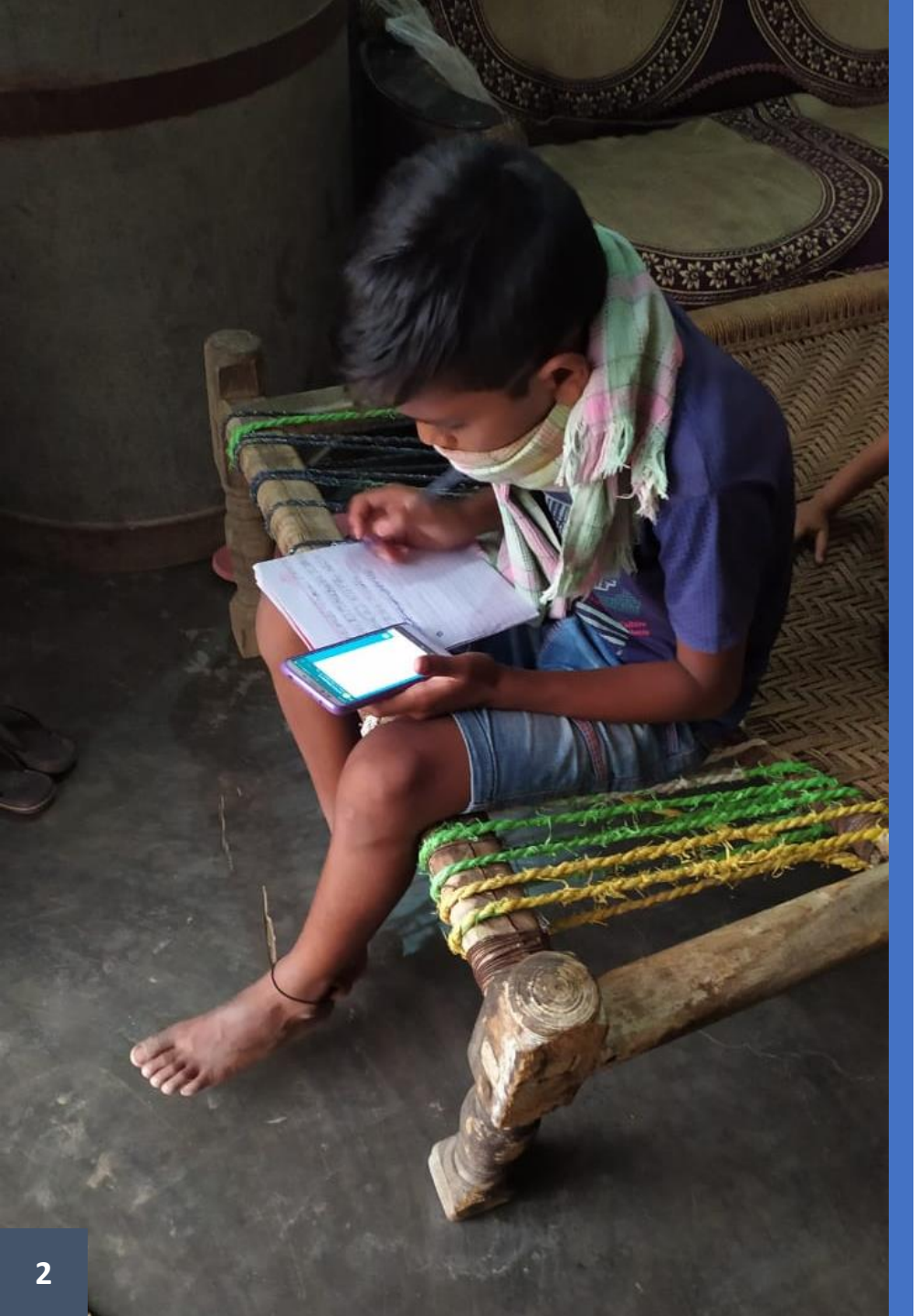
Children & Communities during COVID-19 Crisis

Insights from Pratham's experiences of "staying in touch"

April – June 2020

Pratham's MME Unit (Measurement, Monitoring, and Evaluation Unit)

Pratham
Every Child in School & Learning Well



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LOCKDOWN & MOVING AHEAD: What did we have in place to help us move forward once lockdown was announced?

These were **the two big pre-exiting pillars** of our work that helped Pratham to move forward in the lockdown period to connect to children, families and communities:

(1) SOCIAL STRUCTURES - Children's groups and mother's groups in the community:

- In most Pratham communities, as part of the usual programs, a social structure/network to support children's learning was in place.
- These took the form of children's community or neighbourhood groups and mothers' groups (in the case of younger children)

(2) DIGITAL CONTENT:

- Digital content in 11 Indian languages was available in Pratham's repository.
- This was used to send messages. See **prathamopenschool.org**

CONNECT: Reaching out to communities… once lockdown began

Understanding implications of Lockdown

- **Schools were shut** across the country
- **Movement of Pratham** field teams to their field communities and villages **suddenly stopped**
- **Children were at home** with **limited access** to any **educational content** or organized **learning activity**

Establishing contact : Reaching out to every community & every neighbourhood

- Pratham field teams **remotely contacted volunteers and parents** to create a volunteer network in every village
- First step was to ensure that we had at least **one contact in every community** with which we had been connected. And then we began to reach out to see if we could have a **contact in every neighbourhood or hamlet in the village**
- Data was collected to gauge internet availability, smartphone access and reach in every hamlet of a village

Connecting deeper: Trying to reach every child

- Curated **content** was shared through **WhatsApp first**
- It quickly became clear that **smart phones were not available** everywhere
- More phone numbers were sought for parents with basic phones
- **SMS content was developed** and shared via basic phones with community members
- Every contact number **received a phone call** from a known **Pratham team** member **at least once a week** to get feedback

Understanding communication and response from remote:

- A **standardized process was set-up** across all states to **track roll-out** of phone messages and content and, collect feedback. **Special "deep dive" studies** were also put in place.

What did we do?

