

KARADI PATH MAGIC ENGLISH-SLL PROGRAM

Assessment Report

**Isha Foundations' Government School Adoption program (GSAP)
Coimbatore, Salem and Dharmapuri**

Prepared by



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Karadi Path in collaboration with **Isha Foundation** has been implementing an innovative English Language program for the students in Government schools across Tamil Nadu. Earlier Isha Foundation, as part of its Government School Adoption program (GSAP), has adopted 31 schools in the three districts of Coimbatore, Salem and Dharmapuri to support the students in 6th, 7th and 8th standard, particularly slow-learners, in two major subjects, Math and Tamil.

Around 150 teacher volunteers were appointed to implement this program. Besides this, because of the pressing need to impart English proficiency among these first-generation students, Isha Foundation sought the expertise of Karadi Path.

Karadi Path developed a novel program that caters to the specific needs of these students given their background and their levels in English language, the 'Magic English - Secondary Language Learners' (ME-SLL) program. The Isha teachers were trained on the nuances of learning English using the mother-tongue approach present in the unique Karadi Path methodology. Additionally, regular monitoring and updates ensured the proper implementation and progression of the Karadi Path sessions.

ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION

During the 2013-2015 academic years, Level 1 & 2 of the Karadi Path Magic English SLL programme was implemented in 40 schools in four districts supported by Isha Foundation.

To understand the impact of the implementation of the programme, a baseline assessment was done in July 2013 and a Midline assessment was completed in March, 2014. In the academic year 2014-15, Endline Assessment and Baseline and Midline Assessment for new batch of students were conducted.

The assessment was comparative in nature—it was designed to assess the level of the students at two different points in time. The purpose of the assessment was not to directly assess each child, per se, but to attempt to assess the impact of the Karadi Path Magic English SLL programme on comprehension, speaking, and reading.

The assessment was designed such that:

1. It is an objective assessment.
2. It is easy to implement and does not require many resources.
3. It should not require too much time per child to complete (a typical assessment takes between 10 and 15 minutes to complete).
4. It should be reflective of the language development expected to result from the programme's implementation while not covering information from the programme directly (thus eliminating the chance for a student to memorize a set of answers).

The assessment plan for the midline assessment was such that on each day, one school would be assessed in the morning session and one in the afternoon. The assessments were carried out by the teachers at the school under the supervision of Karadi Path Trainers and Isha-GSAP Coordinators.

KARADI PATH MAGIC ENGLISH SLL

The Karadi Path Magic English SLL programme is a two-year immersive English language programme that attempts to rapidly improve the English proficiency of children from predominantly non-English environments. It does so using a process that tries to replicate many of the elements of mother-tongue language acquisition in a systematically condensed programme.

The programme is designed around four modules:

- **Action Path:** In this module, students learn sentence structures and vocabulary through a series of imperative statements. The sentences range from single word commands to complex compound sentences which demonstrate proper use of many of the components of language that are difficult to obtain without extensive practice.
- **Music Path:** This module uses the familiarity and enjoyment that a child has when listening to music as a foundation to develop language skills. The songs have been carefully written to create many opportunities for conversations and vocabulary development, all in a stress-free environment for the child and teacher.
- **Reading Path:** As it is expected that students from non-English environments would not have had much exposure to reading, the Reading Path module starts with introducing students to the basic phonetic sounds of the English alphabet, and progresses to building phonic and sight word recognition in the students. The module is designed to rapidly give students confidence in their word recognition ability with the phonic words, but quickly accelerates into development of sight reading.
- **Story Path:** The Story Path module tries to replicate as much of the mother-tongue learning process as possible in the classroom. In the mother-tongue approach, we use our voice expression, facial expression, gestures, and objects to help a child develop language proficiency. Similarly, in Story Path, the key tools used are professionally narrated stories with contextually appropriate background music (voice expression); a range of activities including miming, conversation practice, and tiny theatre (facial expression and gestures); and vividly illustrated story books (objects).

The entire programme is designed such that:

- A child should not need an explanation of a grammar rule or a definition of a term. The context in which such things are presented should be sufficient for the child to be able to derive the meaning on their own.
- A child who goes through the programme would be equipped with both the skill and attitude of continuously improving their language skills from whatever they are exposed to in their environment (television, newspapers, and so on).
- The programme should place low demands on the English language proficiency of the teacher. The session plans and trainings offered to the teachers specify what the teacher should do, when they should do it, and how it should be done. This also reduces the burden of a teacher having to prepare systematic lesson plans with a long-term language development perspective on their own.
- The programme should not place too much of a demand on expensive infrastructure. All that is required is a relatively quiet place and an audio system capable of playing audio CDs loudly enough that all children in the class can hear the audio clearly.

