



# Learning Curve

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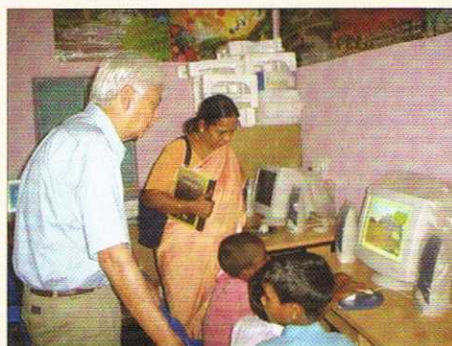
**The Kudligi Story**

**Notes from the Field**

## A letter from Azim Premji

A few weeks ago I was in schools that were located in the Pavagada taluk of Tumkur district in Karnataka State. In these schools are located the Computer Assisted Learning Centres of Government of Karnataka. The enthusiasm of the children was overwhelming and completely disarming. We had gone there unannounced and were surprised to observe the good upkeep and tidiness of these centres. They had neatly organised the computers, furniture, curricular CDs and each child was raring to work on these computers. The children and their parents might have many problems of providing for the schooling but the message was very clear. They were there to learn and conquer.

I was disappointed that two out of the five centres that we visited did not have electricity supply for the past few days and even the UPS was not charged. Like the eager farmers who wait for the rain clouds, the children and the teachers seemed to be waiting for the electricity supply. The lack of electricity did not dampen their spirits at all. They refused to be frustrated. They refused to give up.



Azim Premji observing children use the content CDs

This is very representative of the millions of children in our country. I have visited several rural schools and urban slum schools and yet have not come across a single school where the children and the teachers came across as having given up hope.

This to me is the biggest strength that needs to be leveraged in achieving the Universalisation of Elementary Education across India. The spirit and the morale have to transcend beyond the immediate set backs or the lack of infrastructure or lack of teachers or poor pedagogical assistance in the school.

The burning desire to make a difference and the passion to come up in life-this is the hall mark of millions of children in our country. And this feeling is the raw material to shape the future of our country.

At Azim Premji Foundation, we would like to leverage on this spirit and consistently keep communicating with all the stakeholders in the Universalisation of Elementary Education through the newly launched newsletter "Learning Curve".

I have great pleasure in presenting to you the first issue of "Learning Curve".

Sincerely,  
**Azim Premji**

### Accelerated Learning Programme (2003)

- 1029 schools
- 16 blocks of North East Karnataka
- 70,000 children
- 1029 volunteers

### Learning Guarantee Programme (2003-05)

- 1903 Government Lower and Higher Primary schools
- 46 blocks of North East Karnataka
- 3,80,000 children
- 584 evaluators

### Computer Assisted Learning Centres

- 225 schools
- 27 districts of Karnataka
- 84,000 children
- 21 Educational CDs



## From the Foundation

As a not for profit organisation, we have long felt the need to communicate with all people committed to make a difference to our country through Universalisation of Elementary Education. In the initial 12 months of the Azim Premji Foundation, enormous time was spent in meeting with several dedicated people and organisations who have vowed to devote their energies and intellectual strengths to the issue of Universalisation of Elementary Education. We learnt from each one of these experiences and every such meeting has contributed to shaping of our current programmes, partnerships and approach.

The discussions guided us in deciding the area of focus both in terms of geography, partnership and the fact that we should work on "improving the quality of learning in schools". It was encouraging to experience the overwhelming support we received to our decision of focussing on "Learning Improvement".

We must confess that we had no experience of closely working with the governments and were apprehensive about what was in store for us. The past two years have not only allayed our apprehensions but in many ways, it has been a "dream experience" in terms of guidance, cooperation and execution support that we received from the Governments of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Our programmes and initiatives revolve around contributing to "improving learning of elementary school children" of the above geography. While some of them like Accelerated Learning Programme and Computer Assisted Learning Centre have the potential to directly contribute to the learning competencies of children, the other programmes such as training and development for teachers, community members, and education functionaries can potentially contribute to building capacity to deliver learning improvement in an ongoing manner.



Joyful learning!



Formal schooling,  
a vital experience of childhood

One of the most important realities is that nothing in education or learning can be achieved by a single individual or organisation. All stakeholders have to pool in and discharge their responsibility effectively. We also need to leverage on each others' achievements and experience. "Learning Curve" is an effort to do exactly this. Through this newsletter, we will not only communicate the status of the programmes and initiatives of the Foundation and other organisations but also generate a meaningful debate on important issues that are relevant to Universalisation of Elementary Education.