- Understanding
- Expanding
- Measuring reach
- Designing and delivering activities via phone

REACH: Mapping village contacts – (1) example from Maharashtra

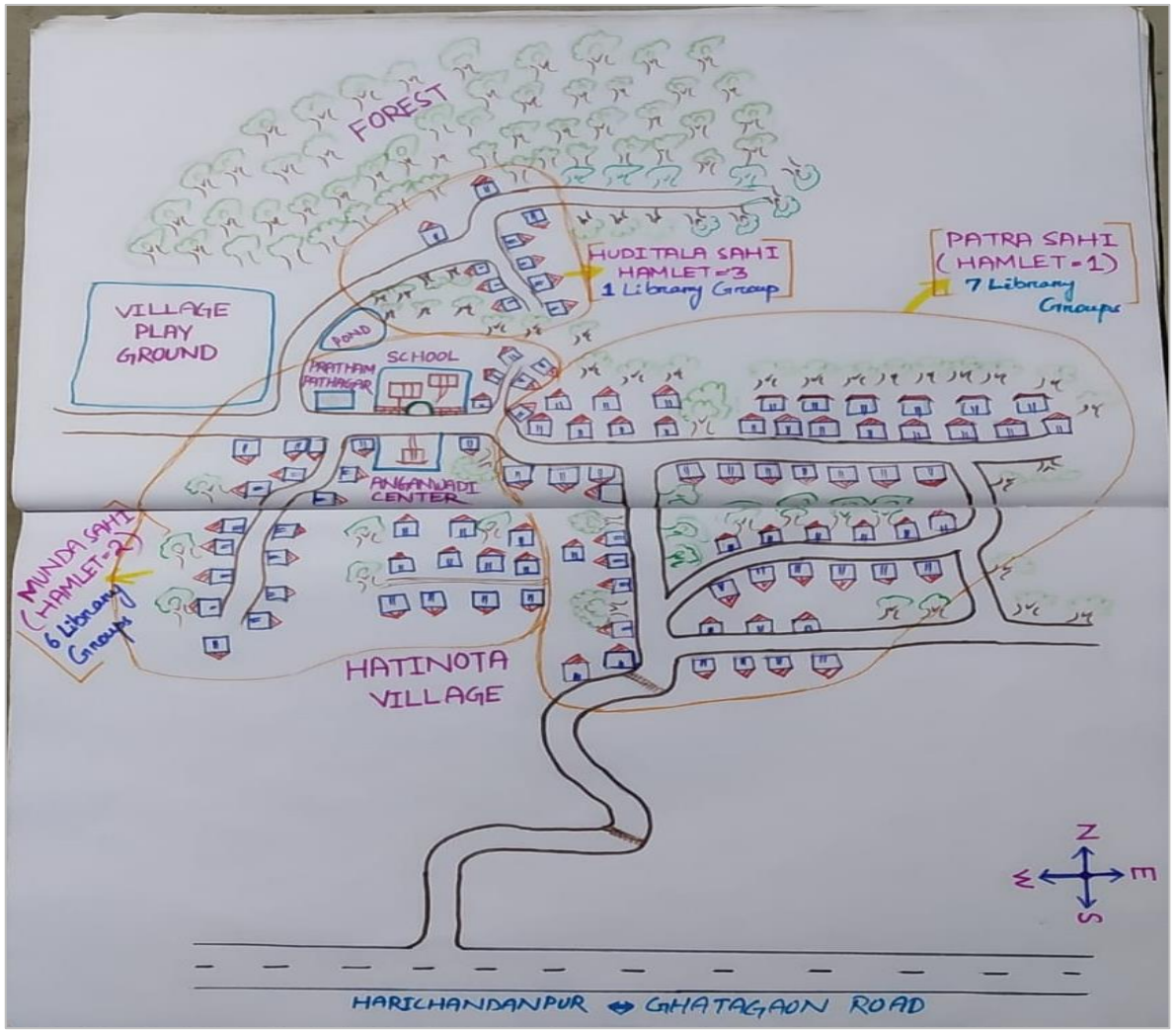
State: **Maharashtra** Block: **Chimur**
District: **Chandrapur** Village: **Piparda**

The village has been mapped, divided into hamlets/neighbourhood. Each contact has been mapped onto the map by hamlet. Type of phone has been recorded as well.

Village – Contact Mapping			
Hamlet No.	**Regular Phone Users**	**Smartphone Users**	**Total Contacts**
Hamlet 1	0	2	**2**
Hamlet 2	1	1	**2**
Hamlet 3	0	2	**2**
Hamlet 4	2	1	**3**
Hamlet 5	1	2	**3**
Total	**4**	**8**	**12**

More than 60% (8 out of 12) of the contacts from Village Piparda have a smartphone while the remaining contacts have a regular phone

