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## Katha on Ratha

Annual Report 2016 - 2017


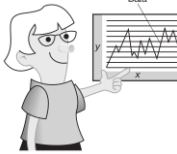
To all who are young at heart

# Part 1





# The story of Katha

& Its journey on Ratha

Once upon a time not so long long ago but a little long ago, couple of years ago to be precise (*well, not sure if that is long ago, but it feels so, as it had been an exciting journey for us*), few of the so called "techies"  huddled to solve, thankfully not a "big data"  problem but nevertheless a big problem of "How to develop passion in Children towards reading books?" .

After trying different recipes  & applying

diverse learnings, thankfully by divine grace

"Eureka !!!"  happened and thus we  
 came into existence.

It was bestowed upon the both of us, "Ka" and "Tha"

to recreate the bedtime story telling  moments

and we had these defining dialogues going between

us....

**Ka :** "How do you get Children hooked up to passionate reading?"

**Tha:** "This has been brewing in my head for sometime. Let it just be storybooks & importantly, each child having a copy of the same story. Reading the story aloud, along with Children would do the magic"

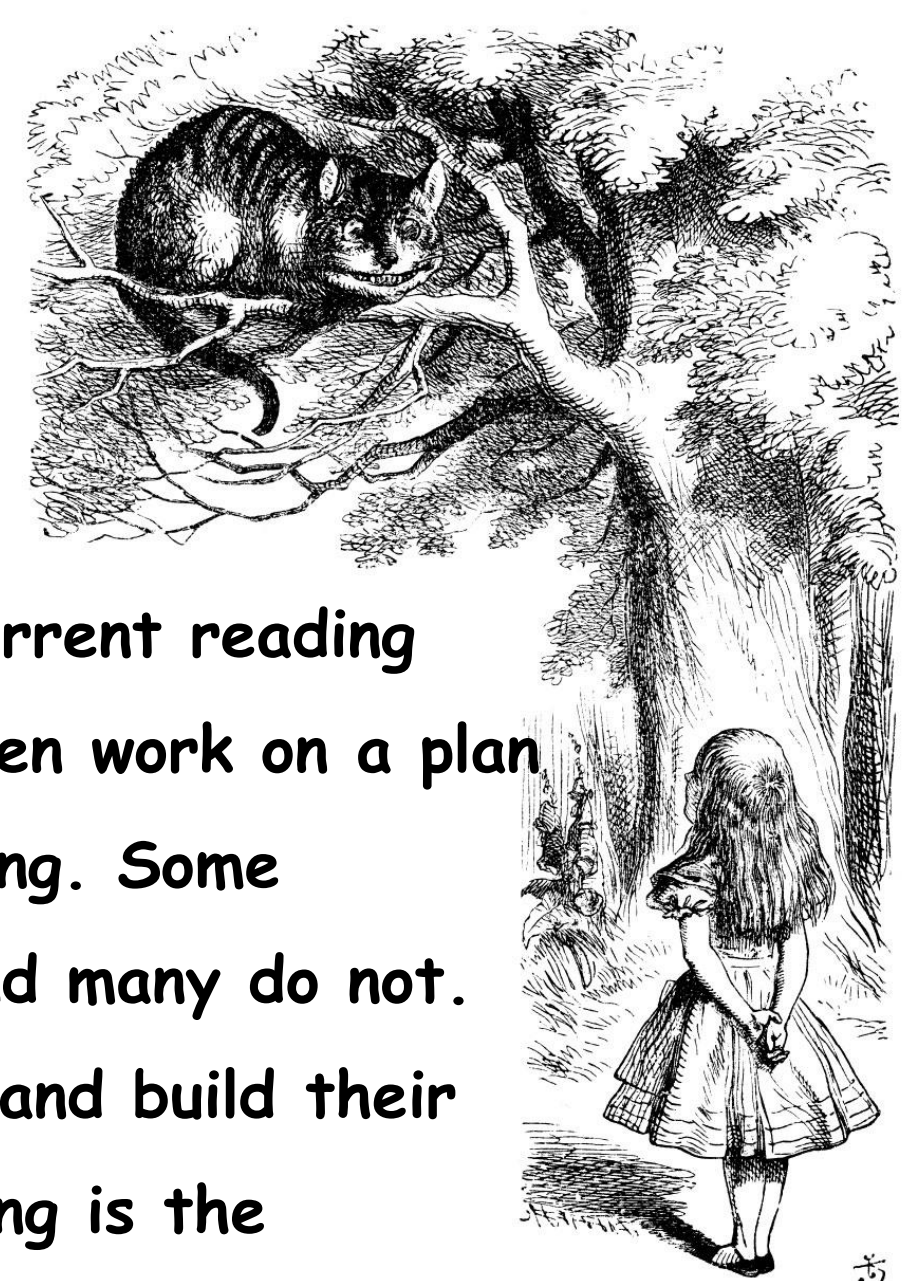
**Ka :** "Wow. You made it sound as though it is all your idea. Many stalwarts have traversed along the path of putting together an effective Reading program and Read aloud is an essential part of that".



