capacity building modules and their implementation in practice.	Stakeholder's knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding teachers' support processes.	Stakeholder's knowledge, understanding and practices related to teacher school and classroom practices.	Stakeholders opinions about programme scalability and sustainability.

Figure 1.1 Data Analysis Round 1

In the second round the data was analysed following an inductive thematic analysis procedure (Braun & Clarke, 2006), where themes were inductively drawn from the data (See Figure 1.2).

Data Analysis - Round 2
Themes inductively drawn from the data

Perceptions about KPALP	Capacity Building	Mentoring and Support	Change in Practice	Scaling & Sustainability
- Design Team - Master Facilitators and Kendhra Pramukhs	- Data Analysis & Classroom Observation - Feedback and Comment Technique & Action Planning	- School Visits - Professional Learning Communities (PLC)	- Attitudinal Changes - Cluster Level Meetings - Leadership during the pandemic Period - Teacher Support in Tribal Areas	- Progress Tracking - Programme Sustainability

Figure 1.2 Data Analysis: Round 2

2. Kendra Pramukh Academic Leadership Programme (KPALP)

2.1 About KPALP

In 2016-2017, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Centre for Equity and Quality in Universal Education (CEQUE), SCERT, and the DIETs of Chandrapur, Palghar, and Pune, developed and implemented the Kendra Pramukh Academic Leadership Programme (KPALP) with 93 Kendra Pramukhs (KPs) or Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs). The emphasis of the programme was on enhancing the quality of the on-site support provided by KPs to teachers to improve the teaching-learning process and, consequently, student learning levels.

In October 2018, the Minister of School Education formally announced the expansion of the KPALP. The state committed to implementing the programme for a period of five years (2018-2022) to reach all KPs and KP-equivalent cadres. KPs, DIET officials, SCERT officials, and officials from Mantralay, including the Additional Secretary for Education and the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to the Minister, participated in the launch event, which was noteworthy because it was the first time an education-related intervention had received such attention.

For the first phase of programme expansion, it was decided that KPALP would be implemented in the state's 34 lowest-performing blocks (based on the 2017 Language Assessment). This is known as the KPALP Basic (module). Concurrently, KPALP Advanced was made available to KPs participating in the KPALP pilot programme (between July 2016-Aug 2017). In addition, one tribal block in Palghar and two urban blocks in Aurangabad were selected to learn from the implementation in these sites and to suggest how KPALP should be differentiated for these sites based on the implementation in these sites.

To support the state-wide implementation of the KPALP, a State Resource Persons Group comprised of 34 Master Facilitators (MFs) and 71 Coaches from DIETs across the state was formed. CEQUE provided direct feedback to the MFs and facilitated workshops with the coaches. The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Department at SCERT led and

monitored the implementation. The coaches were then expected to implement the programme on the field with the KPs.

The first batch of 17 MFs was hand-selected by SCERT and received nearly six months of expert input. These MFs have played a significant role in enhancing the capabilities of other MFs and coaches. One hundred MFs and Coaches have been gathered to form the KPALP State Resource Persons team. A KPALP Core Team has been established to support the programme design and capacity-building modules. The Core Team was established to support SCERT and promote programme ownership within the government system.
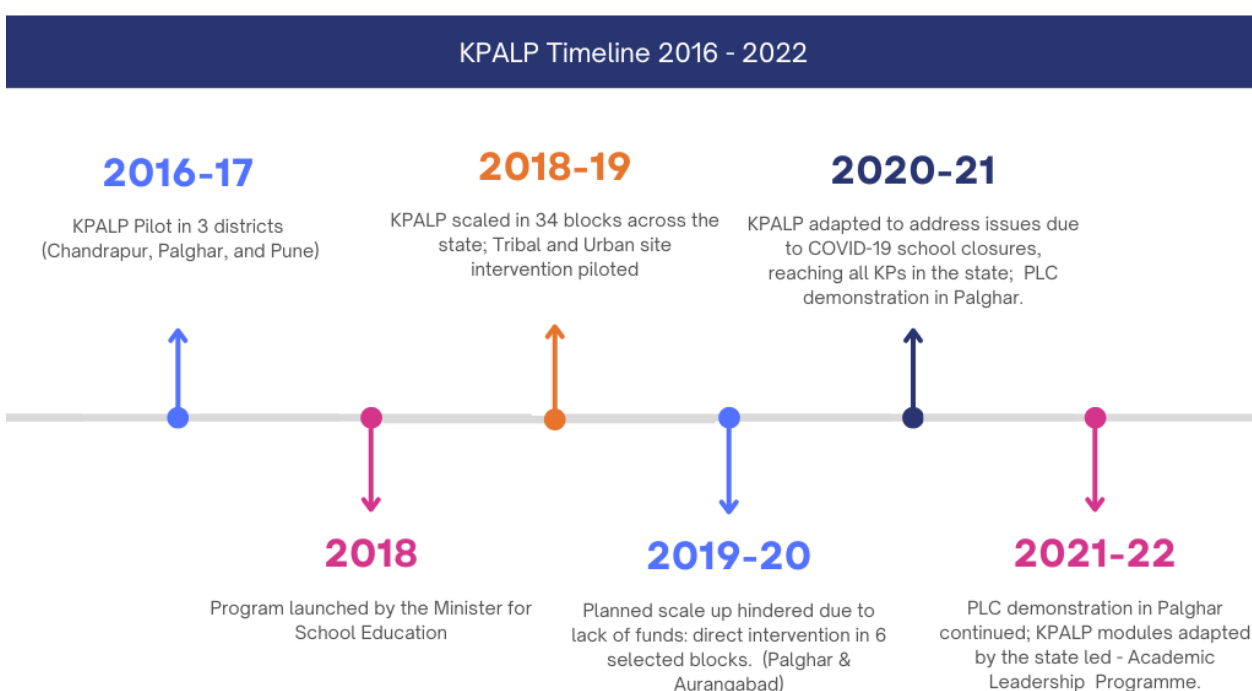

Figure 2.1 KPALP Timeline 2016-2022

KPALP's theory of change is that supporting teacher educators (Master Facilitators/coaches and cluster heads) to better coach teachers in their classrooms will change their teaching practices, thereby increasing student learning levels overall.

