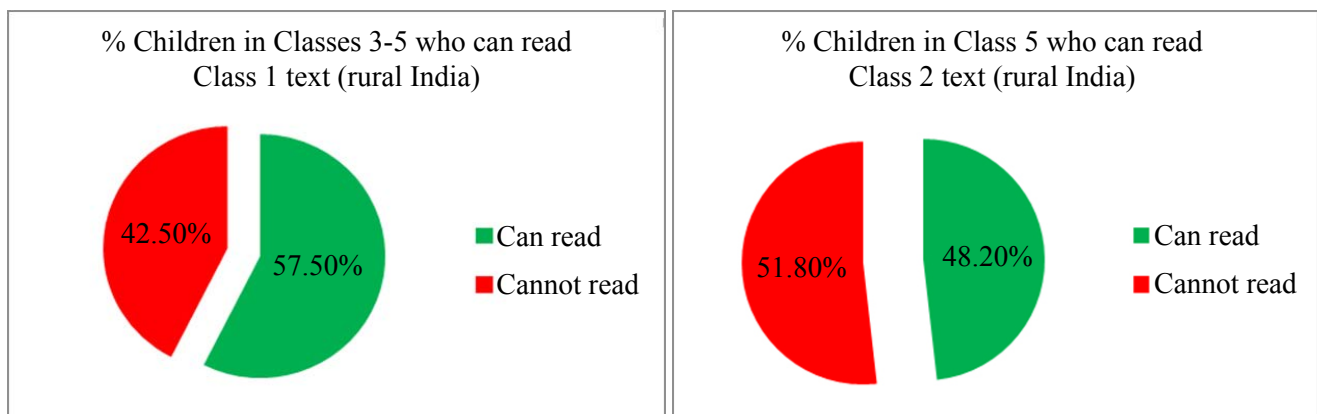# PlanetRead
Annual Report 2015

Literacy for a Billion: the Year in Review

Same Language Subtitling (SLS)

Of all the skills taught in primary education, reading is arguably the most essential. Without reading, acquisition of information, more compex skills, and critical thinking within the educational system is frustrated. Competence in reading determines the quality of learning.

Illiteracy in rural India is enormous, and the lack of effective institutional infrastructure makes it a persistent educational challenge. 42.5% of rural India's children in Classes 3-5, cannot read a Class 1 level text (ASER 2011). In Class 5, more than half cannot read a Class 2 text. The education of India's rural children is being constructed on a foundation that cannot support it – and India is 70% rural. Illiteracy is undermining broader academic performance; and the disability imparts a lifelong disadvantage.

% Children in Classes 3-5 who can read Class 1 text (rural India)	% Children in Class 5 who can read Class 2 text (rural India)
42.50% / 57.50% — ■ Can read ■ Cannot read	51.80% / 48.20% — ■ Can read ■ Cannot read

"Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential," says Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations. Literacy offers better lives and more opportunities – it improves health, increases income and enables more community involvement. (A child born to a mother who can read is 50% more likely to survive past the age of 5.) PlanetRead's Same Language Subtitling (SLS) puts more people on that hopeful path.

A child born to a mother who can read

is 50% more likely to survive past age 5

Oracle Giving Supports PlanetRead's Same Language Subtitling (SLS)

Oracle supports more than 1,000 nonprofit organizations globally through a combination of grants, sponsorships, and volunteer support. The grantees are working to solve some of the world's most pressing challenges, from delivering reliable healthcare to rural communities in Africa, to fostering the next generation of innovators, to supporting girls and young women of color in the digital space. https://www.oracle.com/corporate/citizenship/corp-giving/index. html

PlanetRead was invited by Oracle Giving to submit a proposal in February 2015 following which an application for subtitling 30 minutes of Bollywood songs every week for one year, was submitted. In April 2015, PlanetRead was selected as one of the grantees by Oracle.

