PROJECT SAMAVESH

Making Foundational Literacy & Numeracy Inclusive for Children with Special Needs

"Broken before they start,
the race is not equal,
Then the goal post changed and they all won in
their own way."
#childrenwithdisabilities #equity

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Abbreviations

CWSN = Children with Special needs

CWD = Children with Disabilities

FA= Formative assessments

FLN = Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

PMU = Project Management Unit

About Sol's ARC

Sol's ARC works in the space of inclusive education to develop education solutions to ensure every last child in the classroom learns . Our pedagogy and tech-based tools enable systemic change to achieve better learning outcomes, which are scalable and deployed through partnerships with governments, NGO's, multilateral and bi-lateral agencies.

Sol's ARC creates scalable learning solutions that meet the diverse learning needs of ALL children

The Problem

"*Highest priority of school education under NIPUN Bharat - Universal Acquisition of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Skills for ALL children*" .

The mainstream FLN initiatives today are not accessible to children with disabilities due to several gaps and challenges in terms of physical, social and learning access.

An estimated **30** million children aged under **19** live with disabilities in India according to the World Bank.

Amongst Children with Disabilities (CWD)-
- One-fourth of the CWD population aged between 5 and 19 do not attend any educational institution[1]
- More than 80% of teachers in India's schools are unaware of disability risks, fail to identify children with special needs, and resort to designing pedagogy for the "average" child [2]
- 42 per cent less likely to attain foundational literacy and numeracy skills. [3]

1)   https://gdc.unicef.org/resource/n-nose-state-education-report-india-2019-children-disabilities
2) https://unesdoc.unesco.org/
3)   https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/en/press-releases/fact-sheet-worlds-nearly-240-million-children-living-disabilities-are-being-denied

Need

Inclusive education systems which are both equitable and empowering can provide each and every child an equal opportunity for educational progress, as articulated in SDG 2030. India is a signatory to the UN Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) thereby adopting a rights-based approach to inclusion of Children with Disabilities (CwD). The Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD) Act 2016 has also helped create a comprehensive legal framework for inclusive education. Disability inclusive education helps to foster a culture of respect and belonging in schools by creating an environment where everyone is fair to one another and accepting individual differences becomes the norm. This results in reduced levels of gender- based violence, crime, bullying, and discrimination. If India has to achieve the FLN mission, it is imperative and urgent to build solutions to ensure that CWD's achieve FLN skills resulting in better learning and life outcomes.

Project Samavesh- Tamil Nadu Partnership

Objective : To increase identification and improve Foundational Literacy and Numeracy outcomes for children with disabilities through systemic integration.

Our Model- Sol's ARC works as a technical partner and Project Management Unit (PMU) for the inclusive Education department Samagra Shiksha. We also work in 3 innovation districts, Kanchipuram, Villipuram and Theni in selected 100 schools to pilot our solutions and bring evidence to the state for adoption and scale.

Key Interventions-

1. **Universal Screening-** This intervention focuses on integrating Universal screening for all children at an intersection of health, mental health, disability and nutrition through a tech based screening tool.

2. **Accessible Learning Materials-** This consists of developing FLN materials aligned to the state program based on Universal Design for Learning in the form of student workbooks, teacher handbooks, assessments and classroom learning materials to be used in the mainstream classrooms by the teachers for CWSN children along with other children.

3. **Capacity Building** - Focuses on building the capacity of teachers and special educators to teach FLN inclusively to ensure CWSN children are included in mainstream classrooms.

4. **Systemic Integration** - Field activities are conducted in the selected 100 schools in 3 innovation districts that Sol's ARC works in. This ensures we take our learnings to the state for further replication and institutionalisation leading to systemic integration.

TAMIL NADU DATA

STATE

49lakh

Total number of students

44000

Total number of schools

270000

Total number of teachers

1776

Total number of special educators

3 INNOVATION DISTRICTS

3157

Total number of students

2415

Total number of schools

3625

Total number of teachers

114

Total number of special educators

100 PILOT SCHOOLS

385

Total number of students

100

Total number of schools

593

Total number of teachers

25

Total number of special educators

Universal screening:

OBJECTIVE To improve the identification of all children at risk for health, mental health, nutrition deficits and disability

49 lakh

students have been universally screened across the state

4 lakh

students have been referred at risk for disability

Welcome to RedFlag APP training at Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Matric Higher Secondary School