**Tha :** Well, that makes it easy for us. Just like Hansel and Gretel, we need to collect the pebbles and follow their path.

**Ka :** I want them to learn in their mother tongue for better understanding while imparting proficiency in an International language to. Not sure which is the way to go.

**Tha :** That depends a good deal on where you want to go?



**Ka :** Don't try to be a smart cat and I am not Alice either. But I do get your point. We need to first assess and understand the current reading ability of our children and then work on a plan to make them fluent in Reading. Some children read on their own and many do not. We should instill the passion and build their confidence in reading. Reading is the foundation for learning and we can make our reading program bilingual to ease the challenges in reading and learning.

**Tha :** Why do you separate learning from reading?



**Ka:** Well, learning is not just reading stories, right? A story makes you think, reflect on the characters, their emotions, their experiences, their actions and this in turn helps you to interpret messages and make your own inferences. Experiences are like formulae that can be combined to derive a new one and apply to our situation. Reading is the first step towards learning for life. Learning has to be a continuous process in life. Let us join hands to become an enticing “Katha” making every child a true seeker of knowledge.

**Tha :** Do you want to restrict this learning just to our pilot school “Sai Sankalp”?

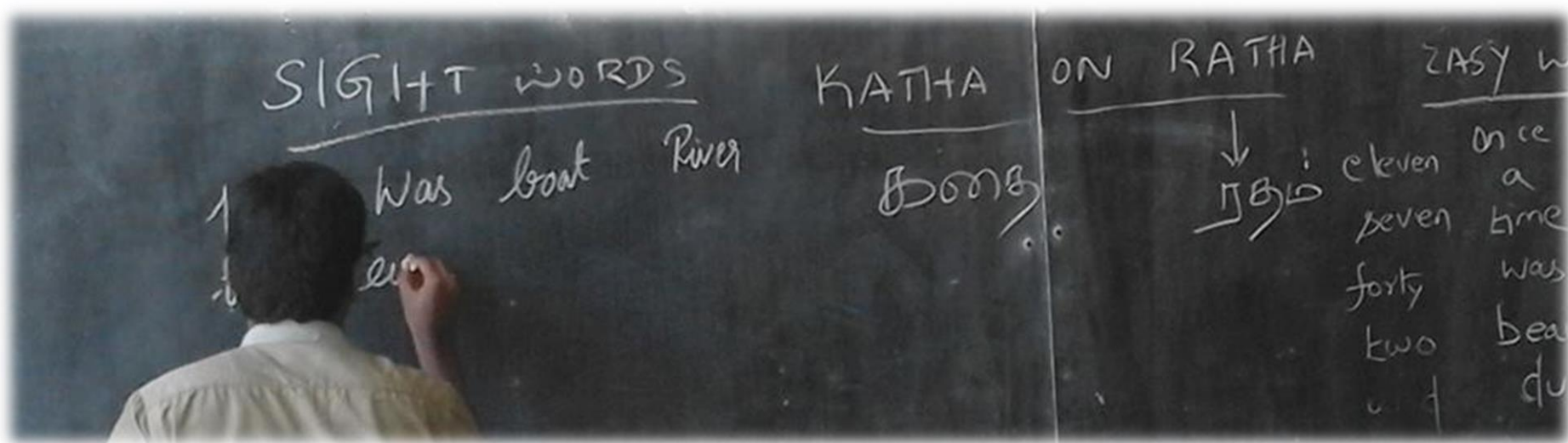
**Ka :** No, We should spread this learning. Let me reach out to our friend Ratha . He should be eager to roll on and take this learning to all those who seek.