Planned as a quarterly, "Learning Curve" has set itself the objective of bringing you closer to the people, policies and programmes in the field of elementary education in India. While on one hand one feels excited with an experience of having touched lakhs of children through the programmes of Azim Premji Foundation, one also feels humbled with the thought that as high as 50 million children in the country are away from the wonderful experience of learning in formal school. Beyond everything else, we sincerely feel that formal schooling is a vital experience of childhood and every child has a right to childhood!

We sincerely appeal to all our readers to help us in enriching "Learning Curve" as we go along.

**Dileep Ranjekar**

Chief Executive Officer



## Fast Forward!

# Accelerated Learning Programme

### What is Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) ?

- A hand-holding exercise towards ensuring retention and learning improvement among school children.
- Specific periods in weekly timetable allotted to Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP).
- Pre test and Diagnostic test administered to all children to understand the existing competency gap in the child.
- ALP provides relevant innovative academic inputs to aid the children bridge the existing gap and achieve competencies.
- Programme aims to advocate, that every child in the formal school system has the ability to learn, inspite of being 'out-of-school' for a year or more.



Using tools - peers show the way

Anjum, Eramma and Younus are three drop out children who were mainstreamed in June 2002 at Government School, Konapurpet, Raichur District. By February 03, they had acquired higher competencies. This year they will be joined by thousands of recently mainstreamed children, through the Accelerated Learning Programme.

The Government of Karnataka and Azim Premji Foundation launched the Accelerated Learning Programme in 2003-04. The programme enables the students to learn at their pace. The child centred, child paced, competency-based approach is aimed at increasing learning levels of children. Simultaneously, it aims to initiate greater community and parental participation in school related activities.

Through a process that included a written test and interview, 1029 volunteers were selected. They were trained by a pool of 75 Master Resource Trainers who have been trained by the Academics and Pedagogy team of Azim Premji Foundation. For monitoring and supervision of the programme in the 16 Blocks, there are Block Co-ordinators (responsible for 2 Blocks each) and Area Co-ordinators (responsible for 40 schools each).

The success of the Accelerated Learning Programme depends on the joint efforts of schools, parents, organisations and governments. Together, we have to create an atmosphere where attending school and learning are not a matter of choice but a way of life. A way to progress!



Accelerated Learning class in progress

**For a detailed document on Accelerated Learning Programme please log on to [www.azimpremjifoundation.org](http://www.azimpremjifoundation.org)**



# Learning Guaranteed!

## LEARNING GUARANTEE PROGRAMME

- A joint initiative of Government of Karnataka and Azim Premji Foundation covering 9280 Government Primary schools in North East Karnataka
- Schools offer themselves for assessment on the important criteria of learning achievement. The other two criteria are enrolment and attendance.
- Reward and recognise successful schools that demonstrate 'Guarantee of Learning'.
- Analyse factors and processes that enable schools to guarantee learning.

The Learning Guarantee Programme (LGP) is designed to identify schools that demonstrate "Guarantee of Learning" on criteria defined by the programme, analyse the success factors and communicate these to other schools. The programme recognises and rewards schools that meet the identified criteria of enrolment, attendance and learning achievement of children. The programme aims at motivating and inspiring teachers and schools to develop processes in a sustained manner that enable all the children to acquire the relevant expected competencies in a manner relevant to their day-to-day life applications.

Since the programme will run for a period of 3 academic years (2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05), schools will have a chance to aspire, improve and qualify for the reward over a 3 year period.

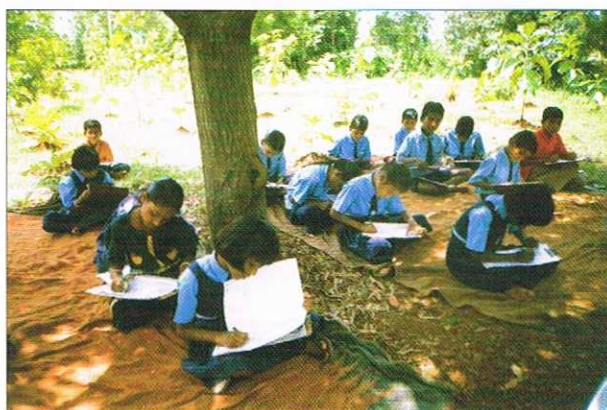
6,484 schools sent in applications expressing interest to participate in the Learning Guarantee Programme. They were each given the detailed application forms and Prospectus. 1,900 schools completed the process and qualified as participants and 895 schools offered

themselves for assessment in 2003. The participating schools exercised their option of choosing the year that they wished to be assessed by the evaluating team.



