One Billion Literates Foundation

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020
It all began in July 2010, when I moved back to India after a gap of 12 years and went on to register a charitable organization. I had no experience in non-profit management, nor the nuances of it like raising funds, or even teaching. Fortunately, Mallikarjun Sundaram and Padhma Mallikarjun contributed 1 lakh and thus began the journey of OBLF, one of the most enriching experiences of my life.

I would visit Government Schools regularly and each time I did, I was greeted with big smiles and the children sang “Good morning Ma’am”. The only way I could reciprocate this enthusiasm and communicate with them was through actions and by drawing pictures. But I had a strong will and I was on a mission to figure out how to instill the love of learning in underserved children.

As the years passed, many more women from the communities around the rural schools we worked with, joined forces. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the contribution of about 100 rural women whom we have trained over the years to teach in the schools.

Even though they had never gotten a chance to complete their formal education, they are the backbone of this foundation. These women, our ‘coordinators’ have not only shown remarkable courage by stepping out of their comfort zones but have also made a tremendous impact in the communities they live in. Their ability to overcome severe hurdles has amazed us all these years and has kept us moving forward.

I have always believed that in order to reap the benefits of India’s unique demographics, we must encourage women, especially rural women to join the workforce. And it is imperative that the intersectionality of educating rural children and empowering rural women has to come together for rural communities to move forward. By engaging rural women to address the massive learning deficit within the mass schooling system, OBLF is striving to create an equitable platform and bridge the rural-urban divide. I am happy to report that we have impacted over 7000 lives to date.

The 10 beautiful years of OBLF would be incomplete without acknowledging the contributions of our Trustees, Nikesh Jain, Arvind Malhan, Aashu Calapa, Sangeeta Mahendran, Srinivas Katta, Rajan Narayanan, and Manosh Sengupta who have been an instrumental part of this journey. A big thank you to Aarti Mahadevan, the founder of Governance Counts for her help in forming our Board. And I hold each donation to this cause, very dear.

Each one of us put in a lot of work into translating our vision into a module for implementation. Now that the module was in place, we needed a leader equally passionate about the cause and capable of taking the foundation to the next level. I am deeply grateful to Anish Ramachandran who possesses several years of leadership experience in the corporate world for having taken on the mantle. I look forward to working with Anish and Team OBLF in the coming years as we embark on this journey to touch many more underserved lives.

With gratitude,
Anamika Majumder, Founder and Managing Trustee
It is a huge privilege to be asked to provide leadership to a movement that has contributed so significantly to creating more educated and empowered rural communities. Over the last year, as I transitioned out of my corporate career of twenty-five years, I have had the good fortune of being associated very closely with the Foundation and its work. It has been a fascinating process of apprenticeship, learning and relearning of many things - not the least of which was to understand the mechanics of the development sector. So now, a year down the line, as I transition into helping lead this movement, I do so with a huge sense of humility and pride in equal measure. Humility because, I am in awe of the work done by the team at OBLF so far under Ruby's leadership; and pride because, it is indeed an honour to work alongside this team and be able to build on the very strong foundations that have been laid so far.

Warmly,
Anish Ramachandran

INTRODUCING OUR NEW CEO (HON)

Anish Ramachandran joins us as our (Hon) CEO after more than twenty-five years in corporate leadership roles. He brings with him many years of leadership experience in different fields, a passion to better our under-privileged communities, and a thirst to inculcate in our children a moral compass we find so lacking today. Though Anish has joined us as (Hon.) CEO starting April, he has been closely engaged with OBLF and has been contributing full time to our cause for the last one year. He has used his extensive network by working on various fronts at the same time such as funding, pedagogy, marketing, fixing metrics for impact assessment, and so much more.

NOTE FROM THE CEO

1. It is a huge privilege to be asked to provide leadership to a movement that has contributed so significantly to creating more educated and empowered rural communities. Over the last year, as I transitioned out of my corporate career of twenty-five years, I have had the good fortune of being associated very closely with the Foundation and its work. It has been a fascinating process of apprenticeship, learning and relearning of many things - not the least of which was to understand the mechanics of the development sector. So now, a year down the line, as I transition into helping lead this movement, I do so with a huge sense of humility and pride in equal measure. Humility because, I am in awe of the work done by the team at OBLF so far under Ruby's leadership; and pride because, it is indeed an honour to work alongside this team and be able to build on the very strong foundations that have been laid so far.