Ratha arrives.. 

**Ratha:** Hmm. It sounds like a good idea. We can start with schools in Tamil Nadu and as we pick up more friends who are passionate about learning we can spread our wings.

**Tha:** Should this just be schools?





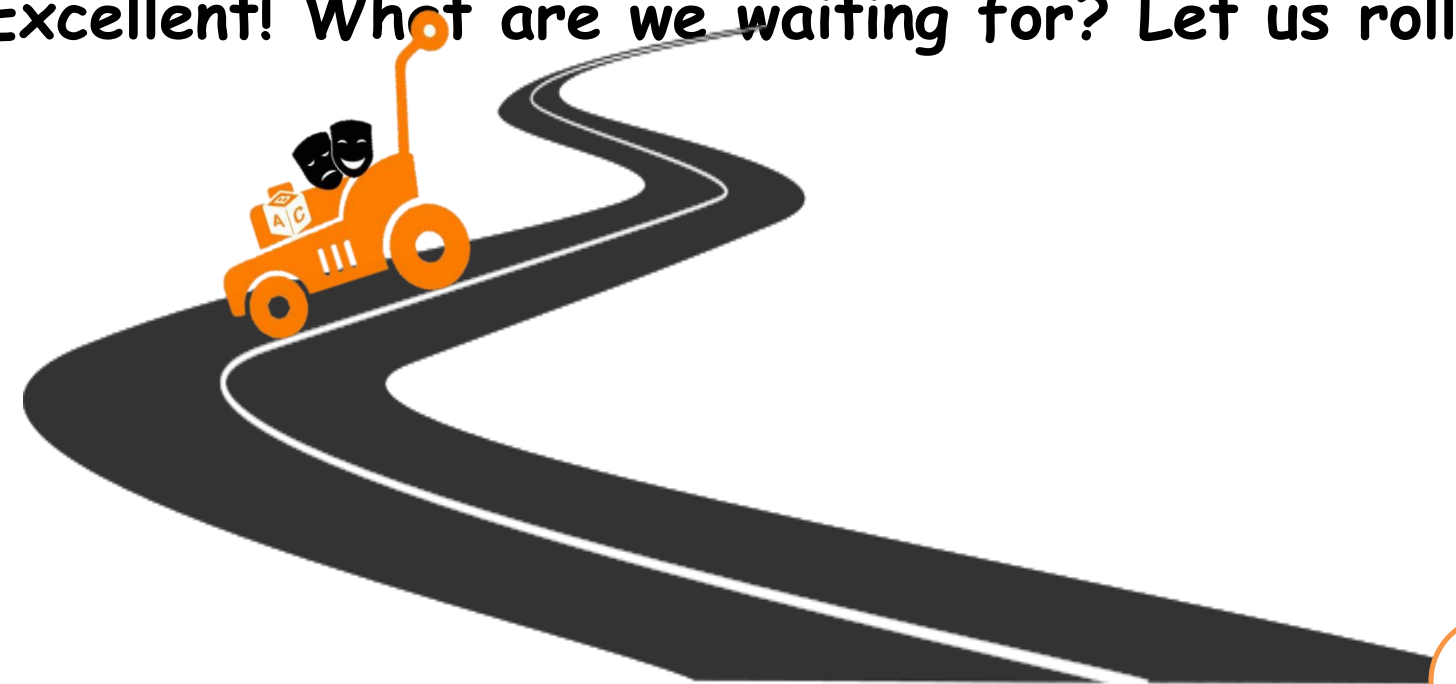
**Ka :** Wow! How nice it is to visualise our Ratha with wings! True, learning is for all ages. Our Ratha should not be restricted to specific age group. Also, the books should be magical like any storybook. They can be on any theme covering disciplines such as Science, Humanities, Personality Development, Arts and Music. You name it, we should have it.

With any book that is level-appropriate and absorbing, there would be learning. And, values acquired for life.

**Ratha:** Good. Where do we find such books that too bilingual?

**Ka:** Well, we need to curate age appropriate and language specific content. Also, like I told earlier, stalwarts who have traversed this path have created platforms that would allow us to weave, extend and translate stories, as required.