REACH: Mapping village contacts – (2) example from Odisha

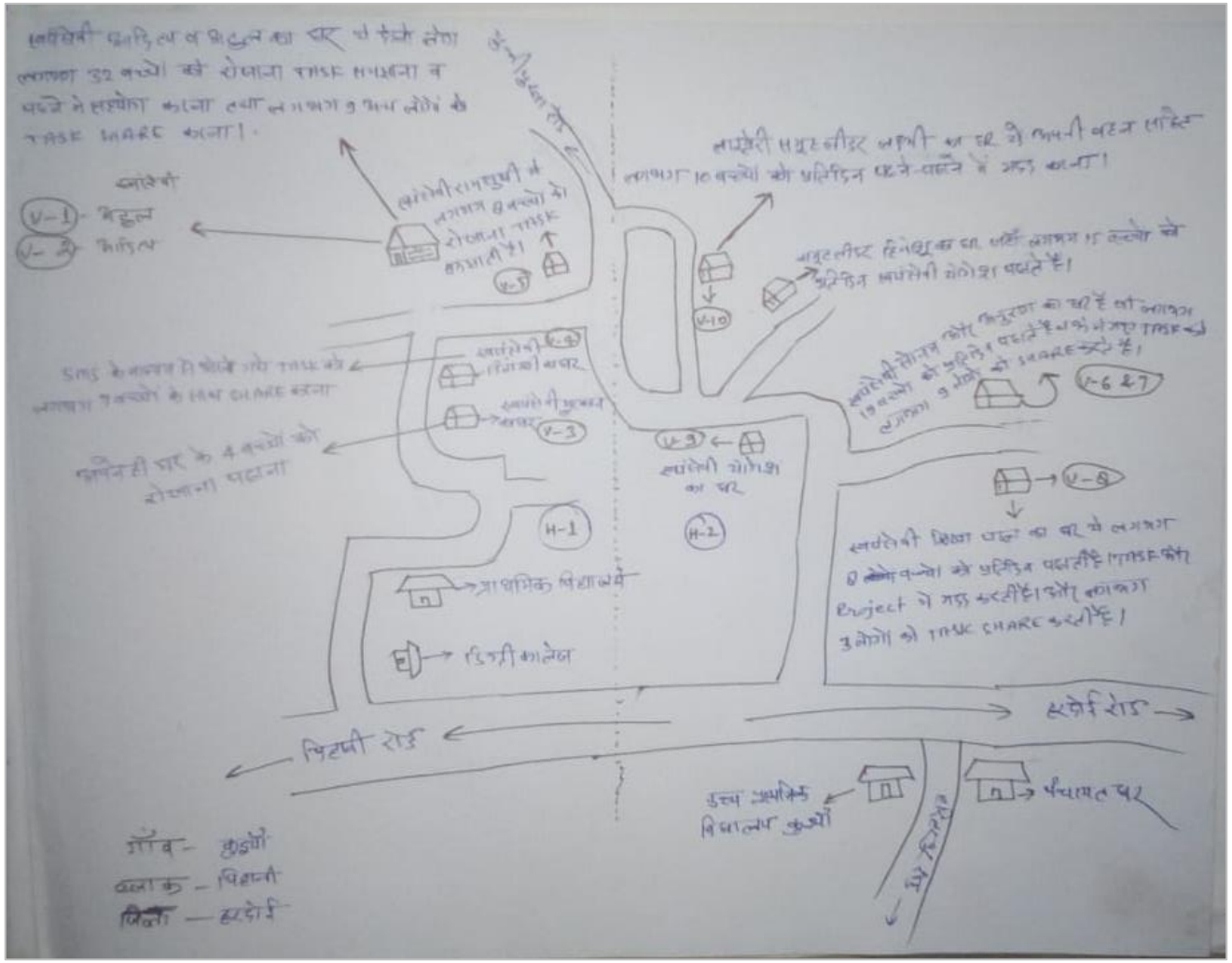


State: **Odisha**	Block: **Ghatagaon**
District: **Keonjhar**	Village: **Hatinota**

Village – Contact Mapping			
Hamlet No.	**Regular Phone Users**	**Smartphone Users**	**Total Contacts**
Hamlet 1	19	11	**30**
Hamlet 2	22	8	**30**
Hamlet 3	1	2	**3**
Total	**42**	**21**	**63**

Village Hatinota in Odisha has more than 60 contacts in the village, however only ~30% of these contacts have smartphones

REACH: Mapping village contacts – (3) example from Uttar Pradesh



State: **Uttar Pradesh**	Block: **Pihani**
District: **Hardoi**	Village: **Kuinya**

Village – Contact Mapping			
Hamlet No.	**Regular Phone Users**	**Smartphone Users**	**Total Contacts**
Hamlet 1	13	6	**19**
Hamlet 2	2	1	**3**
Total	**15**	**7**	**22**

Village Kuinya in Uttar Pradesh is a smaller village divided into two hamlets and has 22 contacts. Of those only 7 (~30%) have smartphones

REACH: Measurement Framework: Staying in touch with communities & tracking reach

HOW does an activity flow?

SMS/ WhatsApp Message created at central/ state level

WHO ensures that activity happens?

Leaders (district and below) track implementation, support field team members and conduct daily feedback calls with their teams

Pratham field team members

- Send SMS/WhatsApp – **daily**
- Call every family at least **once a week** to connect, clarify and get feedback

Volunteers and parents

- Conduct activities & support children
- Send back photos, videos, audios of children doing activities
- Share feedback with Pratham field team

WHAT information do we collect?

Quantitative indicators:

- **No. of contacts** with whom **SMS/WhatsApp was shared** (daily or alternate day)
- **No. of follow up calls** made by Pratham team member to confirm message received
- **No. of phone messages received**
- **No. of Volunteers** who **conducted the activity** with **at least one child**

This is collected daily/ weekly for every community were we have reach

HOW are we collecting this data?

- Data is collected on Android apps by Pratham field team members
- District/Block leaders track progress and conduct feedback calls using the in-app reports

CONTENT: via phones - Learning and Fun activities through **WhatsApp** messages .. Example: Leaf Art

Here is an example of a WhatsApp message

Karona Thodi Masti, Thodi Padhai

Leaf Art!
Collect leaves of different shapes, sizes and colours and make beautiful drawings. Watch this video to know about leaf art. Share photos of your leaf art with us.

https://youtu.be/Jx41JPM3yGI Stay home and stay safe.

Download PraDigi App for more masti and padhai https://bit.ly/2xZZKf1 03072020 ***Pratham***

Children sent back photos and videos of their activity

CONTENT: via phone - Language & Math activities through SMS messages

A word game sent via SMS

Group message

एक खेल खेलिए। यह खेल 30 मिनट का होगा।
घर के सब लोग खेल सकते हैं।
एक शब्द बनाइए जैसे कि घर। अब अगला शब्द र से शुरू होगा जैसे रेल।
अगला शब्द ल से होगा, खेलते रहिए।

Here is a 30 minute game. Everyone at home can play. Make a word – like home. Next word must start with "e". Example elephant. Now make a word with "t" and so on.

Math SMS Activity

एक खेत में कुछ बकरियाँ और मुर्गीयाँ हैं।
कुल पैरों की संख्या 180 और आँखों की संख्या 120 हैं।
बताएँ कितनी मुर्गियाँ और बकरियाँ होंगी?"