Training and Support

Karadi Path provided training and support to the teachers employed by Isha Foundation who were handling the Karadi Path Magic English SLL programme in the 40 schools. This included an initial training as well as subsequent training of any new teacher who was appointed to handle the Magic English sessions.

There was regular phone and email communication between members of the Isha-GSAP team and the Karadi Path Education Company team to ensure the smooth progression of the programme's implementation.

In addition to the training and electronic communication, on-site support was offered in the form of classroom observations, at which point detailed feedback was given to the teachers to guide them in implementing the programme for the best results.

Because of the nature of the programme, this offered a good opportunity for both Karadi Path Education Company and Isha Foundation to be involved in a programme implementation assessment. For this, special orientation was provided to those conducting the assessment.

Assessment design

There were three main sections in the baseline assessment, each with 2 or more sub-sections. These are:

1. Comprehension (*20 out of 140 marks, approximately 14% of total*).
 - a. Action Commands
 - b. Point and Answer
2. Speaking (*80 out of 140 marks, approximately 57% of total*).
 - a. One Word
 - b. Phrase or Sentence
3. Reading (*40 out of 140 marks, approximately 29% of total*).
 - a. Stage 1: Single words
 - b. Stage 2a: Three to Five word sentences
 - c. Stage 3: Longer, more complex sentences

Assessment Protocol

The Karadi Path programme assessment is objective by design. The assessor does not ask questions that require subjective answers such as the students talking about themselves or their families. The complete question and answer keys are provided to the assessor who is expected to only record the linguistic quality of the responses.

The Karadi Path programme assessment tests language understanding and usage in contexts that are unlinked from the Karadi Path Magic English SLL material. While the test is based around the vocabulary and language usage that the students would have encountered during the programme, the linguistic constructions of the answers are not found in the text for the students to memorise and repeat. The assessment tests if students are able to generate English sentences independently in new contexts using the vocabulary and grammar that they have learned with Action, Music, Reading, and Story Path.

Based on the above and based on the limitations of resources available, some fundamental premises in the design of the Karadi Path assessment protocol were as follows:

1. The assessment was simple and easy to administer and record results.

2. It was realistic to the domain of students being assessed.
3. The assessment showed pre-programme and post-programme levels of the students for English, specific to understanding and speaking. Hence the same test was administered at the baseline and midline to assess programme impact.
4. It was completely objective since multiple assessors would be administering the tests to the students, and a significant period of time would have elapsed between the baseline and endline assessments.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Sample set of students were assessed who participated in the Karadi Path Magic English-SLL programme across 40 schools in 5 project locations. The table below provides the number of samples across districts, in each stage of assessment.

Table 1: Total no. Of students assessed across the districts

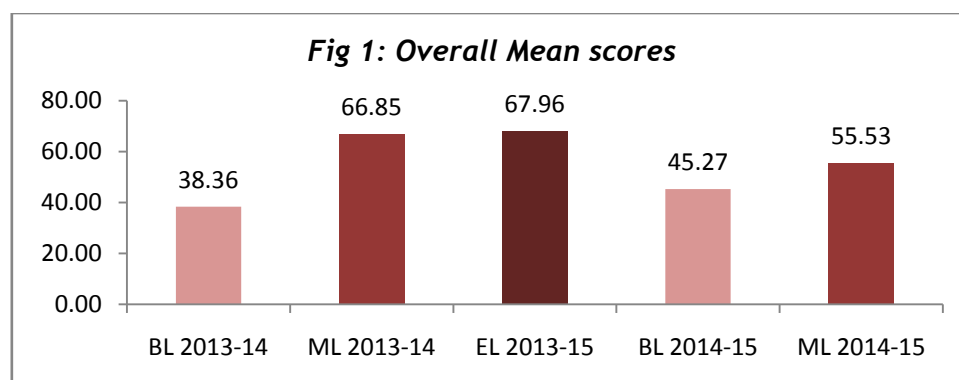
District	BL 2013-14	ML 2013-14	EL 2013-15	BL 2014-15	ML 2014-15	TOTAL
Coimbatore	254	240	89	146	123	852
Dharmapuri	262	260	61	70	67	720
Salem	100	103	58	37	33	331
Kalpakkam	NA	NA	NA	80	66	146
Salem-Model	NA	NA	NA	18	14	32
Pollachi	NA	NA	NA	28	23	51
Grand Total	616	603	208	379	326	2132

* BL refers to Baseline, ML refers to Midline, EL refers to Endline Assessment

The overall mean scores indicate that there is significant improvement in English proficiency of students after the implementation of Karadi Path ME-SLL. Refer to table 2 and Fig 1 for overall mean scores. In the implementation period of 2013- 2015, the scores improved from 38.36 in the baseline period to 67.96 at the end of the project. Likewise in cases where the implementation started in the year 2014-15, the overall score increased from 45.27 before the implementation of the programme to 55.53 at the end of year one of implementation.