**Ratha:** Excellent! What are we waiting for? Let us roll on...!



*To instill the passion and confidence for  
reading & learning*

## Part 2



**Ratha:** Shall we take the readers on an expedition?

**Ka :** Yes, it would be great to relive and cherish

the adventurous paths we traversed,



diverse people we embraced  and the smiles

we spread.

**Tha :** Why don't you start from the beginning?



**Ratha:** Right. We entered the Sai Sankalp Nursery

& Primary School on **June 28th, 2016** with Kathas

like 'Ting Tong', 'Smart Sona', 'Lenny and Tweek'

and 'Sabo and Jojo'.

**Tha :** What beautiful & cute stories they are! Can

you please share the response from this first

school?



**Ratha:** Sure. Look here, at my Journey of Ratha -  
"Tales of the travel" Diary entry.



**Ka :** hey, what is that special entry inside the box?

**Ratha:** Oh! This is what the Headmistress of that school had to say:

*June 28th, 2016 I travelled to a place that is remote to reach but has touched many young hearts and enabled learning. The Sai Sankalp Nursery & Primary School is in a village called Arasankazhani near Chennai. The school is immersed in Katha sessions as they have them every day. The sessions are handled by both volunteers and the school staff on alternate days. The students are grouped in a way to have effective learning. The late bloomers of the class also have picked up reading.*

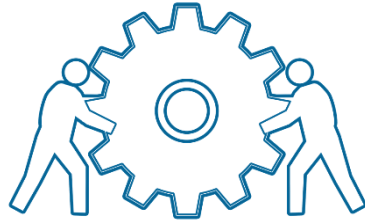
*"Katha on Ratha had a major impact on our last batch of 5th std. students. They are all our Alumni now. Some of them still turn up at our school on Saturdays. They show keen interest in spending time at our school library and continue their passion for reading books. The Programme had immensely helped them last year in story reading and comprehension"*

*Mrs. K. Sangeetha, Head Mistress, Sai Sankalp Nursery & Primary School.*

**Ka :** Wow, that is fabulous. Truly touching lives!

**Tha :** Yes, the more people join hands, the more robust and expansive the mission becomes. "Together

we achieve more".



**Ratha:** Yes, actually there are many like minded institutions that have set foot in this direction and partnered with us to bring change.

**Ka :** Wow! Tell us more.

**Ratha:** Oh, sure let me tell you about one of our most inspiring NGO partners, 'Hand In Hand'. They have taken this program to six of their Residential Special

6 Training Centres (RSTC) across Tamil Nadu.



The children in these centers started experiencing Katha sessions from August 2016.

**Ka :** So, how was the response? What did the children learn?

**Ratha:** Not only did they learn to read, the Katha sessions have also kindled their other latent talents.

Here, let's dive into my diary to quench your thirst to know more about Hand In Hand. 



**5 August 2016**

I am so excited that Hand in Hand is our partner. I travelled to six schools across Tamil Nadu by just visiting Kancheepuram ☺. Well, their teachers travelled Kancheepuram, to listen to our stories. We started with Kathas like 'Moon & the cap', 'The boink mystery', 'I can climb'...