2.2 Capacity Building of KPs

Master Facilitators (MFs) and district coaches identified by SCERT and working in DIETs were responsible for the capacity building of KPs. Figure 2.2 depicts the delivery method for capacity building.
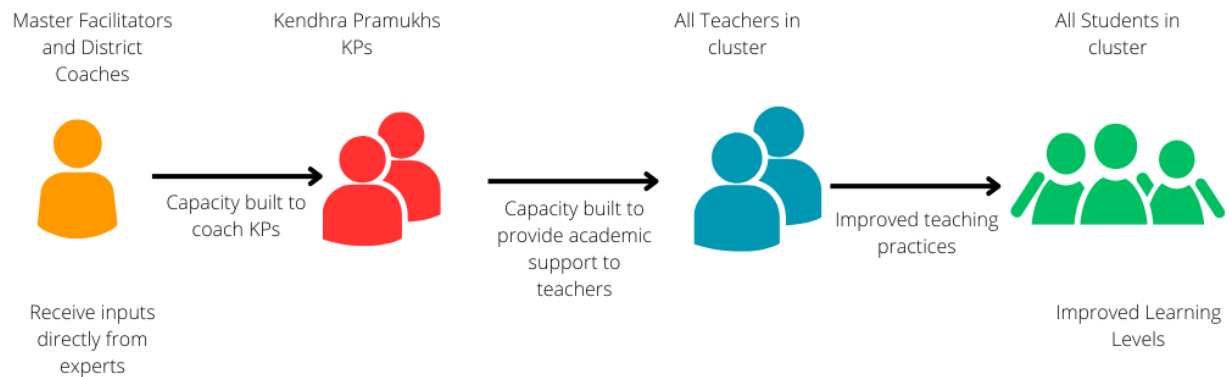
Figure 2.2 KPALP Capacity Building Approach

Capacity development of the Kendra Pramukhs was focused on three main themes.
1. Data analysis
2. Classroom observation and effective feedback
3. Cluster development planning

Data Analysis

The objectives of the Data Analysis module were to gain an understanding of the process of analysing student learning data and to develop the necessary skills. The learners used mindmaps, a model conceptually adapted from the Datawise (Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2013) model of prepare, inquire, and act, a mind tool called Ladder of Inference, and I notice, I wonder protocols to identify a focus area and a learner-centred problem to initiate the inquiry process.

Observation in the Classroom and Effective Feedback

The Classroom Observation and Effective Feedback module was designed to enhance observation and feedback skills in the classroom. Participants learned how to conduct focused classroom observation, comprehend the 5-dimensional framework (5D model) of classroom observation, identify teaching problems uncovered during the observation, and provide effective verbal and written feedback to instructors. Facilitators mapped out the feedback procedure using the FUEL model.

Cluster development strategy

The purpose of this module was to help participants develop an action plan by identifying and comprehending the problems of learning and teaching and by developing a data-driven action plan for addressing the problems of teaching and learning. Participant skills were specifically developed in the following areas: analysing assessment data to identify problems of learning; conducting focused classroom observations to identify problems of practice; providing effective feedback; following up and tracking teacher progress; and identifying teacher needs and formulating action plans.

During the course of the programme, modules about these skills were also adapted to meet the requirements of urban and tribal areas.

Master Facilitators at the state level delegated programme implementation to district coaches, who trained and coached KPs. Implementation included skill-building workshops, field assignments, and on-site coaching sessions for all cadres in the cascade.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were also established with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and implement a more sustainable method of professional development. A separate PLC module has also been developed in collaboration with state resource personnel and the SCERT.

2.3 KPALP Progress Tracking

The KPs' skills were recorded on a Skill Matrix. The matrix classified each of the academic coaching KP skills into three levels of practice. Level 1 corresponded to a beginner or 'NOVICE' skill level, level 2 corresponded to an 'INTERMEDIATE' level of skill practice, and level 3 corresponded to an 'EXPERT' level.

Focus Group Discussions with KPs and teachers, a KP self-assessment survey, and the study of artefacts such as share (the visit feedback) book entries were used to conduct a baseline-endline assessment of KP skills. Observations of the KPs' field work, workshop contributions, and field assignment documents were utilised to track and monitor their progress on a regular basis. A system was developed to monitor the profile of each KP, including individual KP work, workshop attendance, and field assignment completion.

The State Core Committee (the committee that evaluates state initiatives) and the Education Principal Secretary at the time were updated on the progress of the programme. The government agreed and requested that UNICEF expand the programme throughout the state. The authorization was granted between June 2018 and May 2020.

2.4 KPALP adaptations during COVID-19 school closures

According to the original plan for 2020-21, KPALP was to be expanded to more state blocks. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent early school closures, KPALP had to be modified to assist KPs in responding effectively to the emergency. The following modifications were made to the design and implementation of the programme.

2.4.1. Home Learning Package

At the onset of the epidemic, the Maharashtra government prioritised the "Shala band, Shikshan Chalu" initiative. The objective was to keep students engaged in learning despite the closure of schools. In response to the aforementioned, KPALP focused on equipping KPs to disseminate information about the Home Learning Package and ensure that all children are learning during the first quarter. Five state-wide webinars were held in which feedback on the home learning

package and mental health during the pandemic was provided. KPs were responsible for disseminating the information to all teachers in their cluster. During the course of these webinars, 2,844 full-time KPs were reached.

2.4.2. Skilling on Tech Tools

With the pandemic and everything moving online, there was an immediate need to train all KPs on using technology tools such as Zoom and Google Meet. Towards this end, six webinars were held to equip the State Resource Persons (MFs/coaches) from each district, assisting them in reimagining the role of KPs during the pandemic and assisting them in using Zoom and google classroom google meet tools.

2.4.3. Adapting the Integrated Module and PLC Module to an online format

The integrated skill module contained all three KPALP themes, -data analysis, classroom observation and feedback, and action planning. The PLC module was also adapted for online delivery. Subsequently, all MFs/coaches were trained in their delivery to KPs. Since then, 94% of all full-time KPs and DIET officials have received training on these modules. Despite the completion of training, field assignments and coaching that were part of the KPALP design were not possible due to restrictions on movement between districts.

In the two focus districts of Palghar and Aurangabad, input continued to be provided through the block-level Professional Learning Communities (PLC) led by the State Resource Persons at the district level, in addition to the aforementioned programme modifications. PLCs were initiated in three Palghar blocks (Vikramgarh, Vasai, and Jawhar) and three Aurangabad blocks (Sillod, Paithan, and Kannada), covering 71 KPs. (22 Palghar; 49 Aurangabad)

KPs shared practices and honed their skills in data analysis, classroom observation, feedback, and action planning through the PLC meetings. After the project in February 2021, 71% of the total cohort of 71 KPs from the two districts demonstrated skill improvement (tracked on the KP skill matrix).

3. KPALP: Impact Analysis

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the findings of the qualitative research conducted on the KPALP by understanding the design and implementation of the programme from the perspective of the primary participants - the Kendra Pramukhs (KPs) and the Master Facilitators (MFs) /Coaches - as well as other stakeholders. The analysis juxtaposes the voices of the interviewees with the elements and characteristics of the KPALP programme to comprehend the impact the programme had on the ground in a district containing significant tribal areas.

3.2 Findings

The findings are organised based on an analysis of interviews with Master Facilitators/Coaches (MF), Kendra Pramukhs (KP), teachers and other stakeholders, including UNICEF and CEQUE team members. The interviewees' voices are summarised below into five themes: perceptions of KPALP, capacity building, mentoring and support, practice change, and scaling and sustainability of the programme.

3.2.1 Perceptions about KPALP

The programme was conceived based on previous UNICEF research and the need for on-site support for teachers. When UNICEF examined the Cluster Resource Persons or Kendra Pramukhs (KP) in the system, they discovered that academic and pedagogical support was largely absent from KPs' practices. This resulted in the creation and execution of the KPALP. Through a series of consultations with subject matter experts, UNICEF and its implementation partner CEQUE developed modules to enhance the capacity of KPs, including data analysis, classroom observation, effective feedback, and planning for cluster development. The programme's objective was to cultivate mentoring and support skills as well as a shift in KP's behaviour.