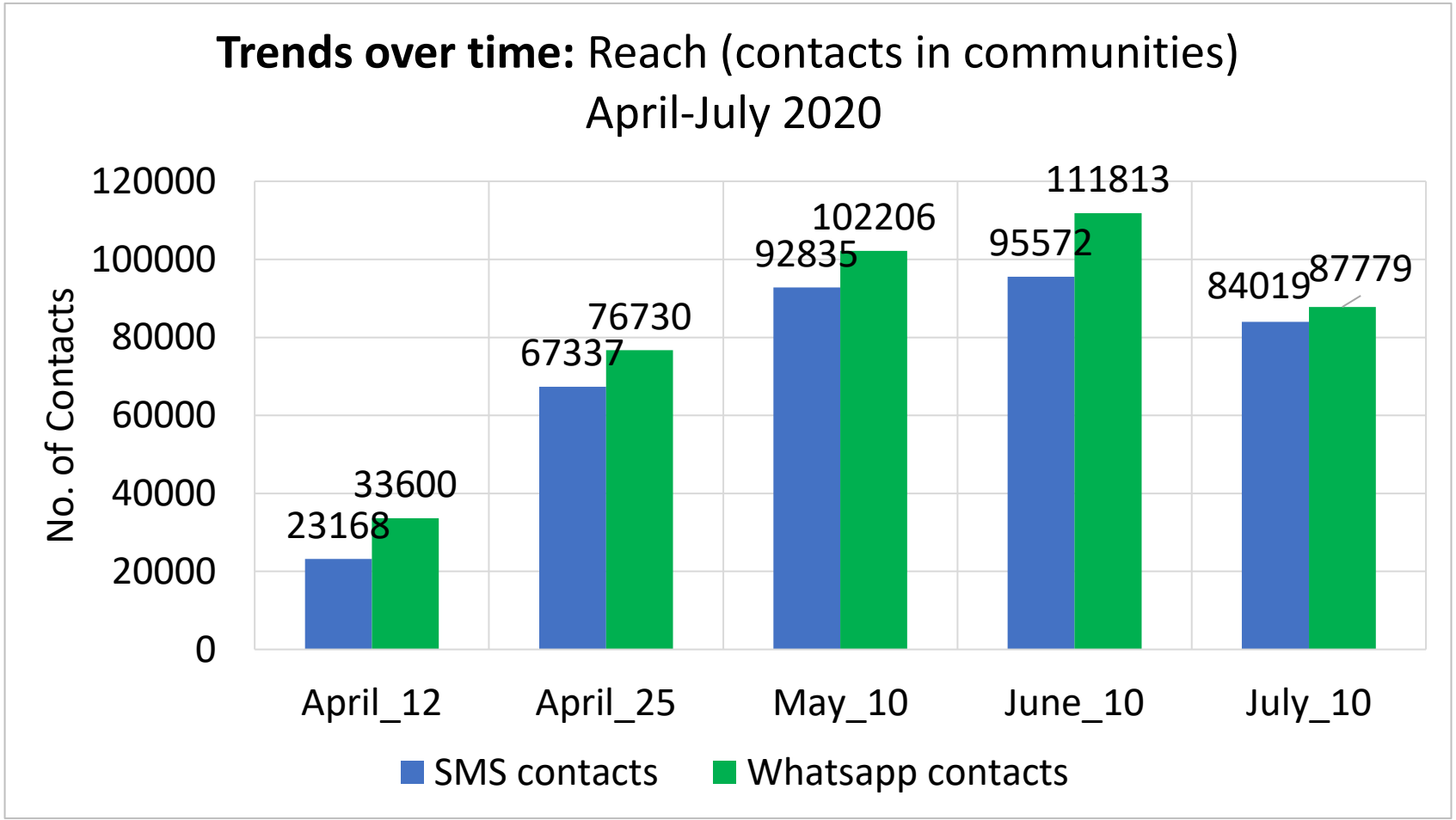
In the field, there are some goats and some chickens. Total number of legs are 180. Total number of eyes = 120. Tell me, how many goats and how many chickens are there in the field?

- As the reaching out process started, we realized that access to smartphones and internet was available only to less than half of the community members, Pratham started sharing simple activities through SMS for children everyday. SMS messages were shared by Pratham field team members with children through a regular phone of a parent, elder sibling or a volunteer.
- SMS based activities are based on weekly themes for either Reading or Math and new content is shared with children every day.

What did we learn?

- Large scale tracking exercises to assess reach
- Small “deep dives” to understand processes

REACH: Aggregate trends over time – Pratham communities - April to July 2020



Date	April 12	April 25	May 10	June 10	July 10
Communities Reached*	**8,044**	**11,773**	**12,827**	**12,663**	**10,126**

- From early April onwards, Pratham teams focused on establishing a remote connect with contact numbers (children/families) in villages
- The number volunteers reached grew over time as Pratham teams targeted to reach a volunteer in every hamlet of the village they visited before the lockdown
- The drop in numbers in July is because in several states, government is also sending out messages. In such cases, Pratham is not duplicating the effort

* In some cases, the same phone number got both SMS and WhatsApp messages

REACH: Tracking Reach - Staying in Touch in Pratham's "direct" communities by state

State	Communities	Volunteers / Parents reached via SMS	Volunteers / Parents reached via WhatsApp
Andhra Pradesh	339	5610	7088
Assam	1041	6469	4612
Bihar	699	9999	10589
Chhattisgarh	181	1061	2577
Delhi	283	2006	5840
Gujarat	791	7084	13513
Haryana	90	2001	2621
Himachal Pradesh	93	526	1234
Jammu & Kashmir	513	3498	2419
Jharkhand	341	1774	1827
Karnataka	541	4470	6133
Madhya Pradesh	2274	5347	6843
Maharashtra	1008	7676	15112
Odisha	275	9527	6232
Rajasthan	638	3313	2877
Tamil Nadu	63	1146	840
Telangana	326	5105	10124
Uttar Pradesh	1875	8050	4899
Uttarakhand	130	1272	1291
West Bengal	300	3178	2082
Grand Total	**11,801**	**89,112**	**108,753**

REACH SUMMARY:

- By mid June, Pratham reached more than 11,000 communities through Staying in Touch activities
- Close to 200,000 contacts were established to reach children & families via SMS and WhatsApp

REACH HIGHLIGHTS:

- Highest no. of communities are reached in Madhya Pradesh (2000+)
- Most volunteers per village are reached in Odisha (31) through SMS and in Telangana (35) through WhatsApp

Note:
Data is updated as of 17th June.
Response rate is reported as positive for volunteers who confirm that the activity for the day is successfully completed.

REACH: Example from Pratham's early childhood programs – reach in Lockdown

Early Years Exercise:

Illustration of the "nested" social structure in communities

3,300 communities reached
SMS contact with 16,000 phone numbers
WhatsApp contact with 18,000 phone numbers

Close to 70% children that Pratham was working with before the lockdown have been reached through these "staying in touch" efforts via phone calls and phone messages.

Those who could not be reached had either left the community or lived further away from the main cluster or did not have an easily accessible phone.

Of the children who received activities:

- 93% children do activities on any given day
- 89% children were helped by mothers in doing the activities

DEEP DIVES:

IN DEPTH
TRACKING & ANALYSIS
TO
UNDERSTAND PROCESSES

How did children and families respond to the content and messages they were receiving?

All of these were carried out in May and June 2020

- **DEEP DIVE 1**: Who are the contacts that we are reaching via phone messages and what is their relationship to children?
  ("Staying in touch" activities across states in communities with Pratham's direct presence.)