Warmly,
Anish Ramachandran
THE OBLF METHODOLOGY

FOUNDING PHILOSOPHY

The Foundation was set up on the belief that quality education is the absolute right of every person. Lack of access, infrastructure, resource constraints, or policy should never be a cause for denying anyone their fundamental right to pursue and fulfill their dreams. And in order to reap the benefits of India’s unique demographics, we must encourage and empower women, especially rural women to join the workforce.

MISSION

One Billion Literates Foundation seeks to provide quality education to children from socio-economically weaker sections of the society in rural Bangalore. We leverage the power of the community based on our belief that the intersectionality of educating rural children and empowering rural women has to come together for rural communities to move forward. And by engaging rural women to address the massive learning deficit within the mass schooling system, we are striving to create an equitable platform and bridge the rural-urban divide.

We develop and create capacity in rural women to deliver impactful learning, create critical awareness about their role in the society and in the environment around them - thus enabling social and financial empowerment for this segment.

VISION

We enable rural communities - young children and women - to take informed decisions and lead meaningful productive lives by setting a strong foundation through education and capacity building.

OUR FOCUS

One Billion Literates Foundation has two equally important areas of reach and impact. The first has been towards curating high quality and research driven curriculum on English and basic Computer literacy. The second area of emphasis has been on socially empowering, capacitating, and creating employment for semi-educated women from these communities. This dualistic approach has created a sustainable model of gaining and imparting education through collective community action.
A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF OBLF

2010
Anamika started OBLF with Lakshmisagar school and signed an MOU for 5 years with the BEO of Anekal.

2011
Signed MoUs with several Block Education Officers & Department of Education, Karnataka.

2012
Registered as a Trust under section 12AA of the Income Tax Act

2013
OBLF adopted 10 Government Primary Schools with 400 children.

2014
Started with a team of 6 women teachers and one male coordinator.

2015
Received 80G

2016
Started summer program

2017
OBLF grew by over 150%

2018
Adopted 23 more rural Government Primary Schools and supported 3 urban Government Schools

2019
Overall 48 rural schools, impacting over 2500 rural children.

2020
Our tech lead Mahadevan and his company PlayKnow developed apps in sync with OBLF curriculum

76 schools, 4500 children and 70 women coordinators

Received a detailed performance report from GlobalGiving after a 4 day on-site visit

Trained 50 rural teachers and impacted 2900 children.

Added Structured Systems- a New Syllabus

19 schools, 600 kids and 19 women coordinators

Adopted a new Government Higher Primary School at Balagaranahalli

2020
Adopted 10 more rural Government Primary Schools in Anekal, expanding OBLF’s work across 25 schools in total impacting 1000 rural children.

FCRA Approval - eligibility for foreign funds

Ruby Kamdin was appointed the Director

Adopted 9 rural schools in the Anekal Area and supported 6 urban schools

Computer orientation program for coordinators & distribution of laptops.

Our tech lead Mahadevan and his company PlayKnow developed apps in sync with OBLF curriculum

Received a detailed performance report from GlobalGiving after a 4 day on-site visit

Trained 50 rural teachers and impacted 2900 children.

Adopted 23 more rural Government Primary Schools and supported 3 urban Government Schools

Overall 48 rural schools, impacting over 2500 rural children.

80G

Trained 50 rural teachers and impacted 2900 children.

Adopted 23 more rural Government Primary Schools and supported 3 urban Government Schools
"We find delight and beauty in the happiness of children that makes the heart too big for the body."