The team members of UNICEF and CEQUE, along with other experts, conceptualised the programme with the knowledge that, although the role of the cadre of cluster resource persons (KPs) was to provide academic support, the reality on the ground was different. KPs were primarily responsible for administrative tasks. Even though the KPs were collecting data, they were only turning it over to their supervisors, and the majority of their job consisted of supervising teachers during the school visits. CEQUE's mission, as stated by their CEO, is to strengthen the capacity of educators to improve the quality of instruction they provide their students, as well as to increase their use of creative and effective teaching strategies. As part of their line of work, they have uploaded approximately 170 open-source videos to YouTube depicting classroom instruction, and they use these videos to coach teachers on becoming reflective practitioners. The UNICEF education officer noted that the type of training that the KPs needed to become academic mentors aligned well with CEQUE's work. Hence CEQUE took on the role of implementation partner, designed the programme adopting a very practical skill-based approach and facilitated the training with MFs/Coaches in collaboration and with inputs from UNICEF.

CEQUE highlighted three standout aspects of the programme in the interview. First, after each workshop, they developed assignments and other follow-up activities that the KPs could participate in. In addition to this, they developed tools to measure the programme and evaluate the KPs' practices, and they integrated measurement into the programme itself. The third component was to provide the KPs with ongoing support and to mentor them until they reached a certain level of

> They (KPs) were making visits to schools but it was supervisory in nature, it was not learning visits. They were not coaching visits, so they were more inspection led kind of visits.
>
> - CEO, CEQUE

competence. CEQUE and UNICEF talked about how they began their work with the presumption that the KPs would have good pedagogical knowledge due to the fact that many of the KPs had prior experience working as teachers. Despite this, they came to the conclusion that the KPs themselves required pedagogical inputs. In spite of this information, UNICEF was adamant that the programme design should not centre on literacy and numeracy pedagogy. As a result, the

modules were designed to develop the mentoring and coaching skills of KPs. The PLC was utilised as a venue for the dissemination and discussion of pedagogical information and ideas with the KPs. One example of this kind of pedagogical input was the expressive talk and writing that CEQUE designed and facilitated through the PLCs.

Master Facilitators & Kendra Pramukhs

According to the two MFs, the fundamental goal of the KPALP was to enhance KPs' academic leadership and awareness of student learning challenges and how to solve them. This was to be accomplished by exposing KPs to a variety of different mentoring and coaching strategies. One of the MFs noted that one of the essential programme aims was to change the attitudes of the KPs about teachers, to better understand the difficulties that are related to teachers and teaching, and to discover strategies to support teachers. Five KPs identified the enhancement of student learning outcomes as one of the key aims of the KPALP, additionally six KPs identified the promotion of academic excellence among KPs as the primary purpose

> I understood the (KPALP) programme has a vital role in the academic area… and we were also appointed as KPs to enhance academic capacities of teachers in their teaching and learning process… so that it will improve the status of the students learning ability…[It is] the main purpose of our role.
> - KP3

of the KPALP. The MFs explained that their principal tasks consisted of attending training, instructing the KPs, and advising the KPs on data analysis, feedback, and comments to the teachers. Also, the importance of doing school visits was brought up by one of the MFs. Each of the ten KPs defined their primary tasks as consisting of going to schools, observing classrooms, learning about students' and teachers' concerns, discussing concerns with teachers, advising teachers on how to address student concerns, and demonstrating ideas wherever possible.

3.2.2 Capacity Building

Data Analysis & Classroom Observation

The data analysis module appeared to be the most crucial aspect of capacity building for the MFs and KPs. While the MFs highlighted the

> Data analysis was an important part of the (KPALP) programme that enhanced our ability to explore problems in less time and more accuracy.
> - KP5

> I liked all the modules, but the classroom observation module I liked the most because while doing classroom observation now we keep our eye on other issues.
> So this module is well designed. So that's why in Pune when we used this module [to train KPs], 100% of KPs observed classes. I was highly motivated by this module.
> - MF2

skills they had developed through the module, such as summarising data and creating graphs, the KPs highlighted the significance of evidence-based mentoring as something they had learned through the data analysis module. MFs also mentioned that developing skills to create graphs and data interpretation was the most difficult task they faced while facilitating the data analysis module. MFs and KPs emphasised Classroom Observation and Feedback as the second module. The module made use of a 5D Model (instrument) to facilitate classroom observations, which the MFs found useful and applicable to the module's execution. The module enabled KPs to capture more specific teaching-learning pedagogical aspects, such as student engagement and learning, as well as teaching approaches. KPs also reported making teachers feel comfortable and assuring them that the observation was intended for feedback and suggestions rather than evaluation. The classroom observations also assisted the KPs in establishing relationships with the students, an experience they lacked prior to receiving KPALP training. The The SCERT educator who has coordinated the KPALP programme since its inception stated that data collection has always been an integral part of the job. However, in the

> Earlier we just used to observe the classroom, but through Five D [model], now we know how to observe the class, how to see students' performance and learning outcomes, so now we focus on minor issues.
> - KP2

KPALP programme, this data was viewed as evidence, and educators at the district, block, and cluster levels used it to make decisions, guide the mentoring process, and identify appropriate solutions to problems encountered.

Feedback and Comment Technique & Action Planning

The Feedback and Comment Technique was highlighted as the third component of capacity building by each of the ten KPs. The KPs shared that they had recently acquired the knowledge to provide feedback to teachers in a more constructive manner, concentrating first on what had gone well before moving on to discuss the deficiencies and issues that they had discovered during the visit. Because of this, the KPs were able to create a good connection with the

teachers, which gave them the ability to motivate the teachers to take action in order to reduce the gaps. Each KP emphasised action planning as another component of capacity building in their responses. They established a connection between the learned skills in the action planning and data analysis

> [Whenever] I was observing in the classroom, I was meeting teacher after classroom in the office and discussing the problems observed in the classroom and asking teacher to think about it... how we can plan to overcome this problem with appropriate and flexible schedules in the future. As per the plan, I was visiting to see the progress.
> - KP10

modules. They detailed the process through which they taught teachers how to systematically collect evidence and plan based on the findings of evidence-based analysis. While their school visits and planning were primarily focused on two areas, namely teaching method and student

> To make an analysis, we used equations [spreadsheet formula] for systematic results. Sometimes we take two schools and analyse how these two schools have different learning outcomes.
> - KP3

learning outcomes, a number of administrative matters, sometimes unanticipated matters, such as admission-related matters, textbook distribution, and assisting teachers with 'Shala Siddhi'-related documents, also became part of the mentoring and action planning process. In a similar fashion, the KPs discussed how they analysed the classroom observations to track the progress of the teachers and how they shared these observations and analyses with the other KPs in the PLCs in order to share and verify their work with their peers.

