



**Executive Summary:  
Impact Assessment Study  
BMC-Pehlay Akshar Teacher  
Development program**

**PREPARED BY**



**COMMISSIONED BY**



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## About Pehlay Akshar

Pehlay Akshar commenced its operations in 2008 in partnership with government schools to teach English. Observing issues raised by conventional English teaching in India where the focus is on rules, structures and idioms making learning the language a challenge, especially for those who do not usually speak it, Pehlay Akshar developed their program around imparting Functional English. Through their work, Pehlay Akshar is helping children build sufficient command over the language to enable them to progress in their academics and careers.

In April 2016, Pehlay Akshar Teacher Training was initiated to train government school teachers to improve classroom management and engagement. A scalable program was created in which the Pehlay Akshar teacher training for teachers was conducted over three days, and smaller self-help groups met weekly to ensure learning. The program trains teachers in modern and unorthodox ideological pedagogies and behaviour techniques.

The Pehlay Akshar Foundation and Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (BMC) have collaborated to train and build the capacity of all primary and upper primary teachers by 2023, to improve their English language teaching skills and thus, improve English learning outcomes among children.

## Impact Assessment Study of BMC-Pehlay Akshar Teacher Development program

This report presents the results of the impact assessment study conducted for BMC-Pehlay Akshar Teacher Development program in 12 wards of the Greater Mumbai area. The program has supported teachers with training to improve their English skills and ability to engage with students in the classroom.

The impact assessment study carried out between November 2019 to March 2020 adopted a “Longitudinal Study” design which helped in collecting impact data before, during and after the program intervention from the teachers and students during their participation in the project activities. Observations, insights, and recommendations were mapped at four levels:

- 👉 The relevance of the teacher training program to the needs of the teachers, students in the government schools.
- 👉 Rigour of on-ground implementation, stakeholder involvement and participation to enable timely outcome delivery – participation of teachers in weekly sessions, teachers’ engagement with the mobile application, program-level ownership displayed by teachers etc.
- 👉 Change in the English teaching skills of teachers and the learning environment facilitated in the classroom using teaching tools.
- 👉 Participation in the classroom and change in English learning outcomes among students of grades 1-6;

Sattva followed a mixed-methods approach comprising qualitative and quantitative methods of research for data collection. The methodology encompassed developing a set of research questions to draw evidence towards each of these areas, which helped elicit reasonable conclusions. As part of the data collection exercise during the study, Sattva surveyed and assessed **300 Star Teachers and 334 students**. Apart from the quantitative surveys, Sattva conducted FGDs and in-depth interviews for Star Teachers, Headmasters and the Pehlay Akshar’s program team.

## Key insights from the Impact Assessment Study

### 👉 The program was scaled basis a clear and established need for English teaching quality

- 94% of Star teachers perceived a need to improve their English skills. Lack of training and guidance, as well as support from peers and family, was the most prominent challenge star teachers were facing before the beginning of the program.
- Over 50% of the teachers reported difficulties in keeping the students interested in the English class and about 50% of the students reported facing challenges in learning English.

Do Star teachers' think English is important? 



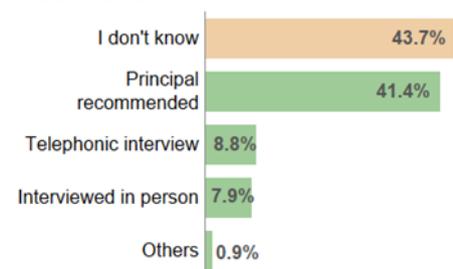
Do students face challenges to learn English?



### 👉 Scope for improvement in the selection process of participants

- 44% of the star teachers, reported not going through any selection process for the program, and 27% of them did not receive any detailed information regarding the training.
- 29% of the teachers were not motivated to attend the program before it started as they thought they would be losing their classroom teaching time by being part of the program.