- **DEEP DIVE 2:** What happens when a message (for example a SMS message) arrives at home?
  ("Staying in touch" activities across states in communities with Pratham's direct presence.)

- **DEEP DIVE 3:** What are children's responses to the variety of activities and content that is coming to them daily via phones?
  (Case of IVRS messages being sent by Delhi Government to its students)

- **DEEP DIVE 4:** What are the responses of children and family members to e-Content shared by government school teachers?
  (Case of e-content sent by HP, UP, MP, JHK and CHH government teachers to students)

DEEP DIVE 1: Who are our contacts in the community?

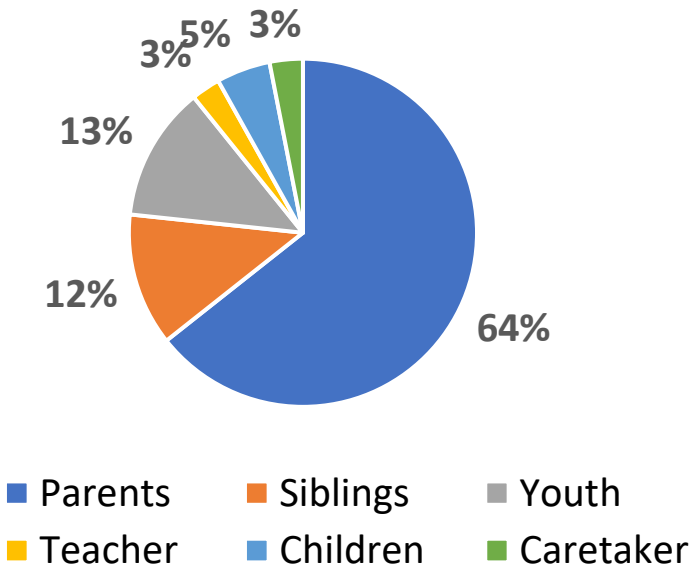
WHAT DID WE DO?

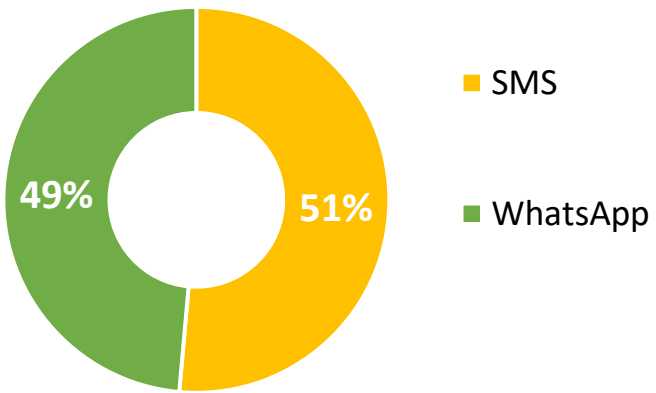
With the help of guiding questions, one Pratham team member from each state narrated a 'story' for one of their villages to help us gain a deeper understanding of how we **reached and contacted families in the community.**

These detailed narratives helped to develop indicators and processes for **additional data** villages to understand the profile of contacts and their relation to children reached

Deep dive with a sample of 22 villages from 15 states. 500 volunteers & 1300 children (May 1 to May 7)

WHAT DID WE LEARN?





Key Insights for this period:

- Most of the contacts reached are either children's parents (64%), or their siblings (12%) or village youth (13%)
- Half of the volunteers were reached through WhatsApp and half of the volunteers were reached via "basic phones"
- 75% of the children reached belong to Std. 3-8 (Std. 3-5: 43%, Std. 6-8: 35%)

DEEP DIVE 2: What happens when a message SMS arrives at home? Understanding responses of children and of family members

WHAT DID WE DO?

This "deep dive" study was designed to understand:

- Who gets the phone message (SMS)?
- Who does the activity with children?
- What is done to help children?
- What are children able to do?

In a sample of villages, daily language and math activities were sent via SMS to children for a period of 1 week. Carried out : end of May 2020

Children's response to activities and support given to them was closely tracked every day by Pratham team members in that area (feedback via phone)

This exercise was very helpful in guiding the design of the message and maximizing the effectiveness of activities with children.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Overall		Who regularly does the activity				
		Father	Mother	Other Family Members	Village Youth	Total
Who receives the message	Father	13	6	12	3	34
	Mother	1	12	5	1	19
	Other Family Members	1	1	27	1	30
	Village Youth		2	1	16	19
	Total	**15**	**21**	**45**	**21**	**102**

Key Insights:

Sample size: 11 villages, 102 children

- Parents are the main contacts whose phone numbers we have.
- More fathers have devices whereas mothers seem to be more engaged in terms of doing the activities with children (this varies by the age group of the children).
- Most of the village youth who receive the SMS also regularly support children in doing the activity

DEEP DIVE 2 (continued) : SMS Activity Sample Analysis

Std. 3-5

What type of support do children require?

69% were helped in reading and/or understanding activity and providing material

(n = 37)

54% were helped in making and identifying different shapes

(n = 29)

61% were helped in measuring length of sides

(n = 33)

56% were helped with coming up with a relationship

(n = 30)

Activity 5: Creating Shapes
Example SMS sent

एक धागा लें।
धागा की लम्बाई 30 सेमी की हो।
धागा से अलग-अलग आकार बनाएं।
भुजाओं की लम्बाई को नापें व लिखें।
आकार और उनकी भुजाओं में क्या संबंध है? बताएँ।

What are children able to achieve as a product of the activity?

- 7% *(n = 4)* — **Get a thread**
- 20% *(n = 11)* — **Create at least 2** different shapes
- 20% *(n = 11)* — **Name the shapes** created
- 13% *(n = 7)* — Can tell **number of sides** for shapes made
- 17% *(n = 9)* — **Measure the length of sides**
- 22% *(n = 12)* — Can tell **at least one relationship**

8 children didn't take any assistance

*2 children did not try the activity

Total Children: 57

- Although many children weren't able to complete the full task, there is high volunteer involvement with each step of the activity
- Only 1/4th children are able to come up with a relationship with a shape
- A little less than half the children are only able to create the shape – not count and measure the sides

DEEP DIVE 3: IVRS Messages in Delhi – What happens at home? Understanding the responses of children and of family members

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS USED BY THE GOVT?