3.2.3 Mentoring and Support

School Visits

The capacity building that the KPs gained as a result of their participation in the (KPALP) programme was consistent with the professional development that the KPs implemented in their roles as mentor teachers. Every KP provided specific examples of how they put the knowledge gained from the three modules into practice. These examples included making decisions based on evidence, making careful and detailed observations in the classroom, providing encouraging feedback to teachers to help them improve their practice, and assisting teachers in planning with shared objectives through discussion and establishing time-bound

goals. KPs stated that they would analyse the data supplied to them by teachers, visit schools regularly and watch classrooms, and address issues with teachers during school visits and over the phone or via a messaging app to understand the requirements of the teachers better. The capacity of teachers at the cluster level to be brought up to date on new ideas and learning that the KPs themselves had acquired through the KPALP was

> We were writing traditional kind of remarks which was very critical and straightforward before (KPALP) programme, but after that we started writing positive remarks i.e. instead of writing 'you have made mistake and you should not make it again' we started writing ' I will be happy if you would have made this activity in this way but I am sure you will perform well in the next visit'.
> - KP8

also built up through the KPs. When observing classes, five KPs emphasised how important it was to observe students' engagement, and six KPs independently stated how important it was to observe students' performance, teaching methods, seating arrangements in the classroom, and the availability and use of TLMs. The importance of offering feedback to teachers and generating action plans that teachers believe they can carry out before their next school visit was emphasised by each and every one of the ten KPs. KPs tracked the success of teachers by following up on the action points that were discussed during the prior school visit. This was an important method. KP communicated with teachers in person and digitally through platforms such as WhatsApp, ZOOM, and phone conversations. The virtual interaction increased significantly during the time that schools were closed due to the pandemic.

Eight KPs particularly said that there was no difference between mentoring female and male teachers, and three KPs stated that the age of the teacher did not play a component in the mentoring process. Five KPs have stated that young teachers have better technical abilities, fresh ideas, and are willing to assist other teachers as well as other KPs, in comparison to KPs who are

> I worked under several KPs and I found that the feedback from the KPs has changed from the aspects of attendance of the teachers and administrative work to the performance of the students.
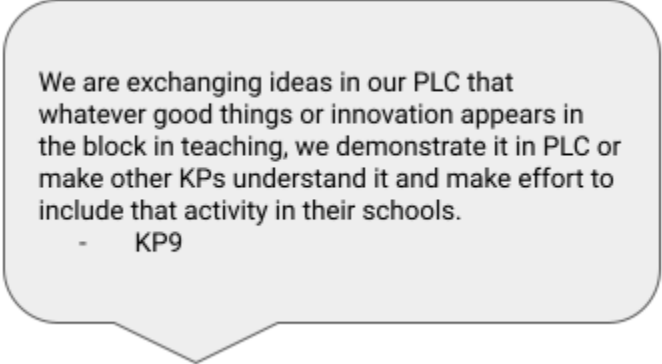> - Head Teacher, GPS, Palghar

more senior in age. Nonetheless, three KPs pointed out that newly qualified teachers are easily worried about administrative concerns. The more experienced teachers, on the other hand, have a much better understanding of administrative concerns. KPs observed some distinctions while mentoring, rural, urban and tribal area schools. According to the KPs, teachers working in rural

and tribal communities are subjected to a greater number of challenges related to amenities than their urban counterparts. In urban regions, they highlighted that teachers need to learn how to cope with a multilingual classroom, whereas, in tribal areas, pupils did not know Marathi and largely spoke the local tribal languages. KPs also noted that the ratio of female teachers in tribal areas is very low compared to urban and rural areas. Every one of the 10 KPs reported that their working relationship with the school principals was positive and that they did not experience any problems carrying out their mentoring responsibilities.

Professional Learning Communities

KPs found the PLC to be a very useful space in which to share their practices, receive support from their peers, and discuss pedagogical and academic challenges that arose in the course of their mentoring. PLCs were also used by KPs to showcase and highlight the excellent work that was completed by teachers. Particularly, eight KPs spoke about students' language issues that they shared and discussed approaches

> We are exchanging ideas in our PLC that whatever good things or innovation appears in the block in teaching, we demonstrate it in PLC or make other KPs understand it and make effort to include that activity in their schools.
> - KP9

to teaching languages, particularly when the student's native language was not Marathi. Five KPs brought up problems with reading and mathematics that they had previously discussed and looked for solutions to. It was mentioned by four KPs that teamwork could be accomplished through the PLC, particularly when planning large events. Two KPs had a conversation about the issues surrounding the dropping out of students after the fifth grade, as the middle and secondary schools were frequently located a significant distance from the children's homes. Three KPs highlighted the fact that they had the freedom and encouragement of peers to express work-related concerns openly and honestly. They also emphasised how important it was for all stakeholders to be involved in the discussions, planning, and decision making processes.

The ten KPs were unanimous in their opinion that the PLC was a very significant environment for their education. They talked about how UNICEF and CEQUE had workshops on language

pedagogy that focused on expressive talking and writing. During the workshops, participants discussed various pedagogical approaches and simple templates. The KPs were able to adopt these templates and facilitate ideas with teachers to implement these templates in their classrooms. All of the points that the KPs made about PLCs were further validated by the MFs, who made statements that were very similar to what the KPs had said.

3.2.4 Change in Practice

Attitudinal changes

One of the most noticeable shifts in KPs' practices was their attitude towards mentoring, teachers, and students. The KPs themselves expressed how they had changed their perspective

> You know I have been working as a teacher for 16 years. I have worked under many KPs, but the current KP (undergone KPALP training) is the best. Earlier I used to be afraid of KP because at that time the KP used to ask me to provide documents and if something is missing then they used to yell. But the current KP sir has good nature, he is a very friendly person, he also has good relations with my students, earlier KPs didn't teach to students anything, they just used ask me, provide this document, give me that file......
> - Teacher 1, GPS, Palghar

towards their tasks, approaching teachers themselves, as facilitators rather than evaluators in their new approach. This shift in mentality paved the way for many different kinds of changes in practice. Instead of approaching their jobs as inspectors, the KPs approached them as mentors. KPs explained to us how they modified the way in which they provided feedback to teachers by emphasising the positive aspects, providing feedback in private rather than in front of the students, and suggesting changes to aspects that they believed the teacher was not approaching in the correct manner. In a similar vein, when looking at the participation and performance of the students, KPs expressed how they examined the data in great detail. The primary function of the KP in relationship with the teachers has shifted from that of an inspector and evaluator to that of a mentor and facilitator. The same way, many KPs gave examples of how students welcomed them into schools because the programme taught them how to notice children, build relationships with the students, and get to know the students as well. Before the programme began, KPs talked about how they hardly paid attention to the students when they were in school. All of the teachers who were interviewed remarked on how this change in

attitude encouraged them to follow up on the action plans, try new ideas that the KPs suggested, and also be able to openly discuss their concerns with the KPs.