The eligibility of a school for the learning guarantee award will be determined on the basis of the enrolment, attendance and learning achievement criteria. The programme requires that in order to qualify for the reward, all children in the 6-11 age group must be enrolled, 90% of the enrolled children must attend regularly and at least 60% of the children demonstrate that they have acquired the expected learning competencies. When atleast 70% of the children demonstrate expected competencies the reward given to the school is higher while schools where at least 80% children do so will earn a reward of Rs. 20,000.

The evaluation of 895 schools for the current year is nearing completion. Each school evaluation takes about 5 days for a 4 member team. The Foundation has selected and trained 584 evaluators (all of them graduates, many have an MSW or B.Ed. degree additionally) in June and August 2003.



Written Test in Progress



Oral Test in Progress



## 3 'R's and 2 'C's Computer Assisted Learning Centre



### What is Computer Assisted Learning Centre (CALC) ?

- A place in schools where students can learn during school hours with the help of computers.
- Attracts children to schools.
- Creates excitement in and around the school.
- Aimed at simplifying difficult concepts, thereby making learning exciting and fundamentals strong.
- Local youth are identified and trained. Called Young India Fellows, these volunteers facilitate interaction between children and computers.
- CALC helps to build local content.



A Young India Fellow assisting students at a CALC

Learning has generally included the three 'R's. To reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic we need to add a couple of 'C's, for creativity and curiosity. Recognising that innovative use of technology in school has the potential to make learning effective, Azim Premji Foundation conceived the idea of Computer Assisted Learning Centres (CALC). To the 35 Centres set up by the Foundation in 2001, the Government of Karnataka added 55 last year. The Government later set up another 135 centres across 27 districts of Karnataka to enliven the educational journey of children.

The objective of the programme is to facilitate improved learning among children through joyful, self-based, interactive sessions. Here, computers are used as a tool for education, not to learn computer technology itself... computers for learning is the motto, not learning computers!

The Foundation has identified educated volunteers from the community who help in the running of the CALC. They are called Young India Fellows. After sustained training and orientation programmes, they are equipped to supervise work at the CALC. With the computer as a tool to aid their imagination, and the Young India Fellows as their mentors, thousands of children in Karnataka have now moved forward. It is said that a good mentor can take ten years off your learning curve. How true!



Chaitra

### Touched by a Butterfly

Chaitra, a seventh standard student of Govt. Higher Primary school, Hungenahalli in Malur Taluk, Kolar District, saw a butterfly and wondered what it ate, and how it got its lovely colours. Ms. Vedha, a Young India Fellow, noticed her interest and immediately set out to help her. She introduced her to the magical world of computers and the excitement of learning through them.

Chaitra prepared a project on the Butterfly using the computer. She read a few books, discussed with her teacher, used Paintbrush to draw a Butterfly and label its parts, recorded her own voice for the voiceover and prepared a full-fledged Power Point presentation.

Sandhya, Chaitra's friend, was concerned about polio-afflicted persons in her village. She talked to the nurse in the local hospital, then to the doctor and created her own document on what she had learnt about polio.

Chaitra and Sandhya learnt something that will always stay with them.... not just the content, but also that there is immense joy in discovering and learning on one's own. In the process, local content was developed too.



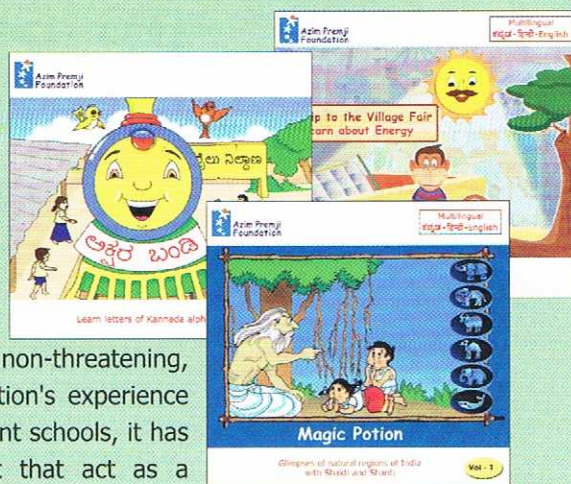
Sandhya



## Educational Content

Imaginative software has the potential to make academic learning happen without the conscious knowledge or effort of the child. Learning can be an exciting process for a child not merely because 'letters' of the alphabet board a train, or birds speak and funny voices congratulate the child when she clicks on the right answer, but also because it happens in a non-threatening, non-competitive, familiar atmosphere. With the Foundation's experience in Computer Assisted Learning Centres in rural government schools, it has been working towards bringing out software content that act as a supplement to the concepts taught by the teachers in schools.