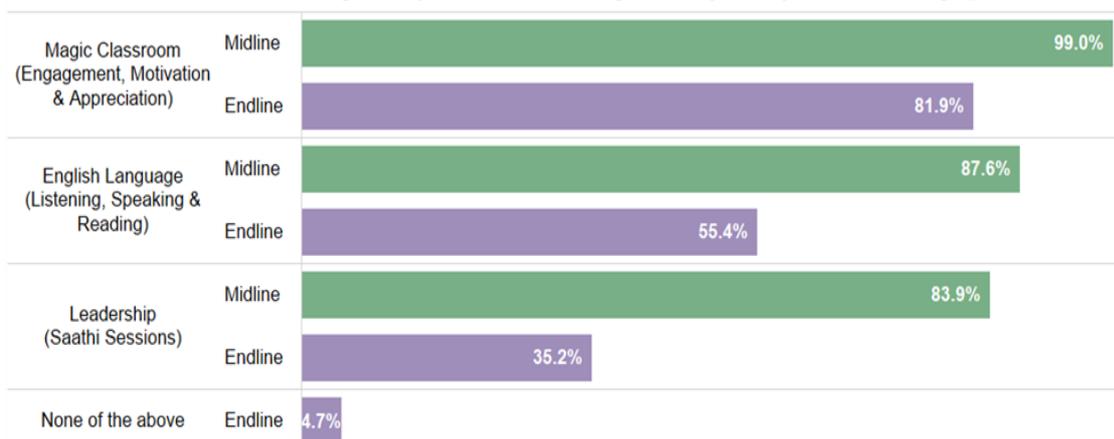
How were the Star teachers selected?



### 👉 Star teachers enjoyed the training and adopted the recommended practices

- The Pehlay Akshar training was rated an average of 7.8 on a scale of 10 by the star teachers.
- Star teachers had a high recall of the components of the training - over 80% of the teachers reported applying learnings from the Magic classroom training sessions in their classroom teaching regularly.

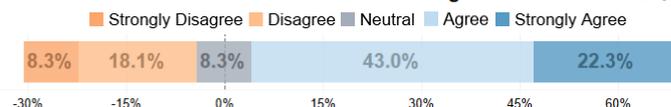
Star teachers recalling concepts discussed during the 6 day Pehlay Akshar training 



**Saathi session has given the teachers a safe space to practice their English skills and learn from each other**

- Over 3/4 of the Star teachers surveyed reported to have attended more than 75% of Saathi sessions.

Would Star teachers want to continue attending Saathi Sessions | 193

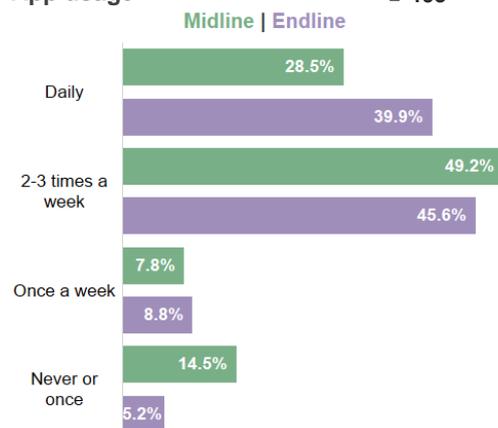


- Teachers found Saathi session to be a safe space to discuss their problems and enhance their English skills. Over 90% of the star teachers feel that Saathi sessions have helped improve their own English as well as English teaching skills.

**High adoption of the Pehlay Akshar app and need for further content to support classroom teaching**

- 85% of star teachers used the Pehlay Akshar app 2-3 times a week to develop their English skills and help them conduct their English classes more effectively.
- Most teachers feel satisfied with the Pehlay Akshar app, 21% of the teacher requested for access to more content to improve their English teaching through the app.

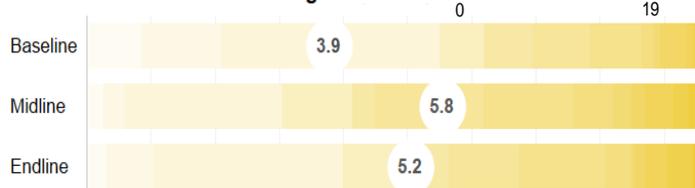
Star teachers' frequency of Pehlay Akshar App usage | 193



**Increase in time spent to develop their English skills and improvement in English speaking confidence and teaching skills among the Star teachers**

- Star teachers reported spending an average of 5.2 hours a week to improve their English skills compared to 3.9 hours before the program.
- 18% of the star teachers felt that they do not feel any challenge towards improving their English skills compared to 3% before the program. 48% of teachers felt the training had increased their awareness regarding classroom activities, while 44% feel the training has improved their confidence.