In order to process the release of funds and start the project work, Oracle appointed Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) to conduct a due diligence on PlanetRead. Charities Aid Foundation is a leading international not-for-profit organisation, which works to make giving more effective and charities more successful. www.cafindia.org

By end of May, PlanetRead completed the due diligence as required by CAF by submitting all the required documents and information. We finally signed the MoU on 25th May 2015 following which we received the grant in the first week of June 2015.

August 2015 – Impact Study Results - of SLS scale up in Maharashtra

From June 2013 to May 2015, nearly two years, PlanetRead added SLS on all the songs of 10 weekly Marathi movies telecast in prime time, on Zee Talkies, the state's most popular 24 x 7 Marathi movie channel. The song-subtitled movies were further repeat-telecasted in other slots on Zee Talkies and on Zee Marathi, also the state's most popular Marathi general entertainment channel.

Together, this resulted in an unprecedented scale up of SLS in the Maharashtra, far more than even the project had planned for or anticipated.

Did the SLS scale up in Maharashtra have any impact on school children's reading skills in the state? Yes! we are happy to share with you the results of the impact study that was conducted independently by Pratham.

Generally, Grade 3 is a good point to assess a school system's deliverance of reading skills. The trajectory of further reading skill development and educational progress is to a large extent determined by what has transpired by the end of Grade 3. So we took a snapshot of Grade 3 reading skills in Maharashtra, at the baseline (June 2013) and the endline (May 2015). In Maharashtra, 30.5% more children in Grade 3 progressed to Grade 1 reading ability. In Gujarat, only 2.1% did. Overall, we have seen that there is a 10% to 14% more children were able to experience marked improvements in the reading skills.

Media Excerpts

Reading for a Billion: A Simple Way to Increase Literacy in India

Frugal innovation is all about doing more with less. In India it has applied to products and services as diverse as cars (Tata Nano), refrigerators (Mitti Cool), artificial limbs (Jaipur Foot), cataract operations (Aravind Eye Hospital), and open heart surgeries (Narayana Hrudalaya).

To commemorate International Literacy Day, rather than reiterate the importance of literacy or bemoan how badly many developing countries have fared, I'd like to share a frugal solution for mass literacy that I have been advocating for in national policy in India.

Impact of Same Language Subtitling (SLS) in different grades at baseline

Could read Class 5 text at endline (could not at baseline)
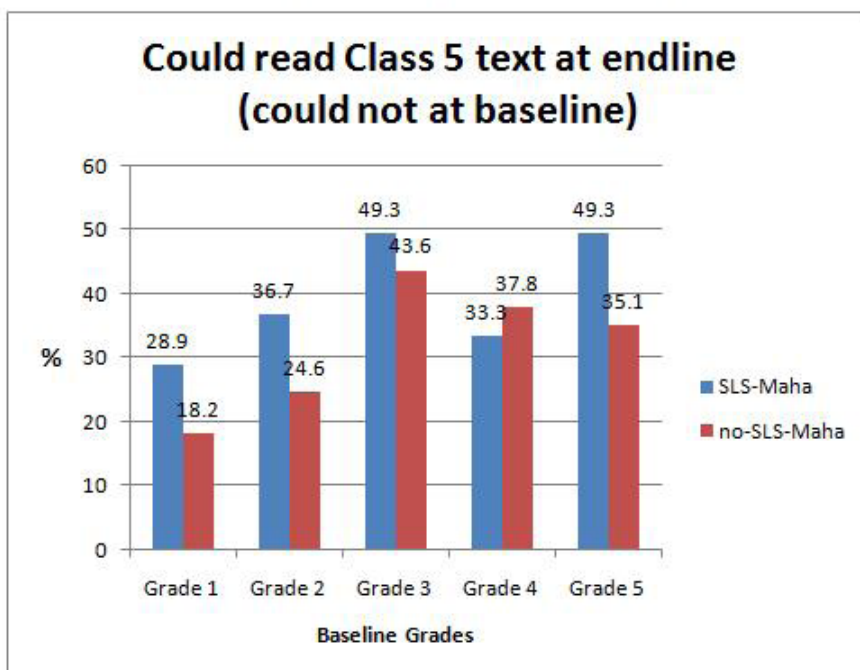
Strong evidence for the effectiveness of SLS was found most recently following a two-year scale up in Maharashtra state (population 114 million), supported by USAID and World Vision's All Children Reading, Grand Challenge. SLS was implemented on most of the songs shown on Zee Talkies, a popular 24x7 Marathi movie channel. The subtitled movies were further repeated on Zee Marathi, another Marathi general entertainment channel in the state. As a result, 38 percent of TV viewers in rural Maharashtra who have access to Zee's Marathi channels got routine SLS exposure, and more importantly, reading practice whenever they saw film songs.

