



HDFC Bank and Central Square foundation join hands to support Foundational Literacy and Numeracy programme

New Delhi, 16 September, 2021 - HDFC Bank's flagship CSR programme Parivartan and Central Square Foundation (CSF) today announced their partnership to support Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) programmes in 5 states — Assam, Punjab, Telangana, Odisha and Tamil Nadu. Both partners will closely work to support the state governments in implementing FLN programmes, borrowing heavily from the guidelines suggested by the Ministry of Education while launching NIPUN Bharat — the national mission on FLN. The partnership aims to improve FLN outcomes in these 5 states to achieve the vision outlined by the National Education Policy 2020.

The partnership was announced at a virtual launch event on Thursday which brought together senior officials and functionaries of the two organisations stressing the importance of various stakeholders to come together towards achieving universal FLN with state representatives - Mr Gangadhar Sahoo from SCERT, Odisha, Ms Nandita Medhi from Samagra Siksha, Assam, Ms Tehseen Sultana from SCERT, Telangana in attendance / addressing the panel.

“Under Parivartan, promoting education, and financial literacy and inclusion are focus areas for us,” said **Ms Nusrat Pathan, CSR Head of Parivartan by HDFC Bank**. “Foundational literacy and numeracy are an important aspect to enhance learning capabilities of children. The pandemic disturbed schooling schedules and unequal access to quality education support has set back children. An on-ground intervention with innovative solutions was a need of the hour. We are confident this collaboration will deliver long-lasting impact for the beneficiaries.”

“If action is not taken soon, we could lose 100 million or more students to illiteracy over the next few years,” said Mr Ashish Dhawan, Founder-Chairperson of CSF. “We at Central Square Foundation, understand the importance of quality education for the children of this country and are committed to the goal of supporting the central and various governments in strengthening their FLN programmes and ensuring all children in India attain FLN skills by grade 3”.

The pandemic has aggravated the already existing learning loss in the country. The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy programmes would address the learning gap at this crucial juncture. The project's focus will be on achieving improved student learning outcomes through multiple pathways including goal-setting, teacher capacity building, development of teaching. Learning Material and setting up a robust evaluation system for course correction and feedback to the state. This would play a significant role in ensuring that all children attain foundational skills by Grade 3 which will make teaching more inclusive and meaningful for children as they progress to higher grades.

There was also a panel discussion on **'State's journey and plans for improving FLN outcomes for children'** where eminent speakers drew from their experiences of leading education reform in Indian states to outline the roadmap for the implementation of state-wide FLN programmes:

Ms. Nandita Medhi, State Programme Officer, Samagra Shiksha Assam, said: "Our focus in Assam has been on bridging the digital divide and plugging the learning loss. We are distributing academic packages to students across Assam, and more than 25 lakh students from class 1 to 5 would benefit from these packages."

Mr. Gangadhar from SCERT Odisha said: "Concerted efforts by the government(s) and NGO partners can help improve learning outcomes. Regular review meetings will be the first step towards effective collaboration".

Ms. Tahseen Sultana from SCERT Telangana said: "The Project Management Unit (PMU) led by CSF in Telangana has been supporting the state government in ensuring children, especially those in FLN grades, continue to learn at home with effective EdTech solutions.

Mr Krishnan, Associate Project Director at CSF, while presenting an update on CSF initiatives in the states, said "Our work in the state aims to co-create a strategy to reorient the focus of the education sector toward improving learning outcomes, with particular attention to achieving foundational learning by Grade 3", said Mr Krishnan. "CSF is providing technical, research, project design and implementation support for all elements of this reform initiative".

The partnership between HDFC Bank Parivartan and CSF indicates a welcoming shift in how the government(s) and civil society organisations can work together to strengthen education delivery in India. The PMUs formed in each of the five states will chart out the way forward for improved FLN outcomes which will include everything: capacity building of teachers, ensuring every

stakeholder understands the importance of FLN and how they can be measured, creating contextual and high-quality teaching-learning material, and establishing assessment mechanisms which will enable the state to understand the gaps in learning and how they can be plugged. The partnership hopes to usher in a new era in these states.

About Central Square Foundation

Central Square Foundation (CSF) is a non-profit organisation working to improve learning outcomes among India's school-going children, particularly those from low-income communities. CSF supports the government(s) and school education system to adopt solutions that are scalable, sustainable, and effective, so that each child has an equal chance at building a better life. CSF's work is spread across three areas - Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), technology in education (EdTech), and the affordable private school sector. More on CSF is available at www.centralsquarefoundation.org.

About HDFC Bank

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