Cluster Level Meetings

> When I was sitting with students and asking any questions related to the syllabus, students raised their hands and said, 'Sir me…. Sir me … sir me' that is the indication of the progress in their understanding.
> - KP7

> KPALP is a capacity-building program for KPs. As we know earlier, KPs used to supervise, but through KPALP KPs learnt something new, and they developed our cluster [in addition to the schools]. Now KP is also doing research, and we both have good bonding.
> - Block Resource Person, Palghar

The success of the PLCs inspired the KPs to also facilitate the monthly cluster level meetings o (or *Kendra Sammelans* mandated by the state) at the Cluster & Block Resource Centres with all of the teachers in a similar manner. The PLC experience made the KPs facilitate these meetings more effectively. During these meetings, the KPs encouraged the teachers to share their thoughts and concerns, and they worked together to find solutions to the problems that were brought up. During these meetings, KPs made it a

> We did not feel any kind of fear about KP because KPALP had changed the role from inspector to mentor or guide and that change made us more supportive in resolving the problems. Students also do not feel uncomfortable about her visit. She used to sit with the students and students also confidently answered her questions. Students ask KP when she will visit our school next time.
>
> - Teacher 5, GPS, Palghar

point to acknowledge the outstanding work that had been performed by certain teachers. Teachers who were interviewed also mentioned how they felt motivated when their work was highlighted among peers and how they found the changes that were implemented in the cluster meetings to be positive. Teachers were encouraged to try out innovative ideas in their classrooms after the recognition of their work in a larger community. They also looked forward to sharing and discussing these ideas at the cluster meeting.

Leadership during the Pandemic Period

As a result of the lockdown that the COVID-19 pandemic caused, the programme had to be moved online. By adjusting their methods of teaching and working to fit the online environment,

the MFs and the KPs demonstrated leadership. In conjunction with the KPs, the MFs were successful in developing online modules, creating Google forms a t the district level to collect updated information from the teachers, and carrying out a survey regarding the availability of mobile devices among the student body. The MFs continued to meet the KPs virtually for training, sent soft copies of training materials, and guided the KPs to adopt new practices. These new practices included gathering information from teachers about student's homework, progress of student's

> UNICEF has designed a program named " Goshta ka Shaniwar". It is a reading campaign through SCERT and Pratham books. While designing the program, they understood that the story would be in three languages, one in Hindi and one in Marathi and one in Urdu, but what about the students of Gujarati medium schools? Then during Covid, the KPs gave their time and translated it into Gujarati, and this issue was also raised at the state level.
> - MF1

> In Covid period, physical teaching was stopped at school and we were communicating with students or their parents on mobile. Whenever possible we were going to the local area to observe whether students are studying or not. We were checking their homework to ensure that students are in process of learning. We also gave some responsibility to the local youth who could track the progress of the students.
> - Teacher 6, GPS, Palghar

homework by connecting with the parents, and involving local youth to create a connect between the teachers and community. The KPs also discussed the role that they played in the development of surveys, their ability to virtually connect with teachers, and their rapid development of their technical expertise in order to use Google Meet, Forms, and other similar digital tools for their work and communication. When the quarantine was lifted during the pandemic's first two years, some KPs went to schools and communities in order to meet with teachers and community members in person, get a better understanding of the challenges they faced, and keep teachers motivated. In spite of this, both the MFs and many of the KPs voiced their concern regarding the learning loss that they were seeing among the students as well as the lack of availability of mobile devices among the parents, which prevented the teachers from being able to continuously stay in touch with their students and monitor the progress that they were making.

Teacher Support in Tribal Areas

The KPALP programme was originally intended to assist teachers in rural districts. However, according to the SCERT educator, when the programme was implemented in urban and tribal areas, it was

> Whenever I find any kind of negativity among the teachers about the performance of the tribal students, then I tell the teachers very respectfully and politely, that these are our students, so you should respect them, and our responsibility is to teach them to make their performance better. If you have any issues or need any kind of help then please get back to me, I am here to support you to resolve the issues.
> - KP1

discovered that the issues KPs and teachers faced were quite different, and so the modules were modified to include school location specific issues. Hence, despite the fact that the programme modules' overarching goals have remained unchanged, certain aspects of their designs have been modified in order to better support schools located in areas with high tribal population. The training provided by the programme allowed KPs to modify their approach to the education of children from tribal communities. Six KPs were able to identify specific problems with the education of tribal students, such as problems with students communication in classroom, a language problem related to the education of tribal students in households where Marathi was not spoken at home, and teachers who were not fluent in the languages spoken by the tribal students at home. Two KPs brought up the point that tribal students ought to be respected and accepted, and that it was their responsibility to find ways to improve the students' academic performance and learning. Because students do not have the opportunity to study at home, it is imperative that they receive academic support after school, as was suggested by two additional KPs to their respective teachers.

3.2.5 Scaling & Sustainability

Progress Tracking

The programme design included the creation of a KP Skill Matrix that allowed KPs to self-evaluate their skills and served as an evaluation tool for KPs' practice. UNICEF conducted a baseline-to-endline study using a questionnaire/survey based on the KP Skill matrix. In Chandrapur, where KPs also received on-site coaching, the end-line data revealed a shift in skill

level for approximately 63% of the KPs, with 23% moving from Novice to Expert. In Palghar and Pune, where only workshop instruction was provided, 17% and 25% of KPs, respectively, had progressed from Novice to Learner. Incorporating formative assessment and evaluation of KPs practise into the programme's design allowed the designers to advocate for the programme's expansion. The MFs/ Coaches were trained on the tracking and maintained the same to work with the KPs.

Programme Sustainability

Concerning the programme, the KPs voiced a number of issues, the majority of which were centred on factors that were related to more extensive systemic problems. The primary issue that the KPs were facing was that the number of clusters they were responsible for supervising had been significantly increased, and as a result, their monthly or more frequent school visits had become extremely challenging. Concern was also voiced by the UNICEF team regarding the fact that almost half of the KP positions in the states remained unfilled. The KPs also mentioned that despite the fact that they had shifted their attitudes regarding mentoring, the expectations placed on them by their superiors were primarily administrative in nature. In point of fact, one teacher proposed that all personnel in the reporting hierarchy of KPs should undergo training in order to comprehend the pedagogical and academic role that KPs play. During the interviews with KPs and all stakeholders, it became abundantly clear that the state needs to invest in school resources and infrastructure, minimise the election and non-teaching duties of teachers, and reduce the paperwork teachers must complete. A few KPs expressed their belief that their work would be more efficient if given more authority, such as the ability to approve budgets for less significant maintenance and purchases. The SCERT educator and coordinator of the KPALP programme also indicated that more concrete and long-term decisions regarding the recruitment of KPs and allocation of funds for capacity building would go a long way towards ensuring the program's sustainability. The state has recently begun accepting applications for the KP cadre, as the SCERT educator stated.