Azim Premji Foundation has 21 educational CDs as a part of the Computer assisted learning initiative. These CDs address specific topics from Science, Mathematics and Language in Kannada, Telugu and English. Contentment for a child is when learning is a joy. The Foundation is currently working on more educational software content on identified concepts for Standard 1-8.



## Research News

**Rashtriya Vidyalaya Education Centre (RVEC)**, a division of Rashtriya Shikshana Samithi Trust, Bangalore, is partnering Azim Premji Foundation to conduct a series of research studies to evaluate the impact of some of our programmes. The results of the impact of Accelerated Learning Programme 02-03 is available while that on the 55 Computer Assisted Learning Centres is expected in December 2003.

**Spastics Society of Karnataka** is partnering the Foundation to study the 'Impact of Technology Initiatives on learning achievements of children with learning disabilities'. The research findings are expected in February 2004.

**Princeton University, USA (Department of Economics and International Affairs/Woodrow Wilson School)**, is conducting a study to evaluate the key differentiators between schools that have offered themselves for evaluation under the Learning Guarantee Programme and the schools that are not participating in the programme. The findings will be available in January 2004.

**National University of Singapore (Department of Information Systems, School of Computing)**, conducted a study to assess the potential of Computer Assisted Learning Centres in rural areas and whether they help bridge digital divide and how communities adopt the model. Their paper on Computer Assisted Learning Centre has been accepted for presentation at the International Conference in Seattle, USA, in December 2003.

**Network of Enterprising Educational Ventures (NEEV)**, has undertaken an intensive study of processes in a sample of 14 schools/ habitations which have offered themselves for evaluation under Learning Guarantee Programme. The findings of this study being guided by Prof. Jalaluddin, will be available by March 2004.

**World Bank** has commissioned two independent case studies on Learning Guarantee Programme and Computer Assisted Learning Centre.



# Snakes and ladders

Factors that facilitate / impede successful primary school completion

LADDERS	
Mild ↑, Strong ↑↑, Very Strong ↑↑↑ and Extremely Strong ↑↑↑↑	
A bright and welcoming school	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
A school where children learn	↑ ↑ ↑
School within reachable distance (boys)	↑ ↑
School within reachable distance (girls)	↑ ↑ ↑
Having teachers who are affectionate, kind and empathetic	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
Having an adult in the family who values education	↑ ↑ ↑
A father who is caring and concerned about the welfare of the child	↑ ↑ ↑
Adults in the family who share work (sibling care / fetching water)	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
Having fewer siblings, but not being the eldest	↑ ↑ ↑
Being in good health	↑ ↑
Being the youngest child	↑ ↑ ↑
Role models / success stories where education has resulted tangible benefits in terms of social status and / or livelihood / upward mobility (girls).	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
Role models / success stories where education has resulted in tangible benefits in terms of social status and / or livelihood / upward mobility (boys).	↑ ↑ ↑
SNAKES	
Mild ↓, Strong ↓↓, Very Strong ↓↓↓ and Extremely Strong ↓↓↓↓	
GIRLS AND BOYS	
Having a parent with disability	↓ ↓
Having a mother who goes to work for long hours	↓ ↓ ↓
Large family and many siblings to care for	↓ ↓ ↓
Alcoholism in the family (father / mother)	↓ ↓ ↓
Being in a lower caste / disadvantaged community	↓ ↓
Being sick or disabled	↓ ↓ ↓
Taking care of cattle / other livestock	↓ ↓
Death, disability and illness in the family	↓ ↓ ↓
Work during peak agricultural cycles (regularity)	↓ ↓ ↓
Drought / migration / natural disasters / riots / violence	↓ ↓ ↓
Hunger (Every morning)	↓ ↓
Hunger (Persisting)	↓ ↓ ↓
Teachers get children to do personal chores	↓ ↓
Teachers beat children and other harsh punishment	↓ ↓ ↓
Where education has not led to tangible benefits in terms of social status/livelihood / upward mobility of local youth (negative role models).	↓ ↓ ↓
GIRLS	
Being a girl	↓ ↓
Being the eldest girl in the family	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
Sibling with disability	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
School that is far away	↓ ↓
Burden of work (at home / outside)	↓ ↓ ↓
Social practices: early marriage	↓ ↓ ↓
Teacher addiction (safety of girls threatened)	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
BOYS	
Having no sisters	↓ ↓
Sibling with disability	↓
School that is far away	↓
Burden of work (at home / outside)	↓ ↓ ↓
Indebtedness leading to short-term bondage	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
Gambling in the neighbourhood	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
Teacher addiction: boys susceptible to bad habits	↓ ↓ ↓