मिशन बुनियाद के लिए भाषा की क्लास अनुसार गतिविधि जानने के लिए 7070237070 पर मिस्ड कॉल दें.आप आज इसे अपने क्लास 3 से 8 के बच्चे के साथ ज़रूर करें.
-दिल्ली सरकार

Message sent to ~500,000 students from Grade III to VIII in Delhi Govt Schools

User response in the form of missed call received

(~17,000 per day gave missed call before 6 pm, post 6 everyone received a missed call)

आप कौनसी कक्षा में है. कीपैड से अंक दबाये:

_____ गतिविधि से जुड़े मैसेज

WHAT DID WE DO?

Std 3-5 & 6-8

Pratham developed voice content was shared on alternate days on the IVRS system.

HOW?

- **Mode:** Phone-based survey

WHO?

- **Surveyors:** 25 surveyors from Pratham Delhi team
- **Survey Respondent:** Parents of children in Std 3 to 5 and children from Std 6 to 8 of Delhi Govt schools

WHEN?

- **Survey Period:** Focused on last 9 days of the program:
- From 23rd May till 31st May 2020

WHAT?

- The specific 'learning activities' shared via IVR between 23rd May and 31st May were considered for this survey

	STD 3 to 5	STD 6 to 8	TOTAL
Sample Size	248	429	677

DEEP DIVE 3 (contd.): IVRS Messages in Delhi – What Happens at Home? Engagement differs between younger and older children & theme of content

Key Insights

(Response varied by age/grade & by task/content received)

The proportion of children who attempted the activities **depend on their grade** and the **theme of the content**

While only **~50-55% of Std 6-8** students attempted the activities after listening to them, **~65-70% of Std 3-5** students attempted the activities

Std 3-5, students **preferred 'fun activities'** as compared to more **'academic/ textbook related activities'**

	THEME/ ACTIVITY FOR **Std 3-5** STUDENTS	Did you attempt this activity? YES or NO
23rd May	**LISTING (THINGS TO COLLECT):** आप क्या चीज़ें इकठ्ठा करना पसंद करेंगे जैसे सिक्के, टिकट आदि।	76% / 24%
25th May	**RIDDLES:** पहेलियाँ बुझे और घर के सभी लोगो से पूछे।	42% / 58%
27th May	**IDIOM:** बच्चे से सर मुंडाते ही ओले पड़ना मुहावरा और उसका अर्थ पूछे।	43% / 57%
29th May	**USING ADJECTIVES:** वाक्यों में विशेषण लगाकर वाक्य बनाना।	72% / 28%
31st May	**INTERACT WITH ELDERS:** घर के बड़े बुज़ुर्गों से पूछे कि वे बचपन में कैसे खेल खेलते थे ।	66% / 34%

	THEME/ ACTIVITY FOR **Std 6 to 8** STUDENTS	Did you attempt this activity? YES or NO
23rd May	**LISTING (THINGS TO COLLECT):** आज की दुनिया के आधुनिक और आश्चर्यजनक चीज़ें ।	49% / 51%
25th May	**SCIENCE (CROPS):** किसी किसान या रिश्तेदार से पता करें कि खेतों में गेहूं की कटाई के बाद फली क्यों लगायी जाती है ?	63% / 37%
27th May	**SCIENCE (BREATHING):** सांस कुछ देर रोकने के बाद हमे गहरी लम्बी साँस क्यों लेनी पड़ती हैं ।	56% / 44%
29th May	**CREATIVE WRITING:** खेत में कागभागोडे को देख कर पक्षी क्या सोचते होंगे ।	54% / 46%
31st May	**MATH (TIME COVERTION):** यदि एक मिनट में 60 सेकंड होते है, तो 1 घंटे, 1 दिन और 1 साल में कितने सेकंड होंगे ?	61% / 39%

DEEP DIVE 4: Tracking e-content & other government initiatives on the ground
Understanding responses of children, family members and teachers

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS USED BY THE GOVT?

GOVT E-CONTENT

(accessed if internet enabled device is available)

Government developed content

+

Content from other organizations

→

Central repository of content with the state government. Often content from this source is used to send to teachers & children.

PROCESS OF DISTRIBUTION GOVT SUPPLIED E-CONTENT

State level WhatsApp groups → District level WhatsApp groups of district leaders → Block/ Cluster level WhatsApp groups of teachers → Children and Parents

WHAT DID WE DO?

HOW?

- **Mode:** Phone-based survey

WHO?

- **Surveyors:** ~240 Pratham field team personnel from 60 districts, across 5 states
- **Survey Respondent:** Parents of children in Std 1-5 Children from Std 6-8 of Govt Schools, Teachers teaching Std 1-8
- **Profile of village** selected:
  - Pratham has established direct connect through Staying in Touch activities in past 2 to 3 months
  - Teachers had been trained on TaRL at some point due to previous partnerships

WHEN?

- **Survey Period:** Between 15th and 19th June 2020

WHAT?

- Questions were primarily based on the e-content shared by the Govt schoolteacher in the past 1-2 months through official channels as well as e-content developed on their own.

Sample Size	Household	Children	Teachers
	3,792	4,512	983

DEEP DIVE 4 (contd.): Tracking e-content & other government initiatives on the ground - What did teachers do? Reaching children, but not all of them …

Content which was being shared by teacher 'officially' (as part of the Govt's remote learning initiatives), could **only be accessed by children who had access to Smartphones** (phones with internet).