**15 October 2016**

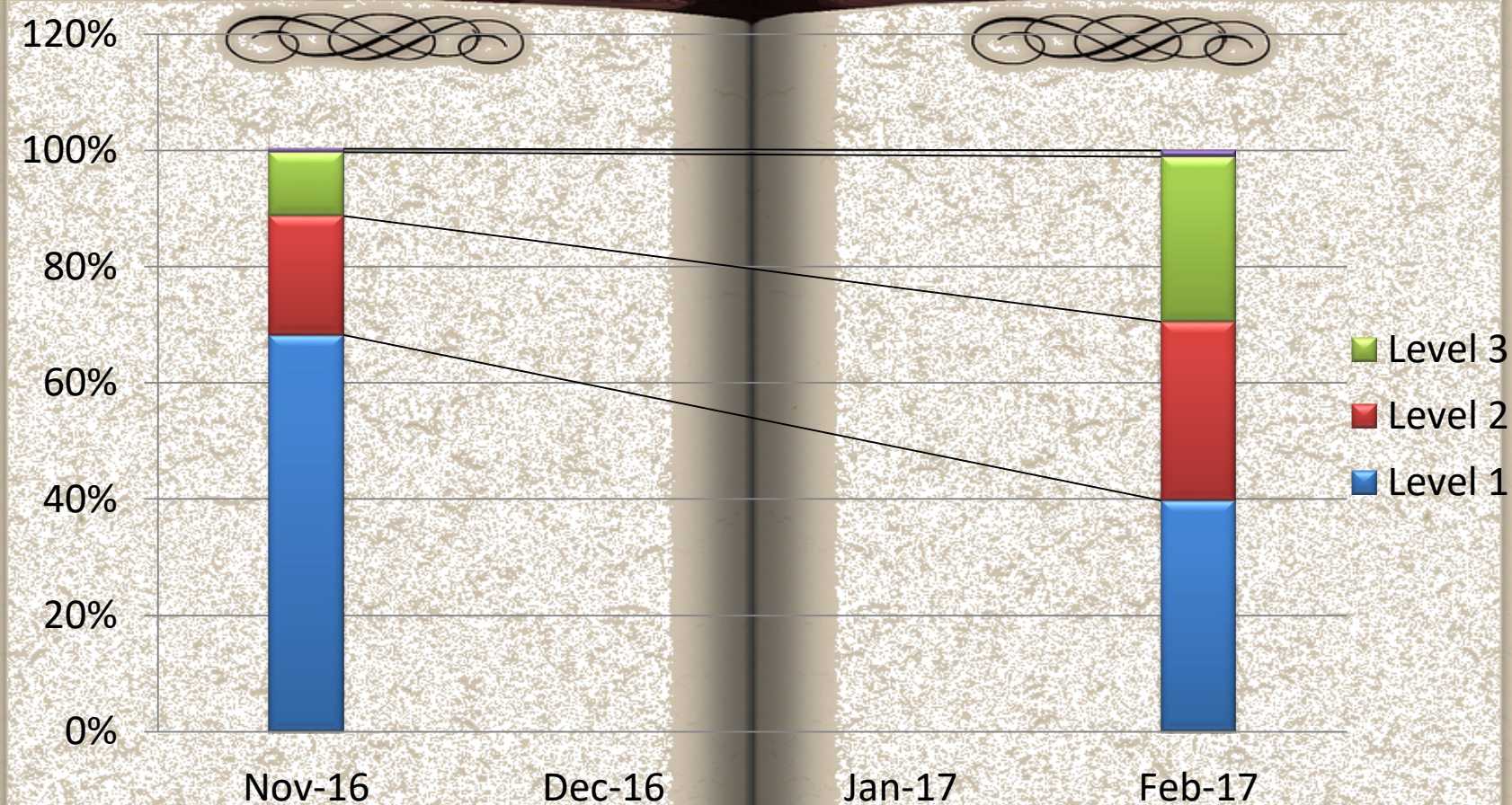
We visited Poongavanam RSTC and Uthiramerur RSTC to observe their Katha sessions. RSTC teachers are very keen and passionate in helping their children to read and children show keen interest too!

**18 Feb 2017**

We met the teachers from all six schools as part of our second huddle. It is heartening to hear them say that most of their children take deep interest in Katha sessions and have started to read on their own, Teachers shared their happiness about their children's improved communication skills. Very happy to watch videos of children enacting the stories as plays, puppet shows and Villupattu. Once their comprehension ability improves, they seem to naturally explore and harness their other latent abilities. Thank God for bringing me to a place that is so rejuvenating.



**Ratha:** And the progress in the 'Language Quotient' of the students is remarkable. A significant increase in the number of students progressing from Level 1(word reading) to Level 3( Story Comprehension) is seen. To top it all, the confidence they have gained while improving on language is worth mentioning



**Tha :** The changes are impressive!, to say the least. Truly the stories are igniting the passion for reading and triggering a positive behavioral change in the kids.