TESTIMONIAL

*The app is new and unique that not only help CWSN but other children too! We have learnt that these children shouldn't be excluded as they have skills and are entitled to many schemes that we have learnt today.The games conducted during the training were exciting,–
Ms Suhasini, Panchayat Union Middle School Teacher, Marakkanam block-Villupuram District.*

UNIVERSAL SCREENING- KEY ACTIVITIES

PILOT TESTING

ACTIVITY

Pilot testing of screening tool for validation with 3200 teachers in 3 districts

RESULT

Screening tool validated and findings published in 2 International journals

INTERMINISTRY CONVERGENCE

ACTIVITY

Facilitation for convergence between health and inclusion department

RESULT

Expansion of the screening tool to include disability as well as health and nutrition.

SCREENING

ACTIVITY

Collaboratively working with the state technical team for integration of the screening tool

RESULT

Integration of the screening tool with the state platform and used by every teacher to screen every child in their classroom.

"Most people see what is, and never see what can be"

Baseline Assessments

OBJECTIVE
To identify the current learning levels of Children with special needs (CWSN) in Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN)

385
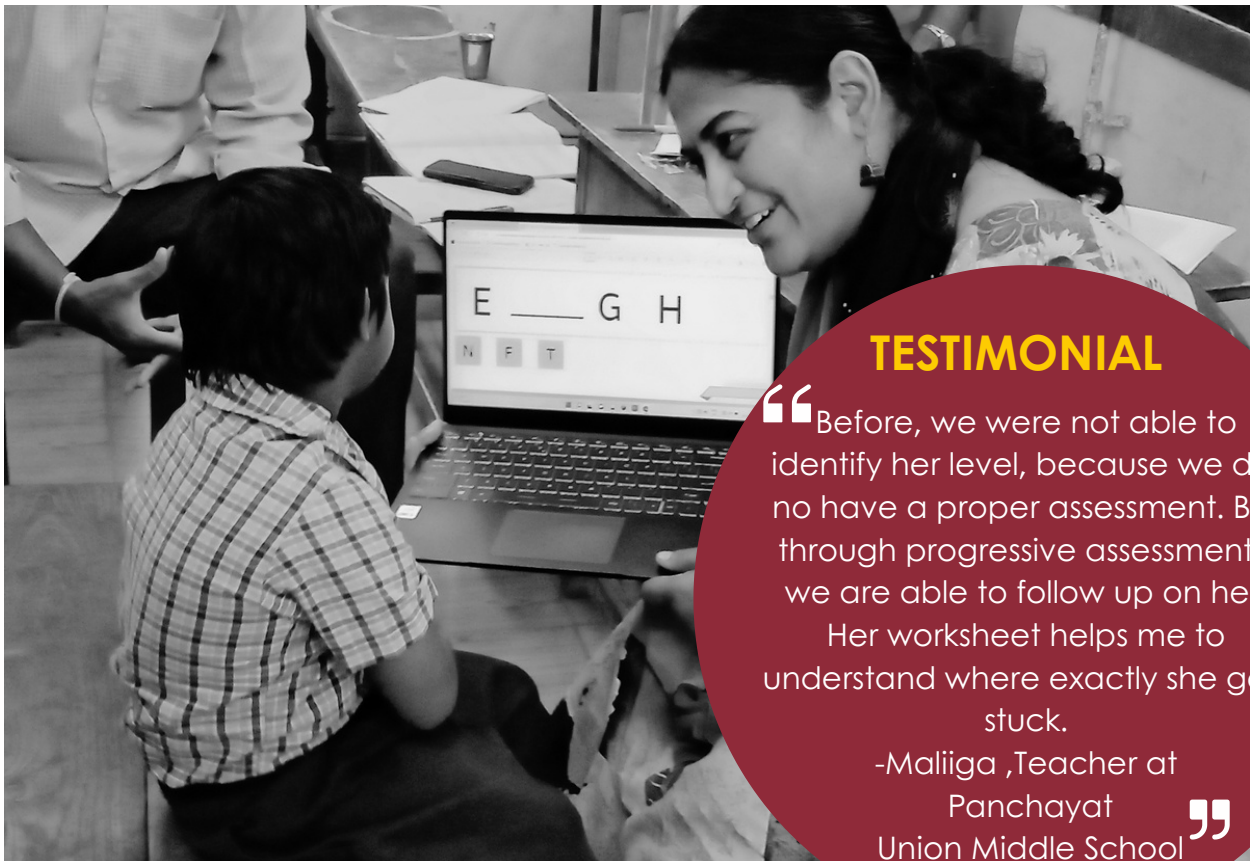Number of students assessed for baseline in 100 pilot schools