When interviewees were asked to rate the success of the KPALP on a five-level scale, with 1 representing very little success and 5 representing

> I really liked this program, and I can rate it as 5 (out of 5) because it totally matches our interest and the program helped us a lot in our daily work. You know, sometime in other programs [i have attended], there are just theories and not a single practical aspect
>
> - KP2

a great deal of success, three KPs and one MF rated the programme's success at 5, while five KPs and one MF rated it at 4, and the remaining stakeholders placed it somewhere between 3 and 4. The primary reason for the lower ratings was not so much related to the content of the programme; rather, it was more related to questions of system support, sustainability, and the scaling of the programme. In point of fact, the Data Analysis module underwent scaling in 2018, but the impact of that scaling is outside the purview of the current investigation. However, as a result of the outbreak of the pandemic, the educational system is currently struggling with a variety of challenges, and the precise state of the programme cannot be established with certainty. Concerns about policy level issues that were raised by UNICEF included the recruitment process for the KP cadre, as well as their job description, specifically addressing the question of what percentage of their responsibilities should be administrative and what percentage should be academic.

The CPD Department at SCERT plans to support the integration of the induction module developed as a part of the KPALP and the other modules into the state's training policy for newly recruited KPs. The state has integrated the KPALP into the ALP (Academic Leadership Programme) under the World Bank funded STARS programme. The ALP includes the KPALP modules for KPs and BRPs. The modules have also been adapted for the head teachers under their school leadership module. Both UNICEF and CEQUE were looking into the question of what role they could play in the event that such programmes were incorporated into the education system of the state, as well as the question of how long their involvement would last and what other aspects of the implementation they could potentially take up.

3.3 Impact Analysis

The KPALP programme was successful because the program's primary learners—the KPs—clearly understood the program's objectives and were able to articulate these objectives several years after receiving training. The views that were presented by UNICEF and CEQUE in relation to the objectives and design of the programme were, in many respects, comparable to the views that were presented by the MFs and KPs. KPs, for instance, were able to express their level of comprehension and practices in relation to all three of the modules for which they had received training. In addition, one of the goals of the programme was to foster the development of skills through the application of more practical methods. One of the KPs explicitly stated so, and others were able to provide evidence from their own experience to demonstrate that this

particular aspect of the design was successful. The HMs and BRP also validated the success of the programme and the changes it brought on ground to facilitate overall school improvement.

The capacity building was impactful, as evidenced by the fact that all ten KPs were able to give specific examples of how they applied the knowledge gained from each of the modules in their work. Because of the data analysis module, KPs are now able to facilitate evidence-based planning with teachers in order to improve teacher's practices and student's learning outcomes. KPs have unquestionably been given the opportunity, as a result of the classroom observation module, to observe pedagogical aspects, as well as the engagement and performance of students in significantly nuanced ways, which has significantly improved their ability to give useful feedback to teachers. Last but not least, the strategy of planning and following up has made it possible for KPs to motivate teachers to try out the suggestions made by KPs and change the practices of teachers. In general, the modules have provided KPs with the opportunity to develop their skills in effective mentoring and coaching in order to provide rigorous academic support.

The support that the KPs were able to receive through the PLC was one of the most significant and positively impactful aspects of the programme as a whole. Within the PLC, KPs were able to receive support from MFs as well as members of the KPALP design team. KPs were able to share their practices with their peers, and get pedagogical support and expertise provided by the programme team. Because of this, it was possible to create a repository of best practises that the KPs could then bring back to the teachers. The PLC made it possible for the KPs to receive ongoing support and was also able to facilitate the development of two-way communication between the experts and the KPs. By participating in the PLC, KPs gained the knowledge and skills necessary to more effectively facilitate the cluster meetings with the teachers. As a result, the schools within the cluster improved, and the teachers were motivated to innovate in the classroom and to be recognised at the cluster and block levels.

> I remember when we were discussing it with CEQUE, we found a lot of images where KPs had shown themselves as the King sitting on a throne, where the KP was in the centre. And then, after the entire series of training, when we did the exercise again, we saw KPs showing how they were part of a circle where teachers were all holding hands.
> - UNICEF Education Officer, about a visualisation exercise done during KPs training

The programme was successful in addressing a number of important issues, one of which was a shift in perspective regarding mentoring and support. All of the teachers who were asked to participate in the interview described how their relationship with the mentors had improved, while the KPs themselves were able to reflect on the way their attitudes had shifted by providing examples of specific shifts in the way they approached mentoring. This shift in attitude and relationship change with KPs has made it possible for teachers to positively receive the mentoring and has motivated them to put changes into practice in their classrooms, try out strategies suggested by the KPs, and follow up with the KPs on the changes and achievements they have made.

In order for KPs to be able to mentor and suggest research-based strategies to teachers, one of the aspects that would need to be thought through is the nature and method of developing KPs' pedagogical ideas. During our visits to the various schools, we discovered that the utilisation of expressive talk and writing instructional strategies was the novel idea that was met with the most positive reception from the various teachers. The KPs were provided with practical strategies and simple templates that enabled them to mentor teachers effectively in this pedagogical area. This was discovered during our discussions with the KPs as well. Other pedagogical aspects, such as those pertaining to numeracy and numerical thinking, could not be substantiated by the evidence that we were able to find. The understanding of numeracy and the development of numerical thinking among teachers and KPs was traditional, and we found little evidence that teachers had implemented any innovative strategies. On the other hand, the reading, writing, and general language development practices of the teachers in the classroom were more forward-thinking and were based on more contemporary theories of literacy development.

The dissemination of such concepts throughout the state is still a question that needs to be talked about and answered. Concerning the expansion of the programme and its incorporation into the general public school system, there are a lot of questions that haven't been answered yet. According to the UNICEF team member, there are very few organisations that are focusing on the issues of mid-level functionaries, including their roles, recruitment efforts, and professional development. On the one hand, the State seems to be questioning the affordability of this cadre from a financial standpoint, as evidenced by the fact that it is not actively recruiting

into the KP cadre and consequently increasing the responsibilities of KPs to manage more clusters. On the other hand, KPs have stressed the importance of being allotted to smaller clusters so that they can pay more frequent visits to schools. The long term impact of such a programme hinges on the policies and practices adopted by the State towards the KP or cluster resource person cadre.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Summary of Findings

In this section, we review the research questions and summarise the findings by addressing them. We can conclude that the KPALP programme was successful based on the data analysis and findings presented in the previous chapter. KPs have developed the skills and knowledge of mentoring based on the professional development they have received and have altered their attitudes towards mentoring in order to build positive relationships with teachers, resource persons, block leaders, and even students. Stakeholders were able to identify specific improvements in KPs' skills, attitudes, and practices at all levels of the system, from the school to the block level. In the five blocks we visited in the Palghar district, the programme appears to have diffused into the system and permeated.

4.1.1 Changes in KPs knowledge/skills, attitudes and practices

Specifically, KPs improved their data analysis, classroom observation, feedback to teachers, and action plan preparation skills. In each of these domains, all ten KPs we interviewed were able to reflect on their learning and identify specific behavioural modifications and adjustments to their practices as a result of KPALP's capacity building. There is abundant evidence that school-level processes concerning teacher support have improved. In each of the schools we visited, teachers remarked that they were motivated to try new ideas, welcomed the KPs, and valued the nature of the support they received. Classroom observations, teacher feedback, and collaborative action planning were highlighted based on a shared understanding of objectives. However, KPs reported that their current authority did not permit them to approve funds for minor repairs and purchases, which occasionally impeded their mentoring process. The formation of relationships is a crucial aspect of change that facilitates the spread and adoption of programmes (Daly, 2015). In many instances, the results indicate that relationships between KPs and teachers, principals, and cluster/block resource officers have improved.