**Ratha :** Did you say 'Kids'!

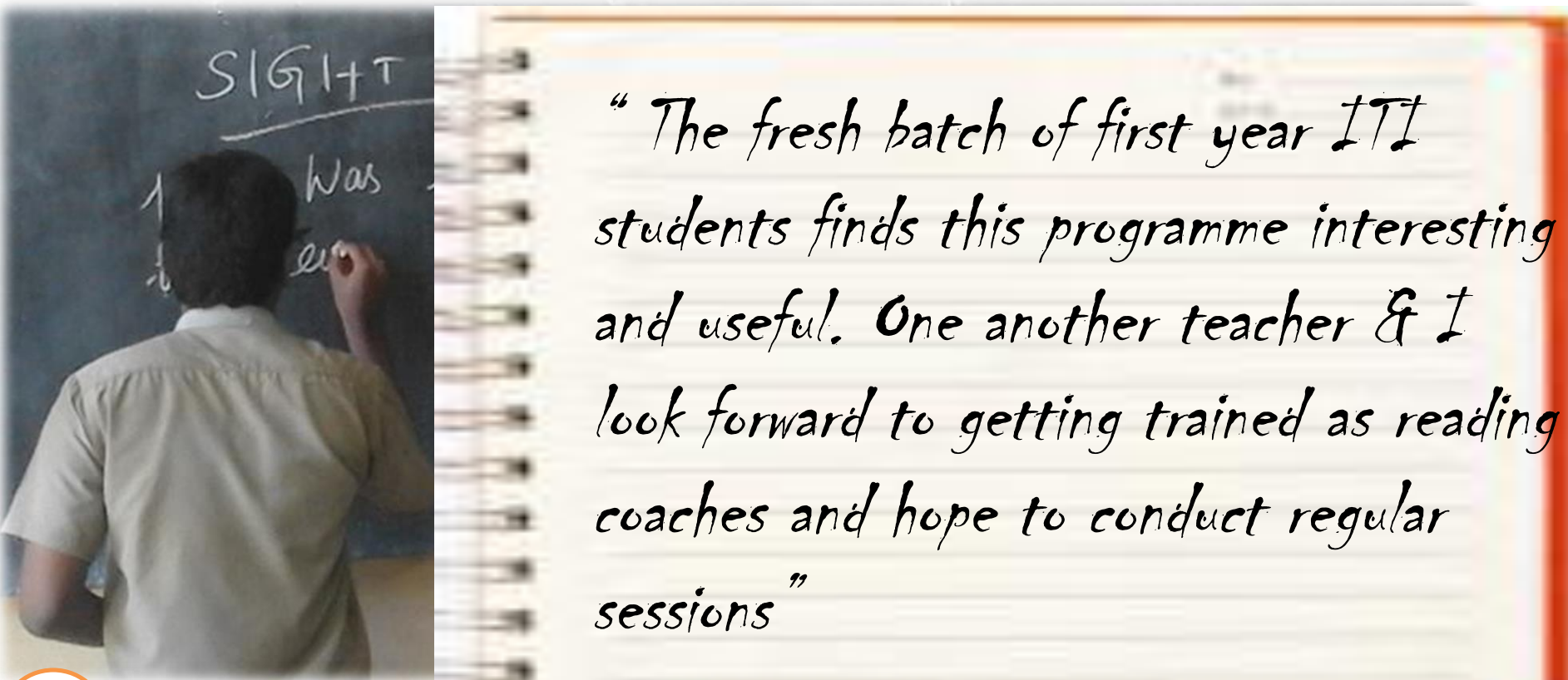
**Tha :** Yes, obviously! stories would only fascinate kids...

**Ratha:** (with a smile) Then let me have the privilege of sharing our experience at an ITI Institute in Chennai.

The average age of the students in this Industrial Training Institute at T Nagar is 19 - 20 years. Though these youngsters have enrolled for vocational training, when it comes to communicating in English, it is a big challenge for them.

We began to take interactive story sessions with the sole motive of improving their English Comprehension and vocabulary. You won't believe the magic spell the stories cast on them.

**Ratha:** Let us hear what Usha ma'am of this Institute had to say



**Ka :** Did they find more reading coaches?

**Ratha:** Oh! Yes we got retired teachers and professionals who have committed to act as Reading Coaches to join the Thakkar baba ITI team. Also regular interventions were planned to train the teachers and make it self sustainable...

**Tha:** Wow!!! So that's how partnering with like minded institutions have helped the Ratha grow, this is truly 'Partnering for success'...