90000
Number of students assessed for baseline in the entire state

75%
of the students had not achieved even the basic FLN skills

TESTIMONIAL

"Before, we were not able to identify her level, because we did no have a proper assessment. But through progressive assessments, we are able to follow up on her. Her worksheet helps me to understand where exactly she gets stuck.
-Maliiga ,Teacher at Panchayat Union Middle School"

BASELINE ASSESSMENT- KEY ACTIVITIES

DEVELOPMENT OF BASELINE TOOL

ACTIVITY
Baseline assessment was adapted and aligned to the state FLN Assessment to include CWSN students.

RESULT
Baseline test was developed and implemented across the state to identify learning levels of CWSN students in FLN.

BASELINE ASSESSMENT PILOT

ACTIVITY
Baseline assessments were conducted for 385 students in 100 pilot schools

RESULTS
75% of the students had not achieved even the basic FLN skills

ADOPTION BY THE STATE

ACTIVITY
Results of pilot were presented to the state with guidelines for adoption.

OUTCOME
State has now adopted the baseline test and everyCWSN child is being screened by special educators across the state.

"If you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid."

Vishu is an 8 years old student studying in 3rd standard at Panchayat Union Middle School, Nagalapuram, Theni district. He has Autism and is also non verbal. He lives with his grandmother and his father after his mother abandoned him. Vishnu visits the school 2 days a week. We saw during the baseline assessment that he was able to identify a few pictures pointing his fingers to the image he saw on the laptop and we were surprised. We did not know he can understand. Inspite of his odds , Vishnu continues to visit the school and his teachers strongly believe that he will show progress with all the efforts that are now been taken.

Accessible Learning

OBJECTIVE To improve the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy skills of Children with special needs(CWSN) in the state of Tamil Nadu

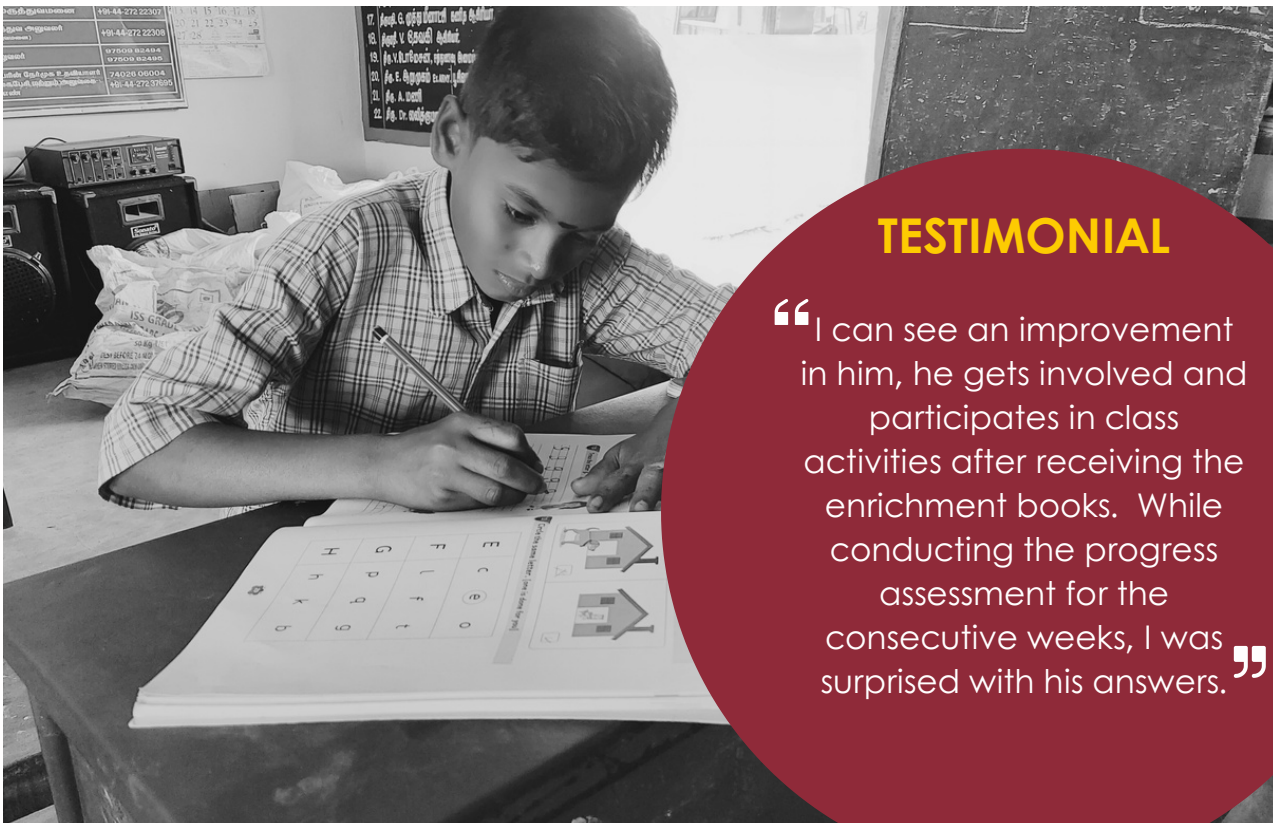## 97
Students received enrichment books in 100 pilot schools