- Ralf Waldo Emerson

On our 10-year journey, we encountered some wonderful people along the way, whose voluntary support and kindness in myriad ways, helped push our growth further. Nikesh Jain’s support gave the courage to Anamika to go forward with her dreams. Mahadevan Padmanabhan continues to be the technical backbone of our Program to this day. While Ruby Kamdin, our Director, was kept busy giving structure and shape to our flagship rural program, Jayashree Muralidharan ploughed a lonely - but brave - furrow in the city schools that we worked with for many years. For years, Archna Negi, Sai Krishna Parlapalli, Tarun Ahuja Malik and our very own Nikesh and Mahadevan made weekly visits to our rural schools to give the much-needed guidance to our rural coordinators and interacted with the children of their designated schools. More recently, this past year Nisha Chacko and Preethi Madappa have also helped in starting this journey of guiding our rural coordinators via weekly visits. Kavitha Prasad with her story-telling background trained our coordinators every week for many years, and Simi Paknikar assisted our program in many different ways. While Vinita Bellappa lent a creative hand to OBLF, Usha Kumar’s interaction with our coordinators at various times, brought in another dimension to their lives.

Currently, our CEO Anish Ramachandran, along with Ruby Kamdin, Simi Paknikar and Anahita Pagdiwalla conducts the weekly training classes for our Coordinators. We acknowledge with immense gratitude the contribution of all these volunteers, along with that of many others like Prarthana Kaul, Meena Dave and Sunil, who gave their time and support to OBLF.
The kickstart program goes hand in hand with ‘Headstart’ the English literacy program and was curated to upskill and socially empower semi-educated women from rural Bangalore. This intervention capacitates women and equips them with pedagogical, professional and social skills, and an understanding of critical issues such as maternal health, safety, hygiene, sexual and reproductive health, gender issues, etc., important to them so that they can play an important role in the communities around them.

OBLF employs these women to conduct OBLF’s English and technological literacy programs in the schools we engage with. The women are mobilized from the community and undergo a 6 month period of rigorous training to transform them into skilled teachers.

This is a 5-week summer program carried out in the months of April and May to sustain and encourage creative and critical engagement with the primary school children OBLF works with, around the year. The purpose of the program is to allow children to revise their learnings from the English program while also learning new skills and hobbies. For the summer program sessions, OBLF invites and collaborates with a plethora of educators, artists, CSR corporates, etc., who curate and conduct special sessions on art, dance, drama, poetry, etc.

An annual and very important event for us is the ‘Joy of Giving’ week, or ‘Daan Utsav’ as it is known now. Daan Utsav is a festival of philanthropy that aims at engaging people through ‘acts of giving’ - money, time, resources and skills - spanning across the Corporate, NGO and Government sectors, schools, colleges and the general public. OBLF is a part of this endeavour and raises funds, resources and gifts for the primary school beneficiaries.

Headstart, our flagship program is a yearly hands on intervention that provides a comprehensive learning package in English literacy for primary school children studying in Government Schools across Bangalore. The curriculum employs the L-S-R-W model and has been designed in line with the CEFR Cambridge model. The sessions and teaching material seek to improve communicative skills and linguistic capabilities. The program has four proficiency levels – junior, junior high, middle and senior. Recognizing the variation in retention and learning levels of children, OBLF conducts an impact assessment for each child and groups them into one of these four levels accordingly.

This program introduces primary school children to basics of computer literacy. The sessions allows children to play with and learn from easy use software and applications. The applications are also centred on the OBLF curriculum and allow students to use speech recognition and text typing features to enable innovative learning experiences. This technology based intervention has been integrated into classrooms along with the Headstart program sessions conducted by the women coordinators.

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ENLARGING OUR FOOTPRINT

As we expand our program, we empower more and more women in rural areas. This year we trained and empowered 70 of them, as against 50 last year. These ladies not only receive an in-house, weekly training in English and Computers, but also get a chance to experience a world beyond their domain. OBLF partners with Corporates to enable these women to experience the “Corporate Culture”. This year, our ladies were taken to Happiest Minds for a workshop on Motivation through Mindfulness, conducted by Sharon Andrew. Our ladies found the experience amazing! To enable our ladies to earn something extra in their spare time, and to make them more aware and responsible for the world around them, OBLF also enabled classes to teach them not just different types of embroidery, and how to make good use of waste material. A throw-ball competition saw our ladies get all ‘sporty’ and also fostered team spirit in them, making them understand the concept and importance of collaboration.