**1900+** Students Reached



**18** Schools Supported



**80+** Reading coaches Enabled



**11** Partners



SUYAM  
31<sup>th</sup> Aug 17



14<sup>th</sup> Jul 17  
New Educational Society

SISTWA  
16<sup>th</sup> Aug 17



Little Drops  
25<sup>th</sup> Mar 17



Edupassion  
24<sup>th</sup> March 17



ICF School Alumni Trust  
3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 17



Thakkar Bapa  
24<sup>th</sup> Nov 16



Hand-In-Hand  
5<sup>th</sup> Aug 2016



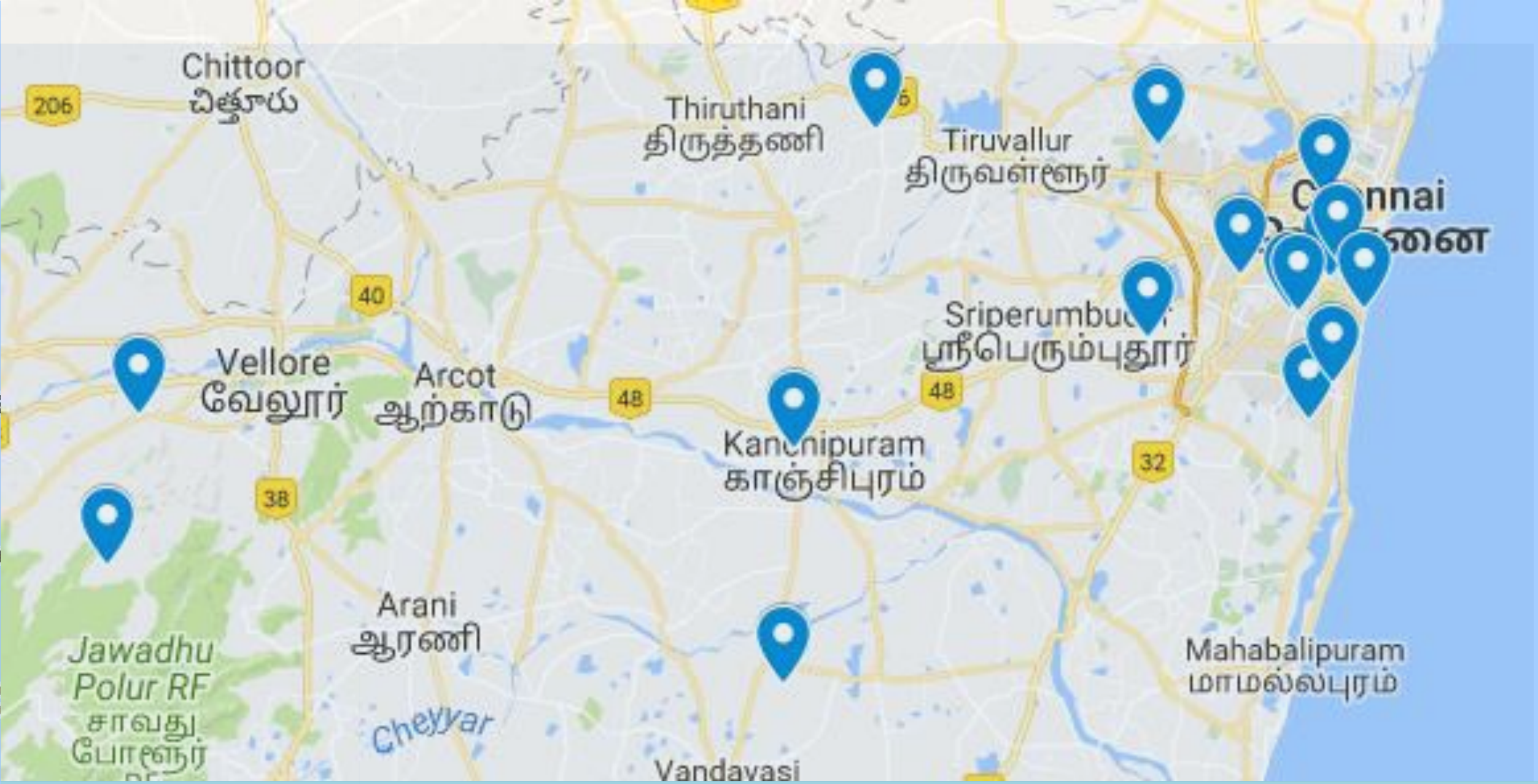