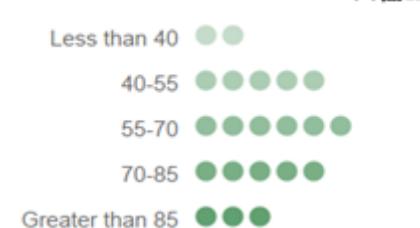
Average hours spent by Star teachers per week to improve their English | 193



**Scope to improve classroom teaching through robust lesson planning**

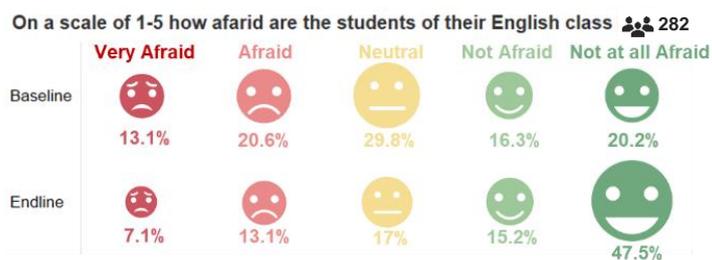
- During classroom observations of teaching practices and student engagement in star teachers' English classes, 38% of the classes observed scored higher than 70% on an average while 33% of the classes scored lower than 55%.
- During the observation, it was found that none of the star teachers prepared a lesson plan to conduct the English class.

Classroom Observation Scores (%) | 21



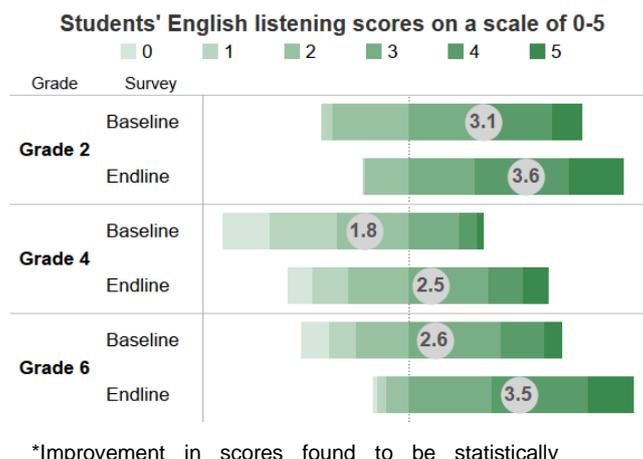
**Star teachers' students have lost the fear of English class and are using sources outside the classroom to develop their English**

- 13.1% of students were very afraid of their English class during the baseline, which has reduced to 7.1% during the endline.
- There is a 10-percentage point increase in students' usage of mobile-based apps and speaking to their friends and family to improve their English after the training



**High improvement in the students' English listening skills and a moderate improvement in speaking and reading skills.**

- On average Students showed 0.7 percentage point improvement on a scale of 5 in their listening skills and a 0.4 percentage point improvement in their speaking skills. Students who could read at or above grade 2 reading level has increased from 13% to 19%.
- There is no significant difference found between the English speaking and reading scores of students from the English and Semi-English medium schools when compared to students from Marathi medium schools.



**Teacher Development program pivoted to 100% Digital model considering social distancing norms**

**6 day Pehlay Akshar training divided into 2-hour sessions to be delivered over 20 weeks.**

- For phase 2 of the Pehlay Akshar program from 12 BMC wards, 2,900 teachers are being trained in groups of 50 over video conferencing services.
- As of 31<sup>st</sup> October, 15 weekly sessions have been completed with an average of 72% attendance

**Despite initial reluctance, 492 Star teachers are leading weekly Saathi sessions with 8-10 teachers in each group**

- A couple of days after the weekly training sessions, the teachers meet for their 1 hour weekly Saathi sessions which are led by their peers who are Star teachers. Saathi sessions allow the teachers to discuss their learnings from the session and make actionable promises for them to take up to improve their English as well as their classroom teaching.