

# Scaling-up Social Organization: The Case of Pratham Info-Tech Foundation in India

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## Abstract

One of the major challenges for any social organization is how to scale-up so as to increase the social impact of its innovation and bring financial sustainability for itself. The present case study deals with this challenge faced by one of the pioneering social organizations working in the field of use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education to bridge the digital divide and improve the quality of mass education in India. "Pratham Info-Tech Foundation" has been working in the area of application of ICT in schools operated for unprivileged students in India. The case describes the unique strategy used by its founder, Prem Yadav and his team to achieve dual goals of achieving social mission with higher scales. The objective of the case is to identify the factors favoring scaling-up of social venture's after an assessment of internal and external environment.

It is a critical case of a single social organization which explains how a social enterprise can achieve scalability by implementing right strategies with the help of 'SCALERS' model. It also validates existing theories of scaling-up of social organizations.

**Keyword:** SCALERS Model, Information and communication technology, ICT, social organization, scaling-up.

## 1. Introduction

Social organizations are usually set up by entrepreneurs to fulfill their individual dream for bringing about social change. As a result, most of the social ventures are driven by personal attributes of the social entrepreneurs. This has significant influence on the way a social venture evolves and impacts the society. Thus, these organizations mainly remain person driven rather than process or strategy driven. As a result, most of the social ventures remain small in size in proportion to the magnitude of the social challenge they are dealing with. Due to lack of proper strategies and processes, an organization is unable to sustain itself after the promoter passes away or leaves the organization. This also results in low sustenance level of social organizations. It is therefore essential that social entrepreneurs strive to make the organization scalable and sustainable by adopting

right strategies.

This case deals with "Pratham Info-Tech Foundation", a social venture working in the field of application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for mass school education. The case focuses on how the protagonist of the case and the social entrepreneur, Prem Yadav deals with the challenges of scaling-up to increase the social impact without diluting its social mission.

## 2. Objective of the study

The objective of the case was to identify the factors favouring scaling-up of social venture after assessing internal and external environment

The case attempted to answer the following questions:

- What are the benefits and challenges of scaling-up for the social enterprise?
- What is the importance of assessment of internal and external environment before implementing scaling-up strategies?
- What are the various ways of scaling-up and how can one apply 'SCALERS' model to see in which direction the enterprise can grow?

## 3. Current State of Research

The review of literature is divided into three parts. First part deals with the state of education in India. The second part covers the role and use of ICT in education with special reference to its application in India. Finally, the last part covers challenges and strategies used by social enterprises for scaling-up.

### 3.1 Status of Education in India

Educational status in India though improving, is still in dire condition. Although the enrollment of children in school is on a continuous rise, the quality of learning is a persistent question. The national literacy level in India have gone up from 64.8% in 2005 to 74% in 2011<sup>1</sup> but are still low when compared to world average of 84.1 % in

<sup>1</sup> The Report to the People on Education 2011-12 published by the Ministry of Human Resource Development

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Documents/is20-literacy-day-2012-en-v3.pdf>

2010<sup>2</sup>. The level of female literacy is still lower at 65%. It is further worsened by high drop-out rates at primary (29%) and elementary level (42%)<sup>3</sup>.

Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) assesses children's schooling status and basic learning levels in reading and arithmetic. The ASER report, 2013, shows that while there is an improvement in overall enrollment (96.7%) and attendance level of children (74.3%) between the age group of 6 to 14 years, there is no significant improvement in learning abilities. For instance, fifty percent of the children from grade II are not able to read simple everyday words in their regional languages and nearly 78 % of children in grade II and about 50 % of children in grade V cannot read grade II text<sup>4</sup>.

### **3.2 Role and use of ICT in education with special reference to India**

Numerous reports state that ICT has a potential to bring out an information and knowledge disseminative process which is learner centric and participative in nature and which can improve the quality of education. Government policy encourages use of ICT in education through disbursement of computers, development of labs, provision of grants for running programs, etc. However the achievement is far below expectation. The reasons can be cited as below:

- ICT technology implemented at school level such as radio-cum-cassette players, colour televisions, computer, computer labs or satellite receiving terminals, etc. has been supply-driven and equipment centric. As a result, the context specific ICT curriculum was not readily available. Very less attention is given to build the complete ecosystem which is required to make ICT as a relevant and timely intervention in achieving the objective of education.
- There is lack of contextual e-content based on state curriculum and developed in vernacular languages. The available e-content is mainly developed for western education and useful for English medium schools. Though ICT is a compulsory subject for higher grade students, it is mainly taught using textbooks that describe computers and their utility rather than through practical demonstration.
- Most of the unprivileged children in India are enrolled in schools run by state governments and are devoid

of basic infrastructure such as computers, tables, electricity, etc. required for ICT implementation.