We at OBLF always strive to be abreast of the latest in pedagogy. To this end, we partnered with Google, to roll out their AI using BOLO App in a few of our rural Government Primary Schools. We faced many challenges, especially around parent participation, which is essential for the success of the initiative. This of course will not deter us from trying to bring the latest to our rural kids.

As we grow from strength to strength, we impact more and more lives. During the current year, we expanded our program by 50%, by running our program in 76 rural Government Primary Schools, impacting about 4,500 rural kids, as against 2,900 in the previous year.

Given the economic hardships of the rural poor during the lockdown due to the Covid-19 situation, the OBLF team decided to quickly pivot and focus exhaustively on relief and rehabilitation of migrant and non-migrant population and communities in the rural interior of Anekal Sub-division of Bangalore.

As in the past, this year too OBLF participated in the TCS World 10K. Over 60 runners represented OBLF at this event, which also gives us an opportunity to raise funds by being a Philanthropy partner to India Cares.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH: COVID-19 RESPONSE DONATION & DISTRIBUTION DRIVE

OBLF has been operating in Anekal Taluk for the last ten years and has deep connections with the community via its rural women’s training program, English language education program in schools, the summer program for these rural children and other community activities. So, our approach with driving COVID-19 relief activities has been to leverage our para-teachers to identify specific and targeted populations which have a dire need for help; that some of our para-teachers are also ASHA workers helps the cause, because they have a formal mandate by the Government to help in COVID-19 containment measures.

OBLF has worked with village elders in villages where we have adopted schools as well as local police stations, seeing their understanding of the geography and the terrain to go deep interior into the villages to identify populations that are at risk, and those who are unable to get the benefit of other relief agencies (whether govt or CSO/NGO). Additionally OBLF is part of the NGO network set up by the Principal Secretary of Karnataka Panchayati Raj, Ms. Uma Mahadevan and get leads from other NGOs specific to populations in Anekal who need help. This helps in avoiding duplication of efforts.

We have worked with a wholesale vendor to give us preferential rates for bulk orders and have arranged for a transporter, who then picks up these kits which are then transported to a secure storage space.

We have formed a team of four - who form the primary distribution team; between us we have two four-wheelers and two bikes. In a day, we typically do two loading/distribution drives. Once we get to a village where we have our para-teachers, they accompany us to point out specific locations or houses where we need to deliver kit(s). In some of the locations with narrow lanes, we transfer small loads to the bike and do the last mile delivery to the door-step; for the aged or the physically handicapped.
A SNAPSHOT OF OBLF'S COVID-19 RELIEF WORK

**Duration:**
Started on 4th April, 2020 - 10 weeks

**Objective:**
To provide relief for vulnerable populations.

**How:**
Distributing dry rations, hygiene kits, health and hygiene awareness sessions

**Where:**
Bangalore, urban and rural

**Who:**
Construction workers, daily wage contract labourers, slum dwellers, waste pickers

**No of lives impacted:**
35,000+

**Amount of dry ration distributed:**
60 T+

**No of masks distributed:**
20,000+

**No of Donors and Supporters:**
500+

**Funds received:**
40L+
Ruby Kamdin, a Chartered Accountant by training and profession, is the kind of leader every non-profit dreams of. It is her incredible passion, relentless drive, single-minded dedication to the cause, the ability to find a solution to the most intractable bureaucratic hurdles and her unending empathy for the underprivileged communities that has propelled OBLF for much of this decade. She is a force of nature and much of where OBLF is today can be traced back to her.

Prof Rajeevan and Mrs Geetha Rajeeva joined as our Education Advisors this past year, and their many decades of experience and expertise in teaching English and authoring books has been invaluable to OBLF. They are currently guiding our efforts to refine and adapt our syllabus and curriculum to be in line with established international standards of teaching and pedagogy. We are very grateful to them for their constant guidance.