losed Captioning Gives Literacy a Boost

Sometimes I turn on my TV and the closed-captioning feature has been activated. I can't find the button to turn it off, so I think: It won't distract me. And yet, I usually find it impossible to ignore.

और मोहे तू रंग दे बसंती यारा

It turns out that reading same-language subtitles while listening to the same words on screen is a complicated transaction. A study by the University of Nottingham, in England, looked closely at just this process—what our eyes are doing when we are listening and reading simultaneously—and its implications for K-12 education seemed significant.

The Economist April 25, 2015

India tries a cheap and cheerful way of teaching people to read

MILLIONS of Indians watch Bollywood movies for the broken hearts, lost fortunes, dishy actors and catchy tunes. But beyond mere escapism, such fare may have a role to play in fighting illiteracy. Between 1991 and 2011 India's official literacy rate rose from 52% to 74%. But about 400m of those counted as literate are only barely so. Bollywood, with its powerful pull among the least-educated, may help the many who can read only simple words.

Brij Kothari of PlanetRead, an NGO, believes that "same-language subtitling"—providing subtitles for the lyrics of catchy Bollywood songs—offers valuable reading practice. Fans keen to mimic their screen idols are drawn to the written versions as they scroll by. The repetitive verses offer a chance to practise more complex words. Children learn well when a ball bounces along the words on screen. Adults generally prefer the words to be highlighted as they are sung.

Research indicates that substantial percentage of those who the Government of India terms "literates" in fact have reading skills so weak as to be dysfunctional. Looked at another way, many functional illiterates have some rudimentary ability to discern phonetic representation from letters and words. These weak readers total more than 300 million. Most of these people, including children, have regular access to television. This is the natural target audience for SLS.

प्यार में सौ उलझनें हैं

In India, PlanetRead's "karaoke" approach to literacy is providing regular reading practice to over 200 million early-literates and prompting another 270 million illiterate people to begin reading.

As the name implies, SLS is the simple idea of subtitling audio-visual content – TV programmes, music-videos, and other accessible content drawn from popular culture – in the same language as the audio. Word for word, what you hear is what you read. And research shows conclusively that viewers of SLS programming are, in fact, reading.

$1 buys:

3/4 cup of coffee

1 year of reading
for 5,000 people

The results are profound. Introducing PlanetRead's SLS to the plenary session of his 2009 Clinton Global Initiative, President Bill Clinton observed, "Same Language Subtitling doubles the number of functional readers among primary school children – a small thing that has a staggering impact on people's lives." And it does so in a way that is efficient, cost effective, and readily available to all. Every US dollar spent on subtitling a nationally telecast program of Hindi film songs, gives 30 minutes of weekly reading practice to 10,000 people, for a whole year! This is the equivalent of one paisa per person per year in India.

PlanetRead partners with Doordarshan, India's national television broadcaster, to present one national and eight regional programs. Doordarshan has seen a 15% increase in ratings for programs with SLS.