Source: Vimala Ramachandran, Kameshwari Jandhyala and Aarti Saihjee: Snakes and Ladders - Factors that facilitate / impede successful primary school completion; Synthesis report of a qualitative study done for World Bank, New Delhi, 2003



## The Kudligi Story

It was 22 July 2003, the second day of school evaluation in the Learning Guarantee Programme. **V S Jatti Block Education Officer, Kudligi, Bellary District** was visiting schools. Mr. Jatti has been less than a year in Kudligi. Surprisingly, Kudligi alone has 119 schools, nearly 13% of the total number of schools to be evaluated in 2003.

**Project Leader (LGP) Umashankar Periodi** accompanied the BEO on his visits to several schools that day. Mr. Jatti had a positive word and appreciation for the BRC Ramana Goud and for the CRC of the cluster. They were an example of the crucial role that Education functionaries can play in such endeavours. The Project leader tried to find out the reason behind the Kudligi enthusiasm, in this interview:

**Umashankar Periodi** : What is the reason for such a high number of schools in your block opting for Learning Guarantee Programme?

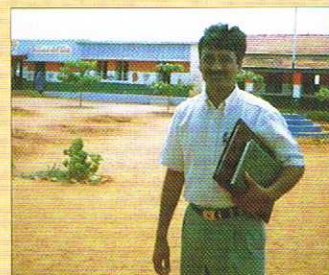
**V S Jatti**: I remember our CPI Mr. Baligar administered an oath at the launch of Learning Guarantee Programme on 23 November, 2002. He asked for full involvement and commitment. I merely ensured that my colleagues and I talked to as many schools as possible, individually, in groups and on every occasion, about the benefits of participating in the Programme.

**UP**: Are the schools very confident of winning?

**VSJ**: The schools sincerely want to become 'Learning Guarantee Schools'. Even if they feel they may not meet the yardstick this year, they are very keen to know where they stand. They want to know their current areas of weakness, so that they can improve.

**UP**: How will the present assessment help them?

**VSJ**: Many of the schools will use this year as a baseline and work to become Learning Guarantee Schools next year. I feel this is a very positive attitude.



**V S Jatti**  
Block Education Officer, Kudligi

### NOTES FROM THE FIELD

## Sharon Barnhardt, Researcher from Princeton University

In July 2003, Azim Premji Foundation started a new research study in conjunction with two economists from Princeton University, USA, and The World Bank's Development Economics Research Group. As the link between the researchers in the US and Azim Premji Foundation's research team in Bangalore, I had the opportunity to visit several schools to pilot test our research surveys.

Surely the best part of this "field" experience was interacting with primary school students whose curiosity and energy were contagious and even overwhelming at times. It was also encouraging to meet a few 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> standard girls who approached us, shook our hands and said in English "How are you? My name is X. What is your name?" It showed not only the success of their education in a government school, but also the confidence they were building. However, those girls were from Anekal and the situation in North East Karnataka was sadly different. At one pilot test in Raichur we visited a school with well over 45 primary school students crammed into one small room. Some were crying and looked scared. Some were not able to tell us if they were a boy or a girl. Others could not say if they were in the first or second standard. I wonder if they knew why they were sitting there, or if going to school was just a ritual to be endured.

A third experience illustrated the problem of out of school children. One 11 year-old boy started a conversation with us near the District Institute of Education Training in Bellary. After his father passed away, he had to leave school to work as a fan mechanic with his uncle. Upon hearing that I was born in the US, he commented, "The US is in the doldrums right now because Mr. Bush and Osama bin Laden are not getting along." What an able mind to abstract information he probably overheard from adults at work and to understand its relevance to a person he just met! If only he could get a good education, imagine what he would be capable of achieving!

Dear Readers,

Do you think the Learning Guarantee Programme can be improved? Can you see a way to make the Accelerated Learning Programme more effective? Your views on any topic related to Universalisation of Elementary Education are valuable to us. We also welcome you to share your ideas about this newsletter. Please do send in your suggestions to the Foundation.