As with any other Organization, our team has been at the heart of our ability to do what we do, day in and day out. The complexities of delivering our unique mix of programs for rural communities – both children and women – are many, and it takes an equally unique, immensely dedicated, and incredibly committed set of individuals to carry off this work in the way that OBLF does.

Pramod Shankar - a branding and advertisement guru, an author, a playwright, a poet, a storyteller - has been guiding and helping our branding, social media and other sundry communication efforts. We love having him around, sharing his perspectives, and more so love the fact that he gives of himself so willingly and generously.

Faiza Khan is a relatively new addition to the OBLF. She is a post-graduate in Gender Studies from The Tata Institute of Social Sciences. At OBLF, Faiza drives our Syllabus and Curriculum working closely with our Education Advisory Board, the Foundation’s social media strategy, its volunteer efforts amongst many other things.

Mahadevan Padmanabhan has been one of our earlier volunteers and well-wishers and continues to be the backbone of our IT infrastructure, providing invaluable guidance and advice to us – and stepping in whenever needed to teach our Coordinators.

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Rathna, our Program Assistant was one of our early coordinators. After a few years, due to financial constraints, she had to leave OBLF to take up an office job, which her stint with OBLF had equipped her for. Her heart though was always with OBLF, and 3 years later, she re-joined OBLF, this time as Program Assistant.

Kshama Mahesh has been one of our earlier volunteers and well-wishers and continues to be the backbone of our IT infrastructure, providing invaluable guidance and advice to us – and stepping in whenever needed to teach our Coordinators.

Mahesh Shetty is our Program Manager, who recently completed six years with OBLF and is without doubt the central pillar on whom this organization rests. His eye for detail, his organizational ability, and his ownership and commitment to OBLF’s cause make him an invaluable part of this team.

And even more recently, we have been fortunate to have Kshama Mahesh join us to volunteer her time, expertise and experience and help in our cause.
Capturing 2019-2020

Operations

- Impacted about 4,500 rural kids, as against 2,900 in the previous year.
- Opened a second training center in Anekal.
- 21 new coordinators appointed.
- Adopted 28 new schools in the last academic year.

Content

Reviewed existing curriculum for revision. Began working on revising the content employing the L-S-R-W model so that it is in line with the CEFR Cambridge model.

Revision of teacher coordinator training and impact assessment in line with new curriculum.

Branding & Social Media

Reworking website and social media platforms – active across all platforms.
OUTREACH AND IMPACT (2019-2020)

There was a significant improvement in the children across all levels post the OBLF intervention. With an improvement percentage of **186.19%**, the average improvement in the students is almost three-fold of their initial performance.

The impact assessment results also confirmed a correlation between higher attendance and improved performance. However, while attendance was a key determinant, other factors such as teacher quality, infrastructure and environment, pedagogy and curriculum, class dynamics, health and wellbeing of the student, etc. also yielded improved results.

In the baseline test taken at the beginning of the year, the average performance score of the students was **26.76** on 80, with 10.86 (on 40) in the oral assessment and 15.68 (on 40) in the written assessment.

However, the end year assessment results have shown a significant increase in the performance with an average overall score of **58.97** out of 80. The average score in the oral assessment increased to **23.20** (on 40) and the written score increased to **35.59** (on 40).
WE BANK WITH:
- Canara Bank, Cunningham Road Branch, Bangalore
- Account name: One Billion Literates Foundation
- Account no: 0431101203551
- FCRA Account no: 0431101206628
- IFSC Code: CNRB0000431
- Corporation Bank, Chandapura Branch, Hoso Road, Bangalore
- Account number: 52010125695467
- IFSC Code: CORP000164

FOUNDATION OFFICE:
- 72, Cunningham Apartments, 5, Edward Road, Bangalore 560052
- Tel: 9652600650

LEGAL:
- Registered Charitable Trust u/s 12AA
- FCRA Approved
- IT 80-G approved.

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS:
- Philips Cherian & Associates,
  2497, 17th Main, HAL 2nd Stage, Indiranagar, Bangalore 560008.