- Availability of committed, skilled and experienced teaching staff is another major challenge. Most of the teachers in public schools are burdened with existing teaching load and additional administrative duties such as election duties, census survey duties, etc. The teachers lack motivation as well as time to learn new technology and new method of teaching which is a crucial success factor for implementation of ICT (Das, 2012).
- Regular maintenance, repairs and up-gradation of computer hardware is a key factor in retaining the interest of students as well as instructors. If it is not done on time due to various reasons such as distance, remote location, lack of funds, no skilled people etc. It results in large number of drop outs from the programme.

### **3.3 Challenges and strategies used by social organization for scaling-up**

It is seen that social enterprises face number of challenges in scaling-up in comparison to their counterparts, i.e. commercial enterprises. Davis and Simon (2013) state that very few social innovations can help social enterprises grow like social ventures as many innovations operate within institutional framework. As many social innovations are designed to tackle the problem of a specific community or a target group its impact is limited by its socio-economic context. In such cases, the standardization of products/ services/ processes which is required for scaling-up is either difficult or less effective in bringing out positive impact. The out reach of such innovations can be enhanced by using 'diffusion' techniques than 'scaling-up' techniques. Briga (2009) mentions that sourcing finances, retaining and recruiting new staff, changing management styles to make it more professional and measuring the impact of scaling-up are some of the crucial challenges of the social enterprises. Westley, Antadze, Riddell, Robinson & Geobey (2014) discuss various strategies adopted by social enterprises to scale-up by studying 24 social organizations from Canada. They conclude that the process of converting social entrepreneurial venture into institutional entrepreneurial organization is difficult as it involves reframing existing social problem, changing the mind set and reorienting organizational strategies.

<sup>3</sup> DISE Report, 2009-10

<sup>4</sup> Annual Status of Education Report, ASER, 2013 <http://img.asercentre.org/docs/Publications>, accessed on 12th Dec, 2015.

Numbers of studies have been done to identify new strategies of scaling-up. Dess, Anderson, and Wei-Skillern. (2004) have done pioneering work in identifying various pathways for the social organizations to scale-up their innovations. These involve a) dissemination about social innovation or programme and encouraging others to replicate it or b) affiliation with other organizations having common set of principles, or c) branching out to spread the innovations. The authors further mention that the vital decision about how to scale up depends on five major 'R's such as 1) Readiness of the organization and social innovation to scale-up, 2) Resources availability to carry out scaling-up, 3) Receptivity or readiness of other communities to accept the social innovation, 4) Risk associated with poor implementation of social innovation or the cost of failure and 5) Returns in terms of serving better, improving efficiency or effectiveness. The different pathways taken by social enterprises for scaling-up are influenced by various dimensions such as initial starting conditions, leadership competencies and vision, availability of resources and the obstacles or opportunities (Westley et al., 2014). Some of the examples of successful scaling-up reported by Gabriel (2014) adopted influencing through advocacy, consultancy and training; building a cheaper and more efficient delivery network through licensing, franchising or collaborations; forming strategic partnerships or joint ventures or through setting out new branches. Many social organizations have also used innovative ways such as using of social media to create web based platform to disseminate key information; building intermediaries to play the role of catalyst for bridging the gap between end users and implementing organizations; developing talent at the ground level; promoting advocacy to bring out policy changes and using social marketing techniques to change attitudes and behaviors.