Table 2: Overall means scores

Assessment	Overall Mean
BL 2013-14	38.36
ML 2013-14	66.85
EL 2013-15	67.96
BL 2014-15	45.27
ML 2014-15	55.53



The observation of increase in scores after the intervention holds true for section wise scores for listening comprehension, Speaking and Reading. Refer to table 3 and Fig 2 to 4 for section wise scores.

Table 3: Section-wise overall means scores

Assessment	Mean Comp.	Mean Speak	Mean Read	Overall Mean
BL 2013-14	10.78	9.93	17.65	38.36
ML 2013-14	15.07	23.73	28.05	66.85
EL 2013-15	16.39	24.20	27.37	67.96
BL 2014-15	11.85	15.08	18.34	45.27
ML 2014-15	14.63	17.70	23.19	55.53

Fig 2: Overall Comprehension scores

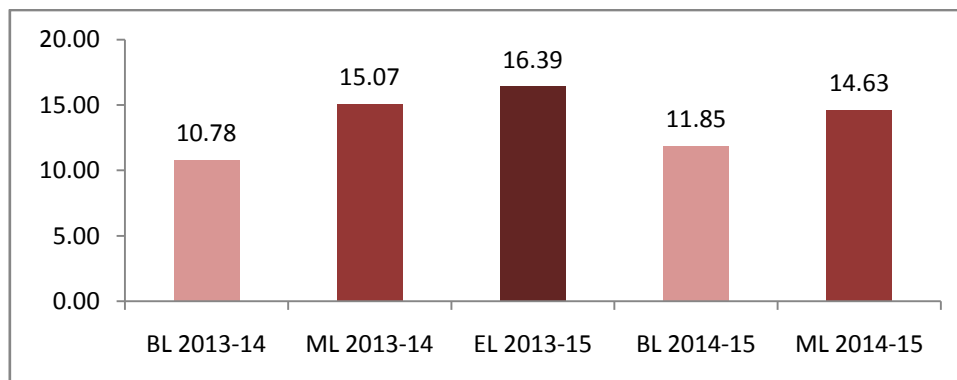


Fig 3: Overall speaking scores

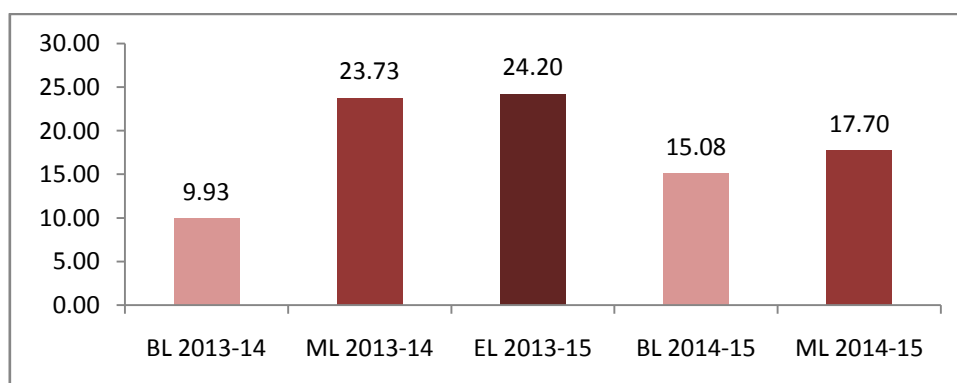
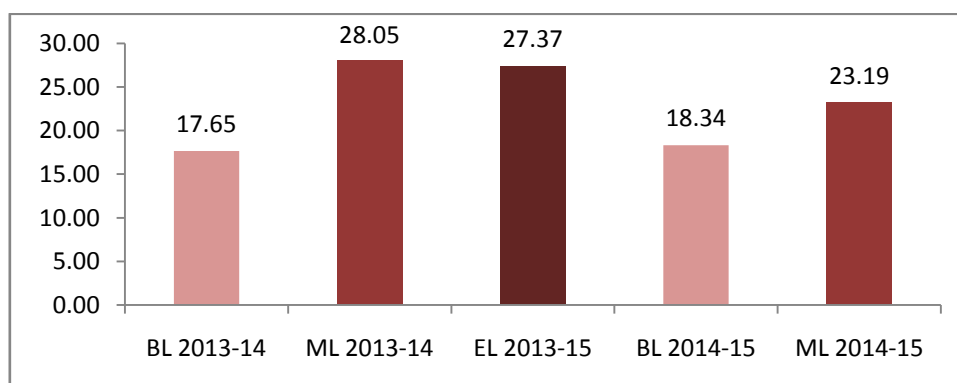