50%
of the students achieved competency level on formative assessments

30%
Growth in the response rate on formative assessments with all students now responding on the assessments

TESTIMONIAL

"I can see an improvement in him, he gets involved and participates in class activities after receiving the enrichment books. While conducting the progress assessment for the consecutive weeks, I was surprised with his answers."

ACCESSIBLE LEARNING- KEY ACTIVITIES

ENRICHMENT MATERIALS

ACTIVITY

Enrichment materials were distributed to 97 students in the 100 pilot schools

RESULTS

CSWN students started using enrichment materials which addressed their learning needs.

CLASSROOOM OBSERVATIONS

ACTIVITY

150 classroom observations for support for usage of enrichment materials

RESULTS

More than 60% of the teachers at the end of week 4 felt confident in using the enrichment materials

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

ACTIVITY

4 Formative assessments were conducted for students for 4 weeks and data was analysed in this period.

OUTCOME

50% of the students achieved competency level on formative assessment across English, Math and Tamil.

Kamalesh is in 7th grade at Municipal middle school, Yagasalai, Kancheepuram block. He is identified as having intellectual disability. His mother Chitra says," I had to hide the enrichment workbooks because Kamalesh loves his books as he wanted to complete it quickly ". I could see him showing more interest in learning, she added. Kamalesh does the books by himself as it has simple exercises that he can understand. Currently he is in Arumbu level in English and Math, Mottu level in Tamil. His mother also said, " I would be glad if the next level of books is given to my son as he learns quickly using these".

> **"Every child can learn, just not on the same day or in the same way"**

Capacity Building

OBJECTIVE To improve the capacity of teachers and special educators for inclusion of Children with Special needs(CWSN) in classrooms.

54
trainings in the last academic year both online and offline

54000
Teachers trained across the entire state

2000
Special educators trained across the entire state

TESTIMONIAL

"The enrichment workbook is very useful to our special children in the school. I believe the book supports special children and eliminates their learning lags. I thank the Sol's ARC staff for supporting us."

CAPACITY BUILDING- KEY ACTIVITIES

APP BASED TRAINING

ACTIVITY

Teachers and special educators were trained to use the app for information on schemes

RESULT

93 students were applied for UDID card

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

ACTIVITY

25635 teachers were trained across 33 districts for Classroom Teaching and environment, and inclusion in Extra curricular