FINANCIALS

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>AMOUNT (INR)</th>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>AMOUNT (INR)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Fund</td>
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<td>Fixed Assets</td>
<td>6,57,959.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excess of Income</td>
<td></td>
<td>Corpus Investment</td>
<td>22,57,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over Expenditure</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other receivables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corpus Fund</td>
<td>22,57,000.00</td>
<td>Products</td>
<td>59,677.80</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cash/Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>135,11,486.04</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>135,11,486.04</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CONSOLIDATED INCOME & EXPENDITURE A/C FOR YEAR ENDING MARCH 31 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>AMOUNT (INR)</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>AMOUNT (INR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening value and Purchase of Products</td>
<td>76,284.75</td>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>1,15,40,620.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Expenses</td>
<td>87,73,298.50</td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>5,89,224.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management Expenses</td>
<td>61,531.50</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>9,725.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>90,000.00</td>
<td>Closing value of Products</td>
<td>59,677.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>2,18,469.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of Income over Expenditure</td>
<td>28,97,865.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,21,99,247.93</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,21,99,247.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear OBLF,

I am delighted to share my experiences at OBLF. My time spent there has given me my independence and confidence. To me, this version of self is the most precious gift I can give back to my parents for all their hardwork and struggles to support and educate me. Due to social expectations and financial strains, completing my education was hard and I managed to study up to 12th standard in a Government School and college. However, it was my dad who dreamt that I would accomplish bigger things and reach higher places. And then I found OBLF and now my dreams and his have come true as continue to teach hundreds of children, encouraging them to become upstanding citizens of tomorrow. I am incredibly grateful to OBLF for the opportunity. Thank you Ruby Maam, for your warmth, kindness and guidance. Initially I was afraid of you and worried about keeping up with the lessons, but now I look forward to the weekly training sessions. I found my calling as a teacher. I found friends and a support system I can turn to in the other women coordinators. And I found a purpose to strive towards. And in the process, I have found myself.

A hundred thanks to OBLF,

Yours faithfully

Sharmila, Teacher Coordinator

Dear OBLF,

I am Puttamma and hail from a small village called Kadajakkanahalli. My journey began with OBLF six years ago. Back then, I couldn’t form a proper sentence in English and struggled with communication. However, I was able to build my English communicative skills at the training and even learnt what it meant to be a good teacher. I also learnt how to source information and work on a laptop. Before joining OBLF, I did not have a mobile, vehicle or even a bank account. But now, I have set up a bank account and bought my self a mobile phone. I even learnt how to drive and purchased a new scooter. I now save time, resources and energy. I feel like a new person- more confident and happy. OBLF vastly improved my confidence level and has become a safe space for me to explore and create. I have made a lot of friends and enjoy meeting them at our weekly trainings. I now teach my children and the neighbours’ children and make informed decisions in the family. I would like to thank OBLF for the knowledge, opportunities and memories. Thank you,

Puttamma, Teacher Coordinator

Rekha R, the daughter of a farm labourer and a student of Adigondanahalli government primary school is the only student from a Government School in Anekal Taluk to be selected in the Navodaya school, and credits her achievement to coaching classes she was fortunate to attend and the English language skills she was able to develop in OBLF classes.

- Rekha R, Adigondanahalli

Pavithra from Hale Chandapura Government Primary School where OBLF has been running its program for the last 9 years, was so enthused with English, that she left the Kannada medium school after her 6th grade, to join an English medium school. She is now in the 9th grade, and continuously scores over 85% overall, as well as in English. Pavithra enjoys the classes and loves participating in activities.

- Pavithra S, a student of Hale Chandapura

Pavithra from Hale Chandapura Government Primary School where OBLF has been running its program for the last 9 years, was so enthused with English, that she left the Kannada medium school after her 6th grade, to join an English medium school. She is now in the 9th grade, and continuously scores over 85% overall, as well as in English. Pavithra enjoys the classes and loves participating in activities.

- Pavithra S, a student of Hale Chandapura

Rekha R, the daughter of a farm labourer and a student of Adigondanahalli government primary school is the only student from a Government School in Anekal Taluk to be selected in the Navodaya school, and credits her achievement to coaching classes she was fortunate to attend and the English language skills she was able to develop in OBLF classes.