Fig 4: Overall Reading scores



DISTRICT-WISE ANALYSIS

Table 4 below gives the details of district wise scores, before, during and after the intervention.

Table 4: District-wise overall mean scores

District	BL 2013-14	ML 2013-14	EL 2013-15	BL 2014-15	ML 2014-15
Coimbatore	35.1	66.0	61.8	38.8	45.2
Dharmapuri	39.9	75.6	75.3	54.7	60.0
Kalpakkam	NA	NA	NA	47.4	65.5
Salem	42.8	46.6	69.7	48.2	65.0

*NA - Not applicable/ available as the assessments were not conducted in the particular location

A. Coimbatore

Fig 5- Overall Mean Scores in Coimbatore project schools

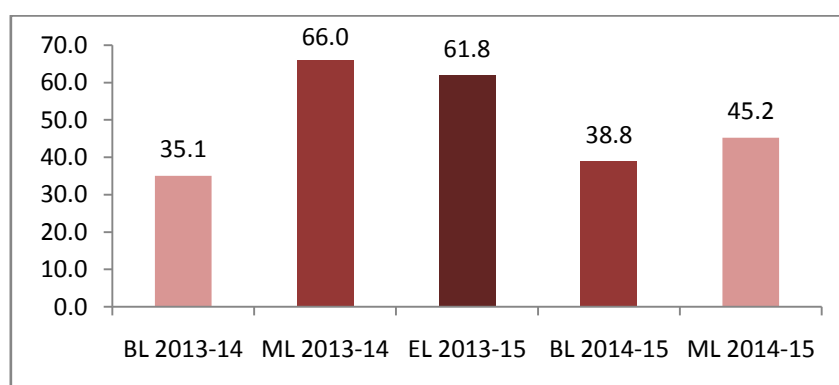


Table 5: Section-wise mean scores in Coimbatore project schools

Assessment	No. of students	Comp	Speak	Read	Overall Mean
BL 2013-14	254	10.2	8.2	16.7	35.1
ML 2013-14	240	15.6	22.5	27.9	66.0
EL 2013-15	89	14.9	19.6	27.3	61.8
BL 2014-15	146	11.8	13.8	13.2	38.8
ML 2014-15	123	13.7	12.2	19.3	45.2

B. Salem

Fig 6- Overall Mean Scores in Salem project schools

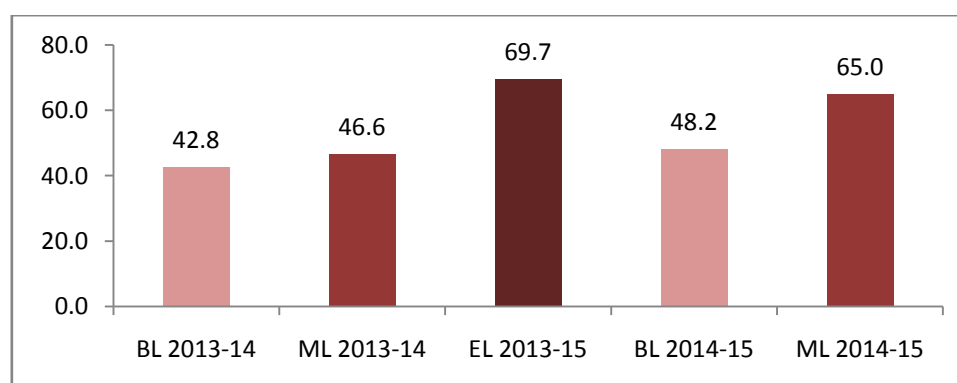


Table 6: Section-wise mean scores in Salem project schools

Assessment	No. of students	Comp	Speak	Read	Overall
BL 2013-14	100	12.5	15.6	14.7	42.8
ML 2013-14	103	14.0	8.9	23.7	46.6
EL 2013-15	58	17.6	25.3	26.8	69.7
BL 2014-15	37	11.4	13.5	23.3	48.2
ML 2014-15	33	16.4	23.7	24.9	65.0