RESULT

Teachers have been using these strategies in their classrooms to include CWSN students though a lot more nudging will be needed.
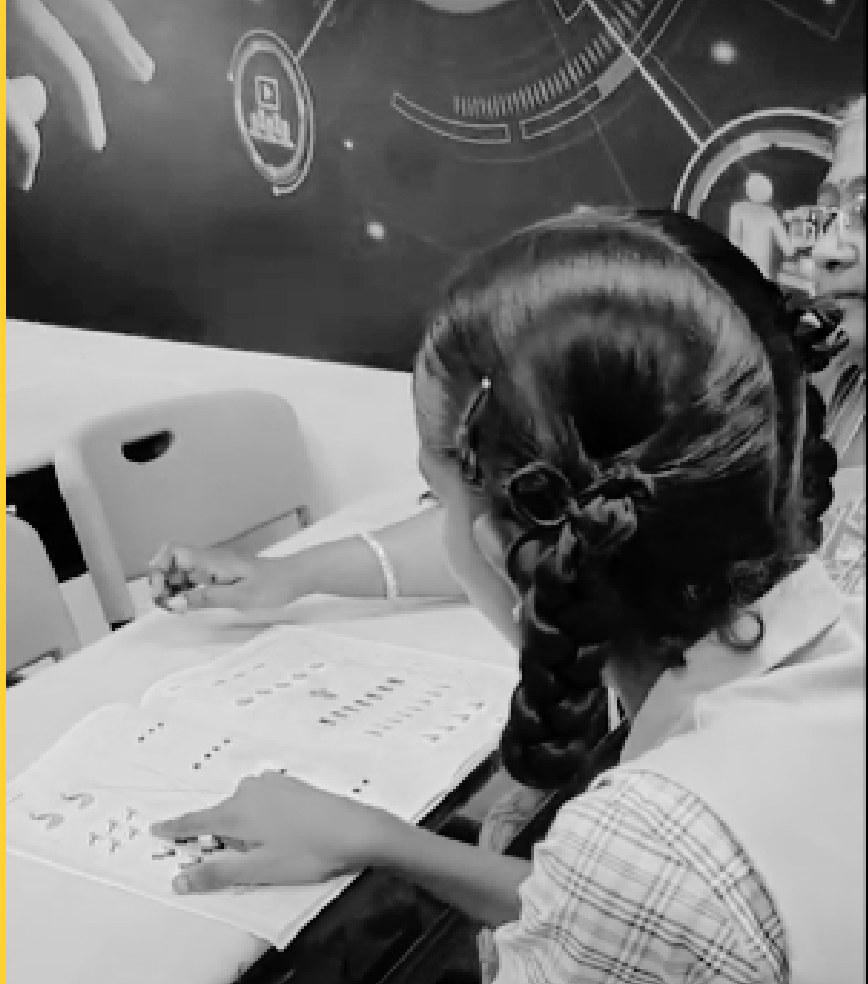

DISABILITY AWARENESS

ACTIVITY

Training was conducted on awareness for inclusion of visual impairement students

RESULT

Training was conducted on awareness for inclusion of visual impairement students

> "Every child needs a champion, a teacher who will never give up on them."

Durga used to be regularly absent for school before receiving enrichment books. The teacher after receiving the enrichment book calls her during lunch period or after class, to work with the book. Durga is progressing very well and since then she hasn't taken a single day off. She comes to school every day, she catches up with her teacher during lunch or after class hours and ensures she completes that day's work. The teacher says that Durga comes to her and asks her to teach her. "As a teacher I can't say no to a student who approaches me to teach her", so we sit during lunch hours or after class. Now Durga asks "why can't we work during weekends, why give leave?".

Enriching School Ecosystems

OBJECTIVE To improve the school ecosystem through school and community level awareness initiatives.