Doordashan SLS Programming

Program Name	Language	Channel	Day	Time
Rangoli	Hindi	DD National	Sunday	8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Chitrahaar	Hindi	DD Delhi	Friday	7:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Movie	Bengali	DD Kolkata	Sunday	4:10 p.m.
Movie	Kannada	DD Bangalore	Saturday or Sunday	4:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Movie	Punjabi	DD Punjabi	Saturday	12:00 p.m. & 10:00 p.m. (repeat)
Oliyum Oliyum	Tamil	DD Chennai	Friday	7:30 p.m.
Movie	Telugu	DD Hyderabad	Sunday	4:00 p.m.
Filmi saragam	Gujarati	DD Ahmedabad	Friday	7:30 p.m.
Chitrageet	Marathi	DD Mumbai	Wednesday	2:00 p.m.
Madhura Madhuravee Manjula Gaana	Kannada	DD Bangalore	Every Day	2:30 p.m.
Movie	Marathi	ZeeTalkies (Zee TV)	Every Day	7:00 p.m.
Movie	Hindi	ZeeCinema (Zee TV)	Every Day	8:00 p.m.

Research, Monitoring & Evaluation

Research conducted at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad shows that SLS improves reading ability by strengthening decoding capacity and habituating fluidity. The data also demonstrate that SLS is effective in stanching skill loss in adult non-readers and in pushing a higher percentage to functional literacy levels. SLS exposure was found to raise the rate of newspaper reading among "literate" youth, from 34 percent to 70 percent.

Exposure to SLS at home during the years when a child is picking up alphabetic knowledge in school more than doubles the number who become good readers during primary education and halves number who otherwise remain illiterate after five years of schooling.
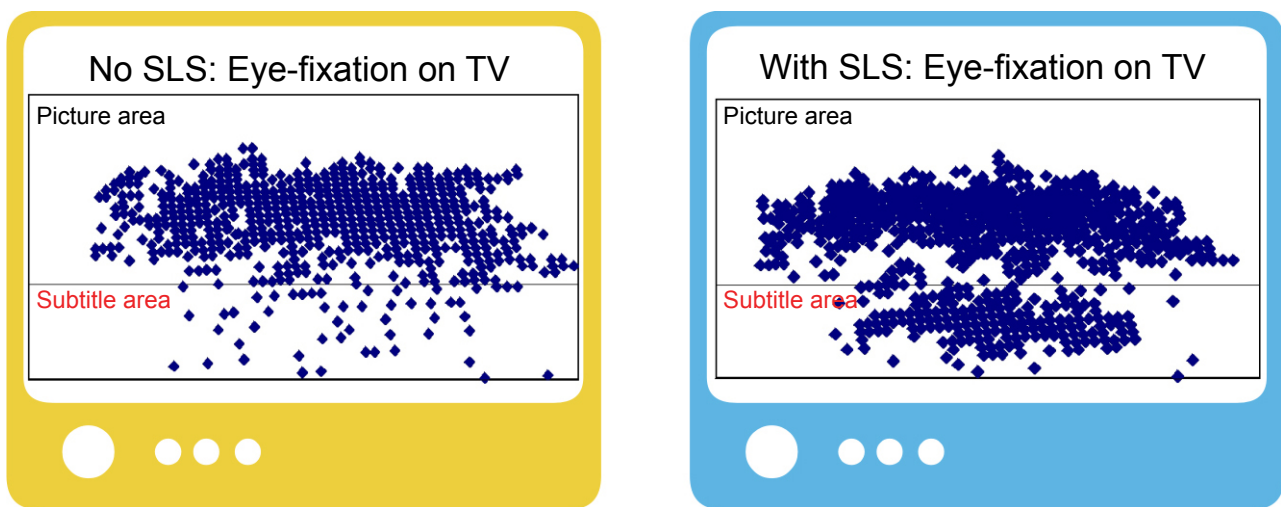
Eye-tracking research has shown that viewers naturally synchronize the auditory and textual information while watching a film song with SLS. When SLS is integrated into popular TV entertainment, reading happens automatically and subconsciously.

Using the Television Audience Measurement (TAM) ratings system, PlanetRead monitors viewership for all SLS-enabled shows and, by correlation with periodic evaluation of functional literacy and academic achievement by AC Neilson/ORG Marg in 5 states, is able to evaluate programmatic impact in the diverse populations reached by SLS.

