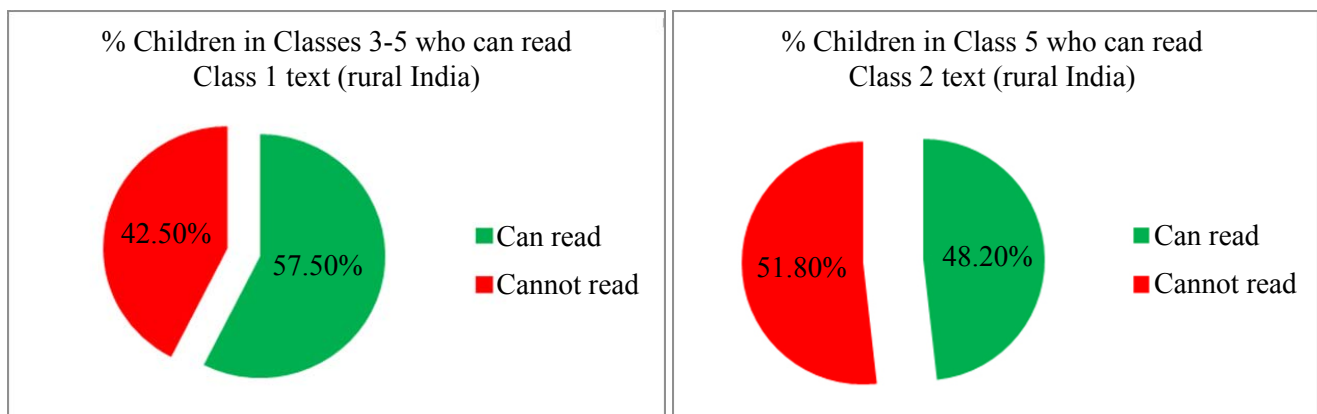PlanetRead

PlanetRead
Annual Report 2014

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

Media Excerpts

Bollywood Lessons, SBS Dateline, Australia (April 2014)

PlanetRead's Same Language Subtitling (SLS) was covered by Amos Roberts of SBS One, an Australian news channel. Amos travelled all the way to India to film a documentary of PlanetRead's work.He met many people in the field who have benefitted from SLS.

The film is available on SBS One's YouTube channel here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOsWToI2PIw along with a brief article of on their website here: http://www.sbs.com.au/news/dateline/story/bollywood-lessons


India has high illiteracy, but a simple idea of showing Bollywood movies with subtitles is having a remarkable effect on reading skills. One of India's biggest success stories, Bollywood, is being used to tackle one of its biggest failings, illiteracy.

The country has the greatest number of illiterate people in the world, but a remarkably simple idea is gradually changing that. Amos Roberts meets Brij Kothari, who wondered if subtitling the song and dance numbers in films would teach people how to read.

Tiruvannamalai Field visit - Study of Media Access for Literacy Development July – 2014

The PlanetRead Team from Pondicherry, India recently went on a field visit to understand the level of access of various kinds of media and how they could possibly improve the reading skills of children.