4.1.2 Changes in school processes

While the evidence regarding mentoring and school-level processes has improved, there is a need to align other school processes with the mentoring process in order to improve the effectiveness of action planning. While KPs on their own, based on the needs of teachers, worked with teachers to plan for admissions, infrastructure, textbook distribution, etc., overall school improvement processes have not been addressed systematically and are quite extensive. For BRCs/CRCs to function effectively in enhancing education quality, research and policy documents indicate a more holistic school improvement vision (Giordano, 2008; GoI, 2011). Teachers and KPs may be able to execute their plans with greater efficiency and speed if KPs are granted more authority to make financial and administrative decisions quickly at the cluster level.

4.1.3 Change in adopting active pedagogies.

Teacher's adopting active pedagogies was particularly evident in the pedagogical ideas that the KPs were exposed to, as teachers exhibited a strong desire to innovate and introduce new concepts in the are of expressive talk and writing. In fact, we observed that simple scaffolds, such as templates and frameworks/models, assisted KPs in proposing these ideas to teachers and enabled teachers to implement and experiment with the new pedagogical ideas. However, we found little evidence of KPs providing such assistance without the assistance of experts like CEQUE. There is a significant knowledge gap among KPs regarding research-based ideas for foundational literacy and numeracy, as evidenced by the limited changes to teachers' pedagogy, particularly in regards to numeracy. However, the PLC provided a conducive environment for KPs to acquire such knowledge. Teachers also demonstrated more nuanced understanding of the issues related to the education of tribal children and were able to identify specific language and communication related issues and worked with the KPs to find solutions. The principles and characteristics of in-service professional development defined by Hammond, Hyler & Gardner(2017) were met through the KPALP programme. Contextually relevant practices, such as recognising the learning needs and issues of tribal children, enhancement of active learning and development, where KPs were able to benefit from continous and sustained learning through the PLCs and in turn provide support to teachers, promotion of collaboration through the PLCs and in the Cluster meetings among KPs and teachers, and provision of space for reflection, and modelling practices were observed in the study.

4.1.4 Support during the pandemic

During the COVID-19 quarantine and lockdown, the MFs and KPs displayed leadership. Many KPs were able to contribute to the development of resources for online transactions, the modification of the mode of training and support, and the collection of data to determine the educational requirements of students. However, KPs were helpless when it came to the lack of resources and devices among students, and they expressed genuine concern for the learning loss they observed once schools reopened.

4.1.5 Operation of the PLCs established for KPs

The PLC was an effective social learning environment for KPs. It provided a venue for both peer-to-peer and expert-to-peer learning. In addition, the PLC was used to discuss issues and seek collaborative solutions. The PLC enabled ongoing support for KPs and encouraged KPs to transform cluster meetings into additional learning meetings and a PLC for teachers. Instead of traditional workshops, professional development is most effective when social learning opportunities are created, according to research (Daly, 2015). The mid-level functionaries roles have always been ill-defined (Goi, 2011) and the PLC was able to develop the KPs professional identity and bring role clarity. KPs through their sharing, discussions were able to validate their practices and understand their role clearly as providing academic support to teachers as they were able to to see the results of their changes in practice. Such a building of professional identity will enable the way towards creating career pathways for teachers. In fact the PLCs positively affected KPs pedagogical practices, collaborative work, authority, and enabled the KPs to provide continuous teacher learning.

4.2 Recommendations

Through the design, development, and implementation of the pilot, the KPALP programme has largely attained the goals it set for itself, resulting in a shift in KPs' attitudes and practices, which has had a positive effect on teacher practices and student learning. For any state education system to sustain such efforts, scalability must be a top priority. The next step is to determine how a programme such as KPALP can be adopted statewide at scale while maintaining the same level of quality. To scale up teacher mentoring and support programmes

for effective in-service learning, a number of systemic, structural, policy-level, and design and implementation factors must be considered.

4.3.1 Systemic and Structural Aspects

Systematically and structurally, it is essential to define the function of the KP or mid-level functionary. KPs have a tendency to prioritise administrative responsibilities over academic ones. Therefore, the balance between administrative and academic roles must be clarified giving more attention to the academic role (Sayed, 2010). A nuanced understanding of the KP's academic role must permeate the reporting structure for the education system to operate more efficiently.   To ensure that KPs function optimally, the recruitment of KPs, the financial implications and affordability of the KP role, and the scope of work must be defined and made into policy.

4.3.2 Policy Considerations

Self-assessment instruments and feedback mechanisms must be developed and implemented prior to the creation of career pathways and evaluation systems. This will allow KPs and teachers to develop their professional identities. The KPALP has already developed a competency-framework for evaluating the skills and practices of KPs. As stated in the OCED document (OECD, 2019), KP and teacher performance evaluation standards must be developed in collaboration with KPs, teachers and other stakeholders. Defining career paths for KPs and teachers is the next step. To increase educator motivation, the self-assessment and evaluation processes must be used to develop horizontal and vertical career pathways for teachers and KPs.

4.3.2 Programme Design

For KPs to become effective pedagogical mentors, it is necessary to create online and hybrid courses and modules in a variety of subject pedagogies. To sustain pedagogical growth, it is necessary to establish and oversee online and hybrid PLCs. The modules and courses must provide simple templates and scaffolds to facilitate implementation in practise, while preserving the autonomy of teachers to contextualise for their classrooms. The modules will be effective if

they are practice-based and consider the educator's local context. The hybrid nature of these modules will increase their reach and scale. The state must ensure that the courses and modules offered to KPs and teachers are high quality. The modules may also be modified to strengthen skills for mentoring and coaching with the other cadres who support the KPs, such as head teachers, block-level educators and DIET faculty.

4.3.4 Scaling and Sustainability

Cohen and Ball (2000) argue that innovations that have aimed to alter classroom practice or instruction have typically not had sustained success as much as curricular reforms like textbooks and standardised testing. There are several studies and research (Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013; Sancar, Atal & Deryakulu, 2021; Lim, Juliana & Liang 2020) and frameworks (Rogers, 1995; UNICEF, 2019; Olsen, Rodríguez & Elliott, 2022; Wolfenden, 2022) available to understand and develop frameworks and designs to scale educational programmes, that should be considered as a next step. For example, these frameworks guide and scaffold scalability of the programme, include what elements to scale, agencies involved in the scaling and identifying technology and other levers and tools to use for scaling. While there have been attempts to scale this programme, there are many policy level issues that need to be discussed in detail, such as the government's plans for recruitment of the mid-level functionary's cadre, the financial implications, building career options for teachers and other larger systemic issues.