44000
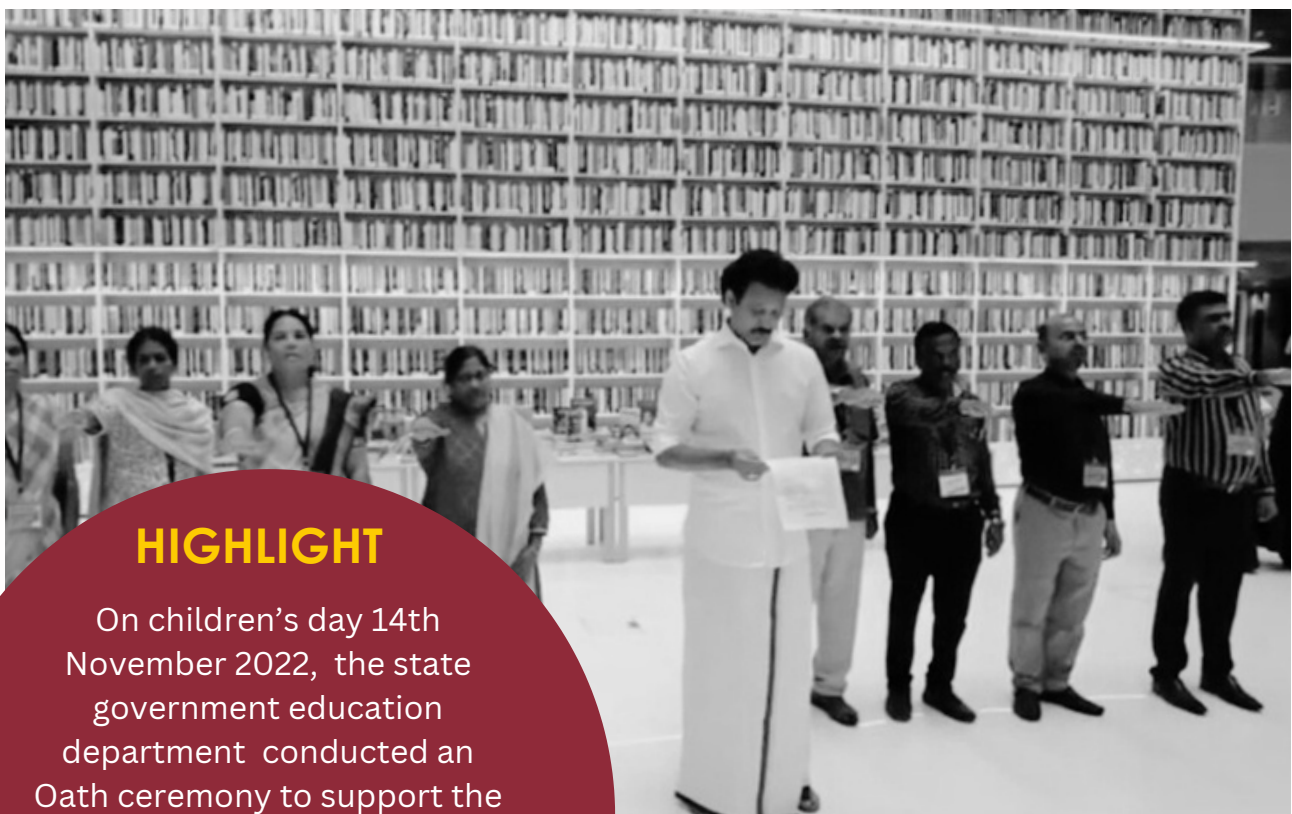schools in which oath for inclusion was taken on children's day

12 lakh
milk packets distributed across the state with inclusion messages

385
blocks in which rallies were organised

HIGHLIGHT

On children's day 14th November 2022, the state government education department conducted an Oath ceremony to support the inclusion of CWSN in schools. This was led by the Education minister of Tamil Nadu and then was taken by every school in the state on Children's Day.

SCHOOL ECOSYSTEM- KEY ACTIVITIES

RALLIES

ACTIVITY

Rallies were designed to spread awareness around disability in the communities

RESULT

Rallies were conducted across every block in the entire state

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SPORTS & CULTURAL

ACTIVITY

Sports and cultural activities were designed for promoting inclusion across all government schools

RESULT

Cultural and sports activities were conducted across the state

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DISTRIBUTION OF MILK PACKETS

ACTIVITY

Developing creative messages on inclusion for every household.

RESULT

More than 12 lakh milk packets with inclusion messages were distributed across the state.

THE INCLUSION OATH

"We, as government school students of Tamilnadu take a pledge on this Children's Day!

We pledge to always stand with children with special needs for their development in the society and to make all our efforts to create awareness about the social, economic and cultural problems they may face!.

We feel that it is essential to ensure that differently-abled children can enjoy full, equal and successful life here without any discrimination and enjoy all their rights!

We also promise to treat them as one of our family and nurture them and their friendship!!

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept and celebrate those differences."

Systemic Transformation

	PILOT SCHOOLS	INNOVATION DISTRICT	STATE WIDE
SCREENING TOOL	☑	☑	☑
BASELINE ASSESSMENTS	☑	☑	☑
ACCESSIBLE FLN LEARNING MATERIALS	☑	☑	☑
SCHOOL ECOSYSTEM BUILDING	☑	☑	☑

Systemic Transformation

	PILOT SCHOOLS	INNOVATION DISTRICT	STATE WIDE
TEACHER CAPACITY BUILDING	☑	☑	☑
SPECIAL EDUCATOR CAPACITY BUILDING	☑	☑	☑
LEARNING OUTCOME TRACKING	☑	☐	☐
SOCIAL SCHEMES & ENTITLEMENTS	☑	☐	☐