After a qualitative study of a number of social enterprises in India, Kulkarni, Ganesh, Bhatt, & Allen (2012) found that most of the successfully scaled-up social enterprises have a holistic view of looking at a social problem, are flexible in their business models and have invested in customer education to show how their lives would be better with the product or service offered to them. A. T. Kearney's Social Enterprise Accelerator model gives a framework to social enterprises for planning growth in a strategic manner (Kearney: 2014). At the foundation level, the social enterprise must have an exceptional leadership having clear vision and mission about the direction in which the enterprises is likely to grow, right core product or services and/or delivery channels and dynamic strategies to get adequate funding to grow. At the second level, when growth takes place, the

social enterprise should leverage technology to achieve scalability and to reduce average costs. It should use other cost effective platforms like leveraging existing infrastructure, partnering with other organizations, using existing delivery channels, etc. Sharing knowledge from each other and mentoring other social organizations also will help achieving scalability. At the third level, the social enterprise should look into bringing a long term change in attitudes and behaviors. Thus the social enterprise must get positively engaged in creating a dialogue with government, investors, other organizations, educational institutes and also get involved in shaping the market as well as in forming the policies.

The SCALERS model developed by Bloom and Chatterji (2009) identifies seven potential drivers of scaling social impact such as Staffing, Communicating, Alliance building, Lobbying, Earnings generation, Replicating and Stimulating market forces. These seven drivers form the acronym SCALERS. The SCALERS model looks into identifying and strengthening internal and external forces affecting the organization and helps in strengthening organization by scaling up in a viable manner.

Many authors have used a case study approach to show how various social enterprises have dealt with the challenge of growth. Faster and Heeks (2013) present a case on scaling strategy of ICT based social innovation in providing greater access to finance for Bottom of the Pyramid (BOP) population through mobile money transfer. The lead organization implemented a systematic scaling-up strategy by moving from 1) pilot project to make the product ready for mass market to 2) incremental rollout by integrating all the stakeholders to 3) aggressive growth by finding new partners and lastly 4) standardization to bring more control over management and quality. The authors further found that the importance of scaling in ICT was even more important as it ensured greater benefits to users as well as implementing organizations due to higher network effects. Lyon and Fernadez (2012) use the case study methodology to analyze the scaling strategies of social enterprises working in the field of 'Early years' providers in UK. They categorized scaling up strategies into three groups such as a) growth occurring due to higher impact from within the organization; b) forming formal relationships with other providers or social franchising and c) encouraging others to use social innovation or good practices through open sharing. Each type of strategy required a different set of institutional capabilities and different degree of control of the parent organization. In another case study, Basargekar (2012) described how a social enterprise working in various

fields such as microfinance, education, child care, etc. converted itself from a non-governmental organization, NGO trust into an umbrella firm covering small organizations under different legal structures and supporting them to grow in an orderly manner.

It can be observed that number of social ventures is coming-up in the area of digitization of education. ICT as a tool can bring significant impact on the overall educational status in India. It is still in nascent stage. Hence, it is important to notice and study how different organizations are using it to bridge digital divide and to improve the educational status of the unprivileged class. As mentioned earlier, most of the existing research is focused on case study methodology as there is no single or standardized way of scaling-up or spreading social innovations. This study also focuses on single case study which has used a unique and effective strategy to scale-up the innovations to bring wider impact.

It can be concluded that the issue of scaling-up is vitally linked with making higher social impact through better spread of social innovations. It further helps to bring higher financial sustainability for social organizations. Various social enterprises have adopted different strategies for scaling-up. Some of the common points arising out of these studies are i) changing management style and making it more process driven, ii) recruitment, retaining and training of suitable staff, iii) affiliation with other organizations having complementary competencies is crucial, iv) use of technology to build-up cheaper and efficient delivery and v) striving for financial sustainability. Most of these are covered in the SCALERS model. Hence, it can be considered as an effective tool to assess the scalability strategy of the social enterprise.

#### 4. Research Methodology

The research uses a case study method. It is a single case and focuses on the unique way the social organization tackles the challenge of scaling-up. It is a critical case in nature as it tries to see if the SCALERS model will fit to the strategy of scaling adopted by the organization. It uses the embedded structure by covering opinions and interests of various stakeholders of the social programme. Specifically the case covers following stakeholders:

- Programme leader: Prem Yadav
- Program Designers: Involved in administration, designing of the project, designing curriculum & e-content
- Program Implementers: Involved in field work such as programme implementers at the class room level (Sancharikas), project leaders, supervisors, repairs &

maintenance staff

- Government organizations at the Central, state and local level
- Corporate partners
- School Management Committees
- School principals & teachers
- Students
- Parents

The details regarding interviews conducted are given below:

1. Prem Yadav – Programme leader
2. Core team involved in designing the programme – Two persons
3. Implementers of the programme – Five sancharikas/ sancharkas, three principals of the schools, teachers teaching IT at schools
4. Monitoring organization: Three members from School Management Committee
5. Beneficiaries of the programme: Children from 6,7 and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, few parents

The researchers conducted unstructured interviews of the stakeholders over a period of one month. Some of the interviews were conducted in the field i.e. in the schools where the programme is implemented. All the interviews were transcribed and revalidated from the organization. They were used for further content analysis. The core issues emerging out of these were as follows:

- How did the core team design a strategy to create a long term impact through CAL programme? How did scanning of internal and external environment help in this process?
- What were the direct and indirect benefits of this programme for the various stakeholders?
- Can the SCALERS model be used as a framework to assess the strategy used by Pratham to scale-up the programme?

#### 5. The Protagonist, PremYadav

The founder and director of “Pratham Info-Tech Foundation”, Prem Yadav started his career in “Pratham Foundation,” a leading NGO working in the field of education in India in 1991. Till 1998, he worked on various projects such as remedial education, literacy, library programmes, etc. He stumbled into the field of ICT in education by accident. ICICI Bank, a leading private bank in India wanted to dispose-off its 120 used computers. Prem used this as an opportunity to start his journey in use of ‘ICT in education’. Pratham Info-Tech Foundation, a sister

concern of Pratham Foundation was set up in the year 2000 with specific focus on using ICT for providing better quality of education to unprivileged children. Annexure I show the Mission and Vision of Pratham Info-Tech Foundation.

## 6. The Beginning

Prem introduced Computer Aided Learning (CAL) project with few schools in Mumbai Metropolitan region for four years from 1998 to 2002 under the umbrella of parent organization, Pratham. CAL involves integrating school curriculum with the help of ICT right from pre-primary level to secondary level. Annexure II gives an overview of CAL. It involved careful selection of partner schools, recruitment/training of teachers, community mobilization, curriculum development, development of teaching-learning aids and base line testing. The programme was run in all the schools providing education in vernacular languages such as Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati, Telgu, etc schools in Mumbai. Though initially it was fully sponsored by ICICI Bank, India for a year, Prem and his team faced ample difficulties in terms of inadequate infrastructure, untrained and unwilling teachers, uninterested parents and children, etc. Indigenous softwares were not available in vernacular languages, e-content was completely missing and the existing imported software was not compatible with the available older models of computers (version 386). Local communities and parents of respective children had their own reservation about the programme. Prem and his team were not deterred by these challenges. In these four years of experimentation nearly 12,000 students of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades from 54 schools attended the CAL programme and they received a moderate success. One of the core team member states that "Though the children were happy to learn new tools using computers, the programme was not fully integrated with school curriculum and it was looked upon as a stand alone programme".

At the same time, Prem realized very clearly that the impact of the programme will be felt only if this programme can be run at a larger scale. To do so, the organization required to design and implement new business model. "Our foundation can create value in the long term only and only if it becomes sustainable and scalable" he vehemently said.

## 7. Scanning of Internal & External Environment

Prem and his team critically assessed the internal and external environment before taking major decisions. This helped them to design the strategy for the organization.

### 7.1 Internal environment:

- One of the major strength of the Foundation was its founding organization 'Pratham Foundation' that had

created a presence across India and was reputed for its strong leadership and innovative approach to deal with the challenges in education. Prem and his team knew that the founding organization will give a lot of support in terms of providing resources, bringing new ideas and creating new structure if required.

- Availability of dedicated and skilled core team was second major strength. As most of the team workers from Pratham Info-Tech Foundation had also worked with 'Pratham Foundation' they had good experience in working in the field on various programmes such as remedial education, literacy and reading programmes, etc. They had a good mix of skill-sets such as finance, IT technology, media and communication, etc.
- Leadership qualities of PremYadav were additional strength. The team had full faith in Prem's leadership qualities and was willing to put his ideas in to practice.
- Rekha Mohit, one of the core team members states that "Prem is fully convinced about the role digital education in mitigating the rural-urban divide in education. His passion and dedication is highly infectious".
- One of the major weaknesses was that the Foundation did not have team of trainers who could work at local / rural level. The Foundation also did not have good quality of software and e-content which can be readily taken to the classrooms.