http://www.planetread.org/interview.php

Literacy, the Subtitle Way
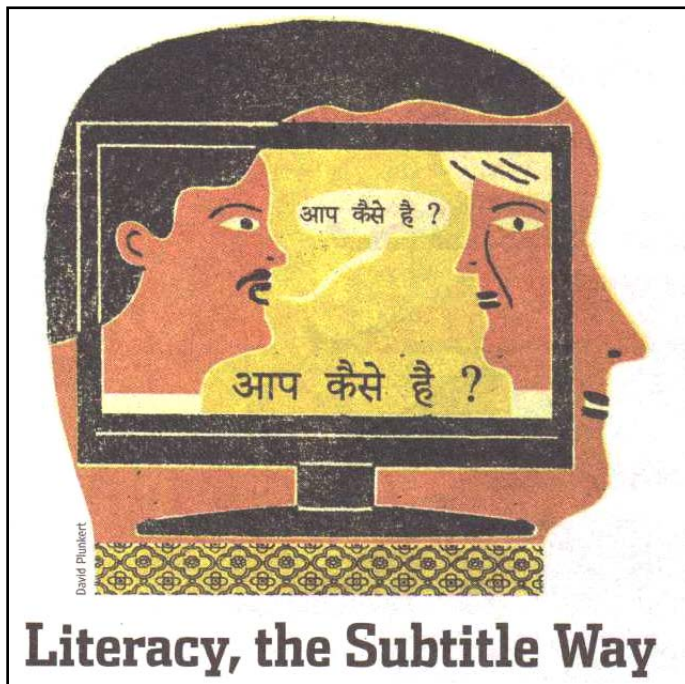
IN 1996, a Cornell University graduate student from India took a VCR break from working on his dissertation to watch Pedro Almoddvar's "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown." Struggling with the comedy's rapid-fire Spanish, the student, Brij Kothari, wished for subtitles in the same language: If he could read along in Spanish, he felt sure his proficiency would improve. This prompted another thought: If viewers back home in India could watch Bollywood musicals with Hindi subtitles, would it help them learn to read their own language?

The answer, which no one knew at the time, was yes. In 2002, after years of rebuffs by bureaucrats and broadcasting executives, Dr. Kothari, now a professor at the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, finally persuaded India's state-run television network, Doordarshan, to start airing same-language subtitled songs. Ratings jumped 15%. The private channel Zee TV followed, relying, along with Doordarshan, on Dr. Kothari's small nonprofit, PlanetRead, to generate subtitles.

Digital technology means development is now happening outside the system
The spread of the internet and rise of mobile phone ownership means more social entrepreneurs are succeeding outside the traditional development system.

I recently spent an evening at the University of Sussex talking to students interested in a career in the international development and non-profit sectors. That might not sound particularly interesting at first, except that I've never had a job in either.

There's a general assumption – and not an unreasonable one – that if you want a career helping solve some of the bigger challenges facing people and the planet that you reach out and volunteer, intern and work at some of the largest institutions taking on those problems.

But there is another way.

A few decades ago, if you wanted a career in development you'd have to be a teacher, doctor or build dams. The spread of the internet and the march of the mobile phone have changed all that. Now, anyone with a computer and internet connection can build an app in their bedroom that helps to improve the lives of millions of people around the world, or develop an idea which goes viral. And I speak from experience, developing text messaging platform FrontlineSMS a few years ago with little funding or resources, which now is driving thousands of social change projects in more than 170 countries.

A Prime Minister Gets the Innovation Ball Rolling

Still from Jodhaa Akbar with Same Language Subtitling (SLS), Copyright Ashutosh Gowarikar Productions Pvt Ltd and UTV Software Communications Ltd

Innovation is taking centre-stage in governance in India. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi recently wrote in an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal, Sept. 25, 2014:

"A young nation with 800 million people under age 35, India is brimming with optimism and confidence. The young people's energy, enthusiasm and enterprise are India's greatest strength. Unleashing those attributes is my government's biggest mission."

He later added, "I also strongly believe in the possibilities of technology and innovation to transform governance, empower people, provide affordable solutions for societal challenges..."

Business for all january 25, 2014

Spreading KNOWLEDGE
Mumbai-based PlanetRead has been working to reach out to illiterates across the country and help them learn reading through the medium of film songs and music videos.

PlanetRead is a Mumbai-based non-profit organisation, which has won the US Library of Congress Literacy Award for its innovative programme to promote literacy skills, primarily through subtitles of popular Bollywood film songs-based television programmes.

According to the PlanetRead website, SLS for literacy was first conceived and researched in 1996 at the Indian Institute of Management by Dr Brij Kothari and his team. Kothari is an Ashoka Fellow and the president of PlanetRead. He is also the CEO of BookBox Inc., a for profit social venture producing children's animated stories in more than 25 languages.

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.