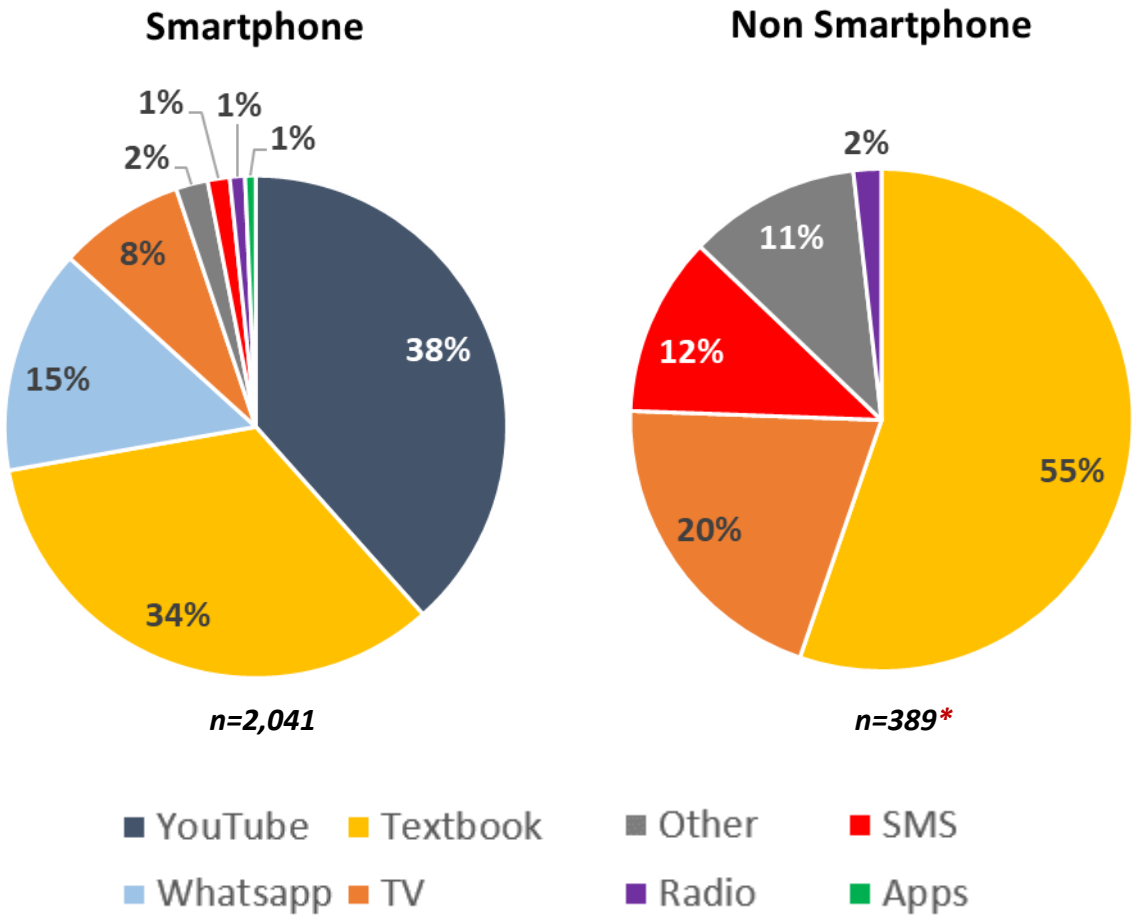
Hence, we asked the teacher (for the children s/ he was responsible for), the status of the access to a device.

According to teachers : % Children with access to different devices	Chhattisgarh	Himachal Pradesh	Jharkhand	Madhya Pradesh	Uttar Pradesh
Unaccounted for *(hence nothing shared)*	9%	2%	62%	33%	42%
Have a **Smartphone**	45%	80%	24%	33%	17%
Have a **Regular Phone** *(Teachers sent e-content went via WhatsApp so these children did not get content from teachers)*	46%	18%	15%	34%	41%
No. of teachers surveyed	46	28	240	273	396
Average no. of children a teacher was responsible for	51	27	94	27	83

- Except for HP & CHH (where we surveyed fewer teachers), the teachers of other states were able to **share Smartphone based content to about 1/3rd or less children s/he was responsible for**
- However, amongst smartphone users, out of the parents surveyed, **86% said they received content from their child's schoolteacher**. **96% of teachers also said they send content to children** whose parents own smartphone

DEEP DIVE 4 (contd.): Tracking e-content & other govt initiatives on the ground - What did parent do? 'Other sources' of content for their children's studies at home

Textbook is relied on as the primary source by a large proportion of children. For children with smartphone access, **YouTube is the most popular** source. Most children do some activity while consuming digital content.



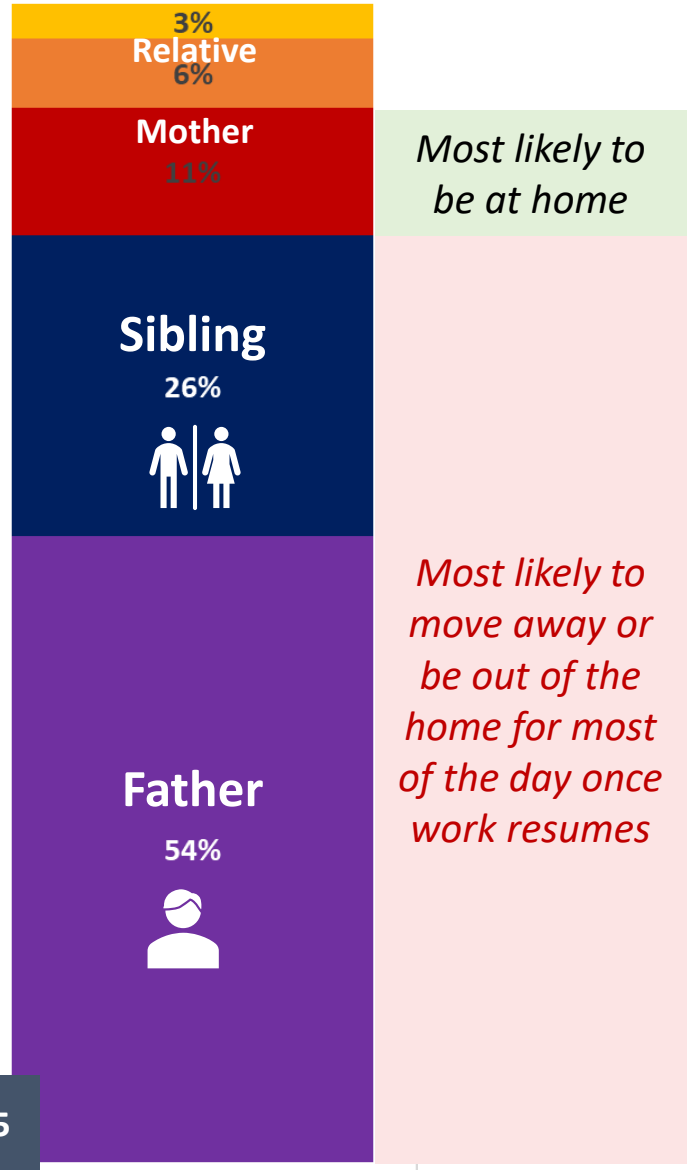
How do children interact with this source? *(multiple choice question)*	Child does some activity	Child just watches/ listens	Other
YouTube	59%	13%	5%
WhatsApp	58%	5%	2%
Apps	65%		7%
Textbook	67%	7%	7%
TV	49%	18%	3%
Radio	56%		
SMS	54%	4%	5%
Other	45%	8%	27%
Across Sources	**61%**	**10%**	**6%**