- Rekha R, Adigondanahalli

Dear OBLF,

I am Puttamma and hail from a small village called Kadajakkanahalli. My journey began with OBLF six years ago. Back then, I couldn’t form a proper sentence in English and struggled with communication. However, I was able to build my English communicative skills at the training and even learnt what it meant to be a good teacher. I also learnt how to source information and work on a laptop. Before joining OBLF, I did not have a mobile, vehicle or even a bank account. But now, I have set up a bank account and bought my self a mobile phone. I even learnt how to drive and purchased a new scooter. I now save time, resources and energy. I feel like a new person- more confident and happy. OBLF vastly improved my confidence level and has become a safe space for me to explore and create. I have made a lot of friends and enjoy meeting them at our weekly trainings. I now teach my children and the neighbours’ children and make informed decisions in the family. I would like to thank OBLF for the knowledge, opportunities and memories. Thank you,

Puttamma, Teacher Coordinator

VOICES FROM THE GROUND

LETTERS TO OBLF
Hello Mr. Pradeep,

I have been working in OBFL since 2017. My concept is to improve my English knowledge and improve communication with those around me. I learnt in OBFL English grammar, plenty of patience and confidence from Ruby ma'am.

I need more to improve myself. OBFL helps not only me but also all women. I send my heartiest thanks to you and Ruby ma'am for giving this opportunity to me.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Veena J

I have been working in OBFL since 9 years as a senior coordinator.

OBFL gives me a very good opportunity to learn English. Before joined OBFL I was a housewife, but now I am a "Teacher". I am proud to say this. This is a very good platform to show my talent. I had a great interaction with the children, especially in the summer camps. I love to teach and spend time with them. In OBFL I got a great opportunity to study and a programme which corrected the stage fear in me.

My husband also proud to tell about my work now he is also encouraging me to do all work. Now I became more confident to do any work. In my community also giving me a lot of respect as they are recognizing me. OBFL is very useful in getting the knowledge of English which improved my communication skills. It is also helping me to teach English to my child. OBFL is a respected job as it does the social work to the public.

OBFL is a very great foundation, I hope many more children will join OBFL and have a bright future with this OBFL. Thanks to OBFL and a very special thanks to Ruby ma'am and Anuradha ma'am.

[Candidate's Signature]
ON THE ANVIL: CEO’S NOTE

AS WE LOOK AHEAD

It is no secret that India’s continued success and growth depends hugely on the development of our rural demography and both, civil society and the State must spare no effort to ensure this. This is where the role of an organization like One Billion Literates Foundation becomes critical. Given the consistent and demonstrable impact we have made over the last decade in the space of educating and empowering these rural communities, we believe this is also the right time to strongly consider extending our impact further into these same communities.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

It is well-known and well-proven fact that high quality early education is the cornerstone upon which continued development of children rests; and absence of this may well result in children being on the backfoot right through their education. In rural areas this issue is further exacerbated because of the lack of access to good quality early education systems. Our belief is that this investment in early childhood education will enable the creation of more equal societies and communities as the next generation grows up to become model citizens of this country. One Billion Literates Foundation plans to address this space by piloting programs in collaboration with other civil society institutions which have core expertise in early childhood education. We are currently in the early stages of defining our plans and efforts to ensure this.

WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

OBLF’s model has always been a unique one for having leveraged the power of the community – especially its women – to sustainably drive the education of children in rural communities. In the coming years, we plan to deepen this investment in the women of the communities that we are part of. This deepening investment speaks directly to our vision of empowering rural communities – and what better way to give power to our vision by investing even more deeply in creating capacity in the women we work with. We plan to do so by engaging in a multi-phased approach to their development which includes amongst other things a focus on developing skills to be better teachers and role models in the classroom, building awareness and skills to understand critical social, health and hygiene related issues in the community, and finally to build important professional skills that will be handy in any role in the professional sector.

I am excited about these plans and look ahead with a lot of confidence and hope that OBLF will be able to partner closely with all of its well-wishers in driving continued impact in the communities that it works with.
We are supported by and grateful to...