C. Dharmapuri

Fig 7- Overall Mean Scores in Dharmapuri project schools

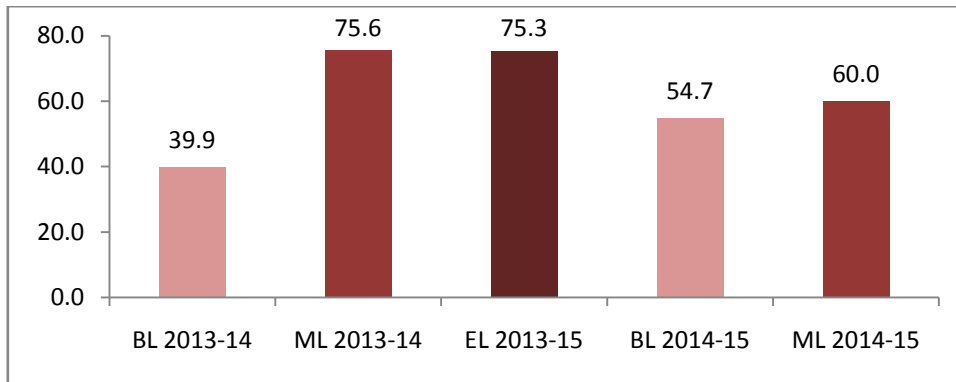


Table 7: Section-wise mean scores in Dharmapuri project schools

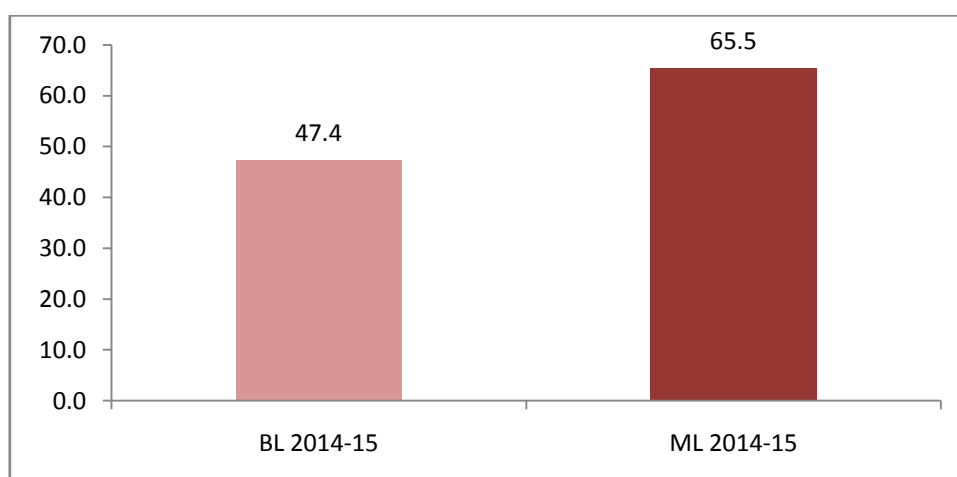
Assessment	No. of students	Comp	Speak	Read	Overall Mean
BL 2013-14	262	10.7	9.5	19.7	39.9
ML 2013-14	260	15.0	30.7	29.9	75.6
EL 2013-15	61	17.4	29.9	28.0	75.3
BL 2014-15	70	13.4	18.3	23.1	54.7
ML 2014-15	67	15.8	19.0	25.2	60.0

D. Kalpakkam

Table 8: Section-wise mean scores in Kalpakkam project schools

Assessment	No. of students	Comp	Speak	Read	Overall
BL 2014-15	80	10.8	15.35	21.2	47.4
ML 2014-15	66	14.24	23.63	27.6	65.5

Fig 8: Section-wise mean scores in Kalpakkam project schools



E. Salem-Model schools

Table 9: Section-wise mean scores in Salem-Model project schools

Assessment	No. of students	Comp	Speak	Read	Overall
BL 2014-15	18	15.8	17.4	28.5	61.8
ML 2014-15	14	17.21	18.3	28.8	64.3

F. Pollachi

Table 10: Section-wise mean scores in Pollachi project schools

Assessment	No. of students	Comp	Speak	Read	Overall
BL 2014-15	28	7.8	4.6	13.6	26
ML 2014-15	23	10.6	13.9	16.9	40.9