Most popular source was asked | WhatsApp Activity: WhatsApp content like PDF/video shared that doesn't redirect to any other source | **SMS Activity:** Simple activities sent via SMS (like what Pratham shares)

**Due to a glitch only 30% of responses on this question were captured on the app*

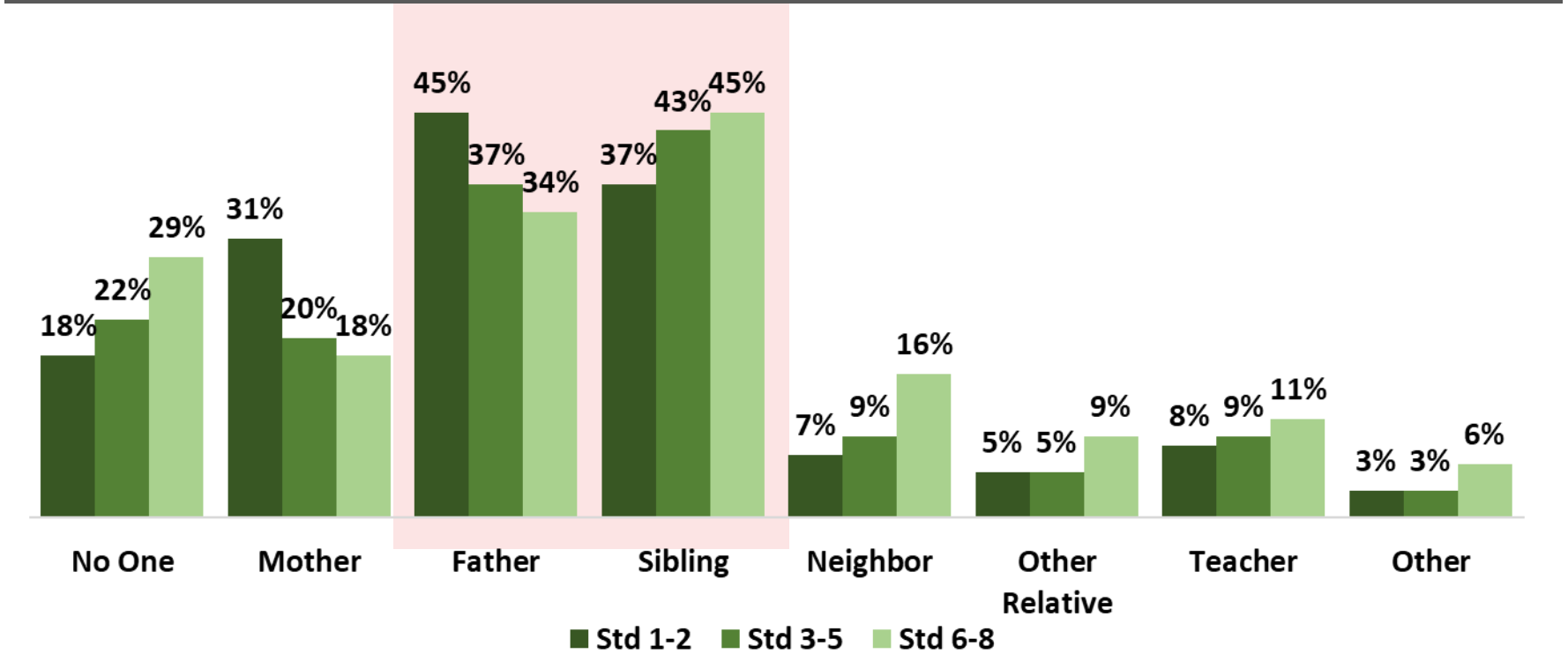
DEEP DIVE 4 (contd.): Tracking e-content & other govt initiatives on the ground - Fathers & siblings were the key people to have contact with, but that may not be ideal

Owner of Smart Phone



Fathers and Siblings are the primary owners of the smartphones.
They are also the main persons who help the child study
(Since this question was multiple choice, we don't know who the PRIMARY source of help is → we can explore this further)
→ Both data points show that once economy reopens, learning may not be sustainable at home

Who helps child in studying? (multi select allowed)



Concluding thoughts

- Learning from ‘Staying in Touch’ Activities done by Pratham teams
- Learning from tracking ‘Govt System’s Digital Remote Learning Initiatives’

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS …

Learning from 'Staying in Touch' Activities done by Pratham teams:

- The presence of Pratham teams in communities and their connect with children and parents before the lockdown was leveraged to create a volunteer network that could be reached remotely after the lockdown.
- Having engaging content in many regional languages that could be used in a flexible way was very useful during the lockdown period.
- Frequent follow up and engagement with children, parents and volunteers helped Pratham teams strengthen the connect and "stay in touch" remotely. We believe that the human interaction especially with someone from Pratham known to children and families helped to sustain participation and engagement.
- Pratham's reach of volunteers and parents through SMS and WhatsApp grew over time. This was because Pratham teams constantly aimed to expand reach – first via connect to every community, then to every hamlet/neighbourhood in the community and finally trying to reach every child in the neighbourhood. Efforts for expanding reach have to be continuously done.
- Meanwhile, key learnings from deep dive studies in a sample of villages were utilized to maximize reach and create more engaging content.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS …

Learning from tracking 'Govt System's Digital Remote Learning Initiatives':

- The way younger children engage with digital content is different from the way older children do. The role of a parent as a 'helper' depends on the grade the child is studying in
- Govt teachers are not able to reach all children s/he is responsible for through remote digital initiatives which require internet; however some teachers have been proactive and resourceful enough to engage with children being missed out
- School textbook is routinely used for learning at home and remote learning initiatives should be developed complementing concepts available in the textbook
- In activities being conducted, instructions can explicitly be given to include mothers, other family members who are likely to spend more time at home. Certain time slots can be decided on when content should go so, we can be certain the parent who owns the phone is at home
- It is important to have a view from the ground up – to understand what happens to content when it reaches children, families and communities. The response from families is very crucial for revising content and understanding motivation of children, and of demand from families.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact us at …

More information for each of these studies is available on request:

Please contact: mme@pratham.org

Karthik Menon:
karthik.menon@pratham.org

and

Siddhesh Mhatre:
siddhesh.mhatre@pratham.org

Pratham