### 7.2 External environment:

- The critical evaluation of external environment would show that though Pratham Foundation had created its mark in the field of education, Pratham Info-Tech Foundation was relatively new.
- Another major weakness was lack of awareness and willingness of the major beneficiaries such as parents and children to adopt ICT for improving the quality of teaching learning process at school level. Other major stakeholders like schools, school principals and school management committee were also equally apathetic to introduce ICT in schools.
- The weak economic conditions of the children and parents were another challenge to make this programme financially sustainable in the long run.
- External environment also showed that Central as well as state governments were in favour of use of ICT at the school level. This was reflected in the new

ICT policy designed in 2012 wherein the Central government made Rs. 50 lakh provision to devise, catalyse, support and sustain ICT and ICT enabled activities and processes in order to improve access, quality and efficiency in the school system (National Policy on ICT: 2012). At the same time the major weakness of the policy was there were no clear guidelines, rules or procedures about proper implementation of the policy at the ground level. As a result the fund was being used in a haphazard manner. For instance, there was no clear guideline about from which source the salary of the ICT teacher will come from. This resulted into either not appointing teacher for ICT or by giving additional responsibilities to existing teachers without proper training and incentives. In very few cases Gram Panchayats (Local Governing Bodies operating at village level) took their own initiative and managed salaries of ICT teachers from their own funds. The overall impact therefore was not as expected.

- Prem and his team also found that the policy guideline to encourage ICT at the ground level though positive was inadequate. It launched ICT as a subject only at the higher level of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades without building any base at the earlier grades. The integration of ICT to the overall school curriculum was lacking.
- The market forces affecting use of ICT in school education were mixed. On one hand private schools and education institutes had started using various IT based education modules in their curriculum. They were well accepted by children and the parents. In fact, it had become an additional source of revenue for the private schools. The limitation of this trend was that almost all the software used was in English language and required improved hardware technology to run. The medium of delivery used by state run schools for unprivileged children was vernacular and these schools were devoid of the necessary infrastructure to run these IT based modules. This showed that even if ICT based education was catching-up very fast in private schools run for privileged children, it had yet to take ground in mass education. The digital divide was growing over the years.

Looking at internal and external environment the team became clear that its technical expertise, domain expertise in the field of school education and rising importance of ICT in education are the supportive factors for designing any strategy. One of the limiting factors is low level of awareness

about ICT amongst the main beneficiaries of the programme such as school children and their parents, school principals, teachers and the local community. Using this analysis the team designed the strategy.

## 8. Strategy for Building Business Model

Prem and his team decided to take a major challenge of integrating ICT in mass education so as to improve the quality of learning and teaching. Prem identified that there are three main interventions which are required to be done at the ground level. These are as follows:

- Creation of e-content in vernacular languages which is aligned to school curriculum from early standards such as 5<sup>th</sup> grade onwards.
- Creation and maintenance of hardware to align the software at the school level.
- Developing a team of ICT instructors who are willing to work in rural areas and in the schools providing education in vernacular language.

Pratham Info-Tech decided that it is extremely necessary that they should have control on all the three parameters. Thus the organization appointed a team of e-content designers and decided to develop the software which is not only aligned to school curriculum but also interactive, fun oriented and self-learning oriented. The organization also created IT infrastructure at the school level and employed a dedicated team of engineers to look after its maintenance. It decided to employ and train local level instructors to take classes at the school level. The entire modality of selection, training and monitoring their work needed to be formed up.

The team started implementing this model from 1998. It received good response from the stakeholders. Prem and his team started planning for scaling-up in a systematic manner.

## 9. Scaling Up The Pratham's CAL Project Using SCALERS Model

### 9.1 Staffing

One of the major challenges in front of all the social ventures is to attract, recruit, train and retain talent. Invariably social organizations start with individual dream or vision of a social entrepreneur who wants to bring out social change through some social innovation. In the beginning the inspirational leadership of the social entrepreneur helps to attract committed workforce willing to work for the social cause, many times at lower wage rates. As an entrepreneurial team everybody is involved in all the activities and decisions are mainly taken ad hoc or by consensus. But as the organization grows up, there is a

need for professional staff to look after specific functional areas. There is also a need for training staff and retaining the trained staff.