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.
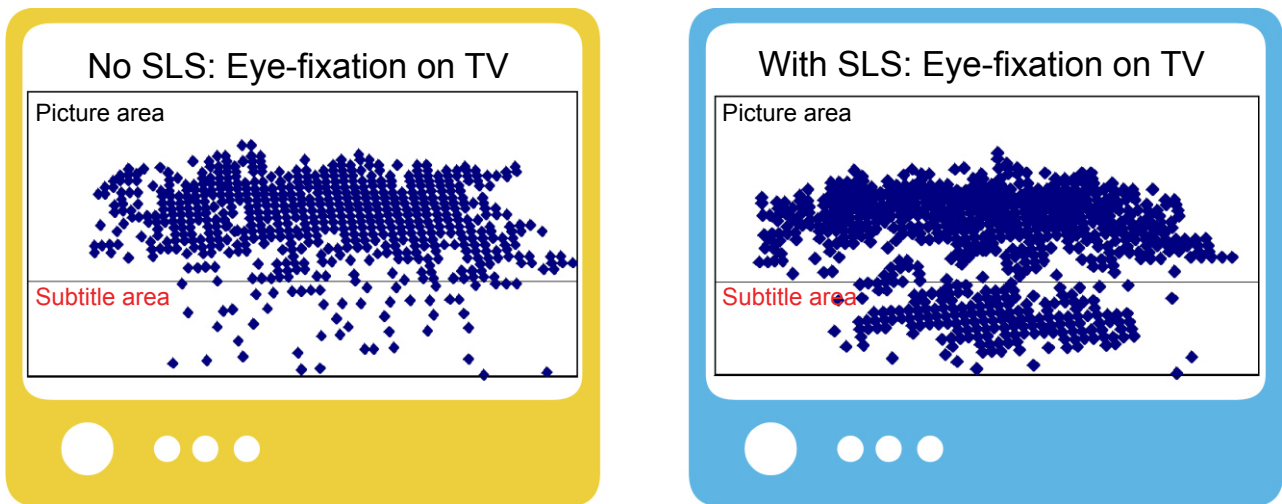
Eye-tracking research has shown that viewers naturally synchronize the auditory and textual information while watching a film song with SLS. When SLS is integrated into popular TV entertainment, reading happens automatically and subconsciously.

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	2014 USD	2013 USD
I. FIXED ASSETS	22726	14077
II. CURRENT ASSETS		
Loans and advances	4080	14303
Deposits	1695	1952
Cash in hand at bank	24082	5357
Total Assets	**52583**	**35688**
LIABILITIES		
I. Capital fund	38350	13536
II. Loan	13295	0
III. Current liabilities	937	22152
Total Liabilities	**52583**	**35688**

Income and Expenditure Account

	2014	2013
INCOME		
I. Donations	186516	39687
II.Earned Income	30	45278
III. Bank interest	1937	367
IV. Excess of expenses over income	0	10865
Total Income	**188483**	**96197**
EXPENSES		
I. Operational costs ***	129815	70065
II. Administrative costs	32680	26091
III. Bank costs	27	40
IV. Excess of income over expenses	25962	0
Total Expenses	**188483**	**96197**

*** Salary totally inculded in the Operational Costs

|	2014	2013
Conversion rate in INR to USD	54	50

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.
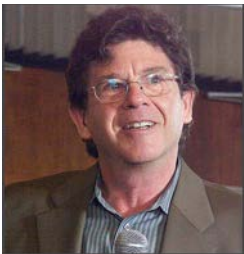
Stuart Gannes

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.
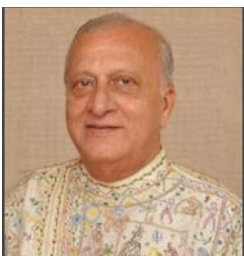
Ram Sehgal

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 Krishnan	Video Editor
Sweta Sravankumar	Project Manager
Priyanka	Project Coordinator
Jemina	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