The UNICEF education officer for the KPALP had already suggested a collaborative approach, involving all stakeholders, NGOs and universities involved in the developing of teacher support systems to come together to discuss and deliberate on larger policy and systemic concerns related to mid-level functionaries and teacher academic support systems. The scalability and sustainability exercise is the way forward and the next step recommended for the KPALP. A concept notes and agenda for a collaborative workshop are attached (See Annexure).

4.3 Reflections

In general, the programme has been successful in accomplishing its goals and has had a significant impact on the following: the development of mentoring skills among KPs; bringing

about of an attitude and behavioural change among KPs; and the improvement of the pedagogical support that teachers receive. What needs to be investigated further are more systemic approaches and discussions at the policy level regarding how to carry out such a programme on a larger scale while preserving the quality of the outcomes. The "scaling-up" of the KPALP is an important next step for the programme and strategies need to be deliberated on in collaboration with multiple organisations working to improve teacher support across India and of course the state government systems that will implement the programme at scale.

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Annexures

Classroom Observation Template

Addendum to Classroom Observation Template Draft 2019

(Adapted from Shala Siddhi, School Standards and Evaluation Framework)

परिशिष्ठ: वर्ग निरीक्षण टेम्प्लेट **2019**

(शाळा सिद्धी, शाळा मानके आणि मूल्यमापनाच्या रचनेवरून प्राप्त)

Observation focus	Indicator	Score/Mark	Score/Mark	Score/Mark
		1	**2**	**3**
Purpose SMART	**1.1**	The learning objective cannot be identified/ vague.	Teacher uses less than 3 aspects of SMART learning objectives.	Teacher formulates SMART learning objectives.
	1.2	No link between the learning objective, classroom teaching and learning outcome.	Occasionally, the link between the learning objective, classroom teaching and learning outcome is observed.	The link between the learning objective, classroom teaching and learning outcome is clear.

Student Engagement	2.1	Learners listen quietly to teachers. Engaged largely through recall and memorization. Repeat after the teacher and do not ask questions.	Few learners actively participate in meaning making through reading, thinking, writing, problem-solving, discussing, collaborative work, asking questions or hands-on activity. Rest of the students answer in chorus.	All learners are actively engaged in meaning making through reading, thinking, writing, problem-solving, discussing, collaborative work, asking questions or hands-on activity.
	2.2	Students are rarely observed taking ownership of their learning.	Students are sometimes observed taking ownership of their learning.	Students are observed taking ownership of their learning.
	2.3	Students are struggling to connect their background and experiences with lesson content.	Students are able to connect their background and experiences with lesson content in limited ways.	Students are able to connect their background and experiences with lesson content.
Pedagogy	3.1	Teacher has a weak understanding of content knowledge. Make content errors.	Teacher's content knowledge is good, but some gaps are evident. They find it hard to explain difficult concepts.	Teacher has mastery over content knowledge.

	3.2	Teacher uses only textbooks and blackboard to teach in class; sometimes get learners to copy from the blackboard; classwork is given occasionally.	Teacher has some understanding of their learners. They mostly follow the textbook but use a variety of TLM in their teaching.	Teacher understands learners and uses a variety of methods and TLM to create opportunities to address the learning needs of all children.
	3.3	Teacher does not ask questions to deepen student understanding or uncover misconceptions.	Teacher infrequently asks questions to deepen student understanding or uncover misconceptions.	Teacher asks questions to deepen student understanding or uncover misconceptions.
Classroom Environment and Culture	4.1	Teacher manages the class by making learners face the blackboard; instructs the class from a fixed position; ensures discipline by maintaining silence.	Teacher mostly gets the learners to sit in rows or circles. Moves around in during lessons to check on students.	Teacher uses space as per the activity, both inside and outside the classroom. Seating is flexible. Learners observe self-discipline.
	4.2	Learners' work is not displayed in class. The environment does not appear joyful.	Learners' work is displayed, but displays are not changed often. The environment is cheerful, but learning may or may not be happening.	Learners' work is always displayed and changed frequently. The environment is cheerful, and learning is happening.

	4.3	Teacher does not develop a positive teacher-student relationship. Do not actively encourage equity and inclusiveness.	Teacher establishes a positive teacher-student relationship. Occasionally tries to get non-participating students to participate.	Teacher establishes a positive teacher-student and student-student relationships. Actively promotes equity and inclusiveness in the classrooms.
Student Assessment	5.1	Teacher assesses as per applicable policy. Mostly uses summative assessments that assess rote learning and factual knowledge from the textbook.	Teacher uses a variety of activities and tasks to assess learning periodically.	Teacher uses a variety of strategies to check for student understanding like peer assessment, questioning, demonstration and individual work.
	5.2	Assessment tasks are not aligned with the content learnt in class.	Assessment tasks are sometimes aligned with the content learnt in class.	Assessment tasks are aligned with the content learnt in class.

KPALP - KP Academic Skill Matrix

Dimension	Level 1 (Novice)	Level 2 (Learner)	Level 3 (Expert)
Analyzing Assessment data to identify student learning gaps	Does not look at assessment data or only uses for reporting purposes	Begins to use assessment data to make inferences on gaps in student learning at individual and class level	Reviews assessment data and is able to co-relate inferences made from assessment data and inferences drawn from classroom observations to come up with a clear picture of gaps in student learning. Begins to use inferences to get a school level understanding of learning levels
Classroom Observation	Does not make concrete pedagogical observations Has no specific plan or focus of observation	Makes some evidence-based pedagogic observations using the 5D framework Makes classroom visits based on a rough plan	Makes comprehensive observations using the 5D framework Has a well-defined plan for classroom visits with a focus on apragat classes Draws inferences based on concrete points
Effective Feedback	Gives feedback mostly on non-academic areas Nature of Feedback is general, advisory and not actionable	Some of the feedback is on academic areas Feedback is sometimes concrete though not necessarily evidence-based	KP gives comprehensive, evidence-based based on inferences on observational data. Gives clear and actionable feedback

Follow-up and Tracking Teacher Progress	Does not track teacher progress at any time Follow-up is ad-hoc.	Tracks the progress of few teachers based on inputs given, but not for a sustained period There is follow-up but not regular and planned well	Regularly records and tracks the progress of all teachers based on inputs given Follow-up is regular and timely
Teacher Needs Identification and preparation of action plan	Does not identify teacher needs or makes plans to build capacity of teachers Does ad-hoc actions as and when he/she gets time. Does ad-hoc actions as and when he/she gets time	Occasionally is able to identify needs of a few teachers Plan systematic intervention of a few teachers based on needs identified	KP is skilled at identifying and addressing teacher needs. Plans a systemic intervention in the form of an actionable plan for addressing the needs (models lessons, provides study material and TLM/SLM aids to teacher etc)

List of Attached Documents

1. Interview Schedule - Kendra Pramukh - English & Marathi
2. Interview Schedule - Master Facilitators - English & Marathi
3. Interview Schedule - Stakeholders - English & Marathi
4. Concept Note & Agenda - Collaborative workshop discussing teacher support and career systems, programmes and policies - English
5. Executive Summary - Marathi
6. Presentation - English & Marathi