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Case Study

Enhancing Access to Education Through EdTech: The Impact of Community Facilitators



Introduction



The Bharat EdTech Initiative (BEI), one of India's largest collaborative initiatives, has changed the educational journey of over 200,000 underserved students. By **fostering collaboration** among various stakeholders and **harnessing data-rich information**, BEI has facilitated enhanced learning outcomes for thousands of underserved students.

This case study explores and underlines the impact of Community Facilitators (CFs) working on the ground. They gather evidence on active users and average weekly usage, which helps them in understanding the impact of their efforts on EdTech adoption, and invariably, build student engagement. Vikram Vasava is one such facilitator with Gram Vikas Trust (GVT), a community partner for Bharat Edtech Initiative. Through this case study, we determine how learning champions like Vikram leverage data to support student engagement on the ground.

At GVT, Vikram focuses his efforts on documenting the day-to-day activities of his student group. He believes this information gathering is imperative to improving learning outcomes. By leveraging technology and community engagement, Vikram has played a crucial role in bridging the educational divide and empowering students in his community.

Background

Vikram has been associated with GVT for the past nine months. His dedication to education and commitment to enhancing learning opportunities for children have earned him immense respect from the community. He actively engaged with parents, students, and other stakeholders to ensure increased participation and positive outcomes.



In his work, Vikram leverages data to better understand and assess what additional support children need. This is demonstrated in the way he helped Neha, a Class 7 student who faced challenges with reading and pronunciation - a fact made evident by her performance on regular online tests where she scored less. Vikram introduced her to helpful tools like "Red Alert" and Google Assistant, and encouraged her to use these resources whenever she didn't understand something. As a result, Neha's reading comprehension and ability to answer questions improved significantly.

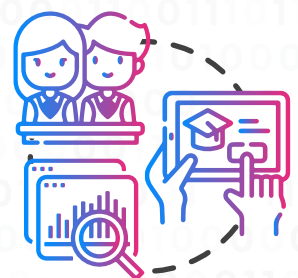
Vikram's reliance on data gathering from the ground has been highly instrumental in fostering consistent online routines for the students in his community. Despite the presence of socio-economic barriers, he adeptly navigates them to ensure his students remain active participants - in the community, at school, as well within their own peer circles.



Overcoming Challenges and Increasing Engagement

Data proved instrumental in Vikram's efforts to help resolve challenges around consistently logging in and learning effectively. Be it through home visits and consultations for evidence gathering, or tracking and addressing absenteeism, the use of data to target and address the problem ultimately encouraged regular attendance and has created a supportive learning environment.

- **Encouraging Mobile Phone Access:** Initially, parents and carers were hesitant to provide mobile phones to children. This disrupted consistent logging in and learning online. However, through regular home visits and consultations, Vikram successfully convinced them to provide mobile phones for educational purposes, thereby enabling access to online learning resources and tests. In this case, Vikram's diligent home visits and information gathering proved vital in persuading families.
- **Motivating Students for Better Performance:** By conducting online tests aligned with the school syllabus, Vikram motivated students to study well and perform better. The assurance that the tests cover school-relevant material encouraged students to take their education seriously and strive for improved results. Positive reinforcement by Vikram post the tests ensures students remain keen and interested in participating in future tests.
- **Addressing Absenteeism:** Vikram actively tracked log-in data and followed up on absent students, and also identified reasons for their absence. Bringing up the issue of absenteeism with the parent or guardian helps target the issue faster. Vikram's persuasive efforts with 13-year-old Neeta's labourer grandfather emphasised the transformative power of education on her future. It brought a sense of reassurance to the elderly man. This personalised approach helped create a supportive learning environment and encouraged regular attendance.



Parental Engagement and Community Support

Through community meetings, regular home visits, and personal interactions, Vikram gathered valuable information about the families and their circumstances. This data collection process enabled him to understand the specific challenges faced by parents in their children's education, and engage them in finding solutions for the same.

- **Building Respect and Recognition:** Through his work with GVT, Vikram has garnered respect and recognition from parents, students as well as the wider community. This respect, coupled with community support, further motivated him to excel in his role and drive positive change.
- **Community Meetings and Home Visits:** Vikram organised community meetings and conducted regular home visits to engage parents and discuss the importance of education. These interactions fostered understanding, leading to increased parental involvement and voluntary accompaniment of children to school.



Collaborative Efforts and Supportive Environment

- **EdTech Buddies:** Vikram appointed EdTech buddies who assisted students in giving tests and provided support to those lacking access to mobile technology. The buddies also took screenshots of students' work and shared it within their group for documentation purposes.
- **Empowering Students to Learn Independently:** Through the use of EdTech resources like Google Assistant, students gained the ability to seek answers and overcome challenges independently. This fosters self-directed learning and empowered students to take ownership of their educational journey.

The appointment of EdTech buddies who assist students in giving tests showcases the use of data to identify students lacking access to mobile phones and provide them with alternative support. The practice of sending screenshots to the group for record-keeping demonstrates the utilisation of data for documentation and tracking purposes. By encouraging students to refer to resources like Google Assistant, Vikram tracks improvements in students' reading comprehension and their ability to answer questions with better understanding.

Transforming Self and Empowering the Community

Encouraging the usage of EdTech platforms has enabled Vikram to pursue data-driven insights and strategies. These insights and strategies emphasise the importance of planning and working systematically to eliminate doubts and achieve desired outcomes.

- **Enhanced Speech Skills:** Vikram's association with GVT has improved his skills significantly. He confidently delivered speeches on occasions like Republic Day, inspiring children and highlighting the positive impact of the government's initiatives.



- **Breaking Barriers:** Vikram's efforts have resulted in breaking barriers to education. By addressing concerns and demonstrating the educational benefits of mobile phones, he has successfully convinced parents, even those initially sceptical, to allow their children access to technology for educational purposes.

Conclusion

Vikram Vasava's work with GVT has made a remarkable difference in promoting education and leveraging EdTech for the benefit of students. Through his dedication, community engagement, and strategic interventions, he has overcome challenges, increased parental involvement, and empowered students to embrace technology for improved learning outcomes. Vikram's case study serves as an inspiring example of how data-driven strategies empower students and create an inclusive learning environment at a community level. Through his work, Vikram has also proved that the ability to gather data, analyse it in the right way, and derive value from it is a hugely important skill – it has the power to create lasting change.



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