Financials

Balance Sheet as on 31st March

ASSETS	2015 USD	2014 USD
I. FIXED ASSETS	16953	22726
II. CURRENT ASSETS		
Loans and advances	4947	4080
Deposits	4839	1695
Cash in hand at bank	11973	24082
Total Assets	**40681**	**52583**
LIABILITIES		
I. Capital fund	29032	38350
II. Loan	8975	13295
III. Current liabilities	705	937
Total Liabilities	**40681**	**52583**

Income and Expenditure Account

	2015	2014
INCOME		
I. Donations	121694	186516
II.Earned Income	19	30
III. Bank interest	2262	1937
IV. Excess of expenses over income	7463	0
Total Income	**138122**	**188483**
EXPENSES		
I. Operational costs ***	111741	129815
II. Administrative costs	19675	32680
III. Bank costs	22	27
IV. Excess of income over expenses	0	25962
Total Expenses	**138122**	**188483**

*** Salary totally inculded in the Operational Costs

|	2015	2014
Conversion rate in INR to USD	62	59

Board of Directors and advisors

Brij Kothari, Chairman

Brij Kothari founded PlanetRead in 2004 to implement his pioneering academic research on literacy education and Same Language Subtitling (SLS). Dr. Kothari earned his Ph.D. from Cornell University, with a specialisation in Education and Development Communication. He is on the faculty of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and was a Reuters Foundation Digital Vision Fellow at Stanford University. He is also the founder of BookBox, a social venture producing children's animated books with SLS in 25+ languages.
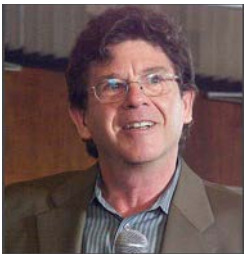
Stuart Gannes

Stuart Gannes has been on PlanetRead's board since its inception.
Mr. Gannes is an educator, journalist, and pioneer of digital media. He served as the Director of the Reuters Digital Vision Fellowship at Stanford University. He earned his BA from the University of Michigan and an Ed.M. from Harvard University.
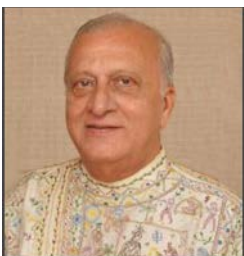
Ram Sehgal

Mr. Sehgal has more than 30 years in the advertising industry and served as President of the Advertising Agencies Association of India and as the Chairman of the Advertising Standard Council of India. He holds degrees in journalism from Regent Institute, London, and advertising from Institute of Practitioners, London.

Staff

Name	Designation
Nirav Shah	Chief Operating Officer
Parthibhan	General Manager
Hema Jadvani	Field Researcher
Santosh Jadhav	Chief Video Editor
Vijay Shinalkar	Assistant Manager
Regis	Team Lead - Video Editing
Swapnil Jadhav	Video Editor
Vengatasalapathy	Video Editor
Amutha	Video Editor
Vivek	Video Editor
Sweta Sravankumar	Project Manager
Priyanka	Project Coordinator
Jemina Wood	Project Coordinator
Victor Lourduraj	Accounts Officer
Arvind Kumar	Senior Programmer (R&D)
Praveen Kumar	Programmer (R&D)
Pauly	Secretary to President
Pakhyalakshmi	Office Care Taker & Cook
Francis Mars	Attender

PlanetRead

www.planetread.org

Operations Office:
Maruti Bhavan
Flat No 201, Plot No 268, Sector 31A,
Swami Pranavanandji Marg,
Near Bharat Seva Ashram,
Vashi, Navi Mumbai 400703
Phone: +91 22 32516401
Telefax: +91 22 27812202
Email: info@planetread.org

Registered Office:
24, François d'Assise Street,
Kuruchikuppam,
Pondicherry 605012
Phone: +91 413 4209183
Telefax: +91 413 4210421

USA
PlanetRead
26 Manor Drive
Piedmont, CA 94611