As CAL programme was steadily spreading into semi-urban and rural areas, Prem understood in the beginning itself CAL will need a dedicated team of engineers (to look after repairs and maintenance), instructors (to conduct classes) and administrative staff. He decided to recruit semi-skilled local people and train them as against employing urban professionals. It would help in reducing the cost and to retaining the employees in the long run. The foundation has given lot of prominence in recruiting and training of local youth especially of young women who have minimum qualification of 12<sup>th</sup> grade and some basic understanding of computers. These young women were thoroughly trained on technical as well as non-technical subjects (such as communication skills, soft skills etc.) and were groomed to become instructors (such as sancharaks or sancharikas). The young women trained by PrathamInfo-Tech took the immense pride in their jobs as it was for the first time they received economic independence and mobility along with social status in a predominantly patriarchal society. "Working with Pratham project helped me personally in gaining self-confidence and getting recognition from the society" says Geeta, one of the sancharika. The foundation also groomed them further to take the positions of group leader. This strategy helped foundation to retain the talent and to reduce the cost. The programme head (Head of CAL programme from PrathamInfo-Tech) meets group leaders four times in

a year to understand the progress of programme and issues faced by group leader or sancharaks and sancharikas.

PrathamInfo-Tech also developed a team of hardware experts from the local area to reduce system downtime in a school. This team was also made responsible for preventive maintenance. Hiring could have helped easy scalability, but capacity building and developing efficient hardware team could be the issue in the long run.

## 9.2 Communicating

Effective communication is a crucial success factor to persuade all the key stake holders such as potential beneficiaries, volunteers, employees, donors and financiers as well as key partners. The potential stakeholders for CAL project were school management committees formed in the local villages or communities, schools along with principals and teachers, sponsors, Government bodies, employees, students and parents. Pratham Info-Tech clearly defined and communicated each and every stake holder about the benefits of ICT and their role in its implementation.

Pratham Info-Tech identified stakeholders and their roles in the following manner (Table 1):

For effective internal communication, Prem and his team designed processes for recapitulation and monitoring at regular intervals. For instance, it is the duty of a group leader to visit every school twice a week to assess the progress by discussing with sancharikas, students and school heads. Along with this formal tests are also conducted to check the progress of students. At the end of the year

**Table : 1**

Sr. No	Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
1	Pratham InfoTech Foundation	Identifying appropriate hardware and software, development of e-content, training and capacity development of manpower, monitoring and evaluation
2	Govt organizations like Gram Panchayat, Zilla Parishad, Municipal Councils	Implementation of government policies, setting-up School Management Committees (SMCs), monitoring the work of SMC, supporting school programmes
3	Corporate partners	Funding for fixed and recurring expenses, identification of location and schools, monitoring & evaluation
4	School Management Committees	Monitoring the programme, acting as an interlink between local governing bodies, schools, PrathamInfo-Tech and parents
5	Schools (including principals and teachers)	Provision of premises, infrastructure, accommodating the programme in regular timetable, monitoring of the programme
6	Students	Participating in the programme
7	Parents	Monitoring the progress

students are supposed to make projects based on learning in the class. Members of the School Management Committee (SMC) and Parents are invited for the exhibition of these projects (Annexure III) "We were pleasantly surprised to see the children's projects in this exhibition. We never knew that these kids can learn computers so quickly.", few members of SMC commented after visiting computer exhibition.

"We neither have computer at home, nor we know how to use it" states one of the invited parents, "Yet, I know this training will help my child to get better job tomorrow. I am very happy and proud to see my child's project here today".

Schools have benefitted in terms of better involvement in school activities. One of the school's Principal Mr. Chavan from the local area states: "CAL project has increased enthusiasm amongst the children. Their daily attendance for other subjects has also improved a lot",

"We learnt various new tools and games such as SCRACH, Libre Office Calc, Paint, etc. It's such a fun. Now I teach to my parents about how to create and use email, how to search, etc", few school children responded.

### 9.3 Alliance building

Forging alliances and partnership is essential for social ventures for various purposes such as for fund raising, creating awareness, gaining assistance related to specialized area, lobbying with government, etc. As per The Company's Act, 2013 every corporate, having annual turnover of 1000 crore INR or more or net worth of 500 crore INR or more or net profit of 5 core INR or more, is required to spend at least 2 % of average net profit in the last three years on CSR activities.<sup>5</sup> The Foundation made strategic alliances with corporate houses such as BPCL, Larson & Toubro Ltd., Tata Power Ltd, etc for sponsoring CAL projects (Annexure IV). It also made alliances IT technology companies like IBM, Microsoft, Syntel, etc for development of software and provision of certification after completion of the programme and with hardware maintenance firms.

Ms Priya Satish from BPCL (who handles CAL project from BPCL) states "We have been operating refineries in Uran district for a long time. Thus working with Pratham InfoTech Foundation in CAL project helped us in maintaining good relations with the local community as well as engaging our employees and their family members in a constructive manner."

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.pwc.in/assets/pdfs/publications/2013/handbook-on-corporate-social-responsibility-in-india.pdf>

### 9.4 Lobbying

Lobbying is required to advocate government to bring out desirable policies which may make a significant impact in achieving social cause. The promoters of parent organization "Pratham" who are at advisory positions today help Prem and his team to build importance of ICT in education on various fronts. For instance, Madhav Chavan, the founder of Pratham has been a member on National Advisory Council from 2004 to 2008.

He was also a member of Governing Body Council of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan mission (SSA) of the Government of India. Farida Lambay, Co-founder of Pratham is an active member of Child Labour and Research in education Committee of Government of India.

### 9.5 Earning generation

Sustainability of social venture depends mainly on its revenue stream which comes from its own income generating activities such as sale, investments, membership fees, etc. Permanent dependence of grants or donations may make the organization vulnerable in the long run. In the year 2001, Government brought out a Government Resolution that each government aided school must have a computer lab and also allowed schools to charge marginal fees. Pratham took advantage of this to find out if few of their programmes can become financially sustainable. Prem also identified other projects such as providing computer training to local youth or parents of the students to make projects financially viable. It is the vision of the Foundation that each project should at least be able to recover its variable cost (which mainly takes care of salaries and maintenance) in three years' time.

### 9.6 Replication

Replication of social innovation with the help of alliances or partners without losing control on delivery or quality is vital for enhancing the social impact. The foundation formed partnership with other social organizations to implement the CAL projects in their locations. This helped Pratham Info-Tech to expand its activities to different states. At the same time it retained its control on its core activities such as development of e-content, soft-wares, competency mapping and assessment modules. It helped the project to bring standardization in content and delivery. One such example is its partnership with Bharti Foundation wherein Pratham's CAL programme is run in other states such as Gujarat, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.



### 9.7 Stimulating market forces

The true success of social venture depends on linking its programme to the market forces in such a way that it encourages private parties such as consumers, investors, sellers to adopt the product or programme for pursuing their own private interest. Pratham is slowly and steadily becoming successful in convincing schools and parents about the importance of computer knowledge in modern digital world in getting good employment opportunities. Pratham is one of the few organizations creating e-content in vernacular language. If many other schools and parents get convinced with this idea, it may create a good demand in future, specifically for the subjects like Mathematics, Science etc. It is expected that with the increasing popularity of ICT led interactive and activity based teaching, the attendance of the students will improve. The Programme will slowly become financially sustainable.

### 10. Conclusion

The social ventures invariably face the challenges of scaling-up which limits the impact of social innovation. As mentioned in the review of literature, the social enterprises can use various ways for scaling-up. SCALERS model is one of the model which covers most of the dimensions of scaling-up. The case of Pratham Info-Tech Foundation explains the effective way of scaling-up by identifying seven drivers shown in SCALERS model.

- Early realization of social entrepreneurs/ leaders, etc about need for scaling-up social ventures is very essential. The case shows that PremYadav was fully aware not only about the reasons for scaling-up, but also about the pros and cons of it.
- It is very essential to scan external environment before taking major strategic steps such as scaling-up, etc. The case shows that Pratham Info-Tech Foundation used the external resources easily available in local areas such as young girls, local schools, local School Management Committees consisting of prominent personalities from villages to its advantage in a very effective manner. It also created fruitful alliances with private corporate firms to raise funds for the programme.
- Financial sustenance is one of the major challenges for any social venture. The case shows that the Foundation is consistently striving out to find different ways to make the programme financially viable. Approaching public and private organizations for funding, charging minimal fees, running similar programmes in private schools for higher charges,

building awareness about e-learning and creating e-content for other schools, etc are some of the measures towards gaining financial sustainability in the long run.

- The overall progress of the Foundation has been impressive. The foundation has become successful in reaching more than 1.5 lakh students in more than 7 states. The details of the same are given in Annexure V.
- Thus it may be stated that this case asserts the existing research by concluding that SCALERS model can be used to assess the potential of scalability of the social enterprise.

It is seen that more and more opportunities are created in the field of social entrepreneurship. One of the major challenges these ventures may face is of scaling-up. While doing so, these ventures can assess their strengths and weakness on all the seven drivers of the SCALERS model and can build-up their strategies.

### 11. Limitations and Scope for Future Research

One of the limitations of this case is that it may not be replicated exactly in the similar way by other social organizations. As any social organization works in a given socio-economic context, it will give only broad indication in which direction the organization can grow.

In future, it is possible that study of other social organizations in the similar manner with the use of SCALERS model will give different dimension on how social organizations are growing or what are the challenges faced by social organization in scaling-up.

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### **Annexure I: Mission and Vision statements of Pratham InfoTech Foundation**

#### **Vision**

All people- regardless of social background, income level, geographic isolation, skill gap and educational qualifications, reap the social and economic benefits that information technologies promise to all in the new world in which information and technology touch every aspect of our life.

#### **Mission**

Aim to boost digital literacy, bridge digital divide, facilitate the adoption of information technologies in education, and equip at risk youths with skills, tools and capabilities that new global economy demands.

#### **Approach**

In pursuit of the vision, the following principles guide our operations and outreach,

Programs, products and services that stress the use of IT to address socio-economic problems of the disadvantaged and underserved population.

- Holistic program development, value-addition to stakeholders and sustainability of efforts are key determinants of success.
- A low cost, scalable and quality driven operational model that relies on recruiting smart, talented youth from the underserved communities we serve.
- Emphasis on capacity building, skill development, social integration and inclusive growth.

Source: [www.pif.org.in](http://www.pif.org.in) accessed on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2014

### **Annexure II: What is Computer Aided Learning Programme?**

Computer Aided Learning Program (CAL) involves integrating school curriculum with the help of ICT. The preliminary stage of CAL programme involves careful selection of partner schools, recruitment/training of teachers, community mobilization, curriculum finalization, development of teaching-learning aids and base line testing. Classes are kept small to ensure individual attention and optimal learning. The Hardware used is of a high quality and the software includes that developed in local languages designed around school curriculum. To make certain that desired goals & outcomes are being achieved, evaluation and monitoring is done at regular intervals.

Source: BPCL- Pratham Computer Aided Learning Programme, Half-Yearly Report, Oct 2009 to March 2010.

### Annexure III: Computer exhibition held in sample school in Uran Taluka



Source: Photograph snapped by researchers

### Annexure IV: List of Corporate Partners

Sr. No	Company	Year of association	Programme
1	Tata Consultancy services	2014	CAL and digital literacy as life skill programme
2	Tech Mahindra	2014	CAL Programme and Community Information and training centre
3	IBM	2004	Kids Smart early Learning Porgram through Young Explorer (Computer) as a tool.
4	BPCL	2009	CAL Programme
5	WNS	2010	CAL Programme
6	K. Raheja Corp	2011	CAL Programme
7	Larsen & Toubro	2014	Community Learning Program
8	Tata Power co. Ltd	2008	CAL Programme
9	Syntel	2008	CAL Programme
10	Saint-Gobain	2008	CAL Programme
11	IDFC	2015	CAL Programme
12	DMART	2015	CAL Programme

Source: <http://pif.org.in/PartnersandAssociates/CorporatePartners.aspx> accessed on 10th July 2014

### Annexure V: Summary Report of CAL Programme implemented in India (as on June, 2015)

Sr. no	State	Digitech Centers	Schools	Students	Team Size
1	Gujarat	31	40	9490	36
2	Haryana	22	22	7801	27
3	Maharashtra	318	407	108371	599
4	New Delhi	9	9	1930	14
5	Rajasthan	36	38	6196	44
6	Uttar Pradesh	55	64	20126	68
7	West Bengal	6	7	1439	7
	Total	477	587	155353	795

Source: <http://pif.org.in/Publications/MainReports.aspx> .accessed on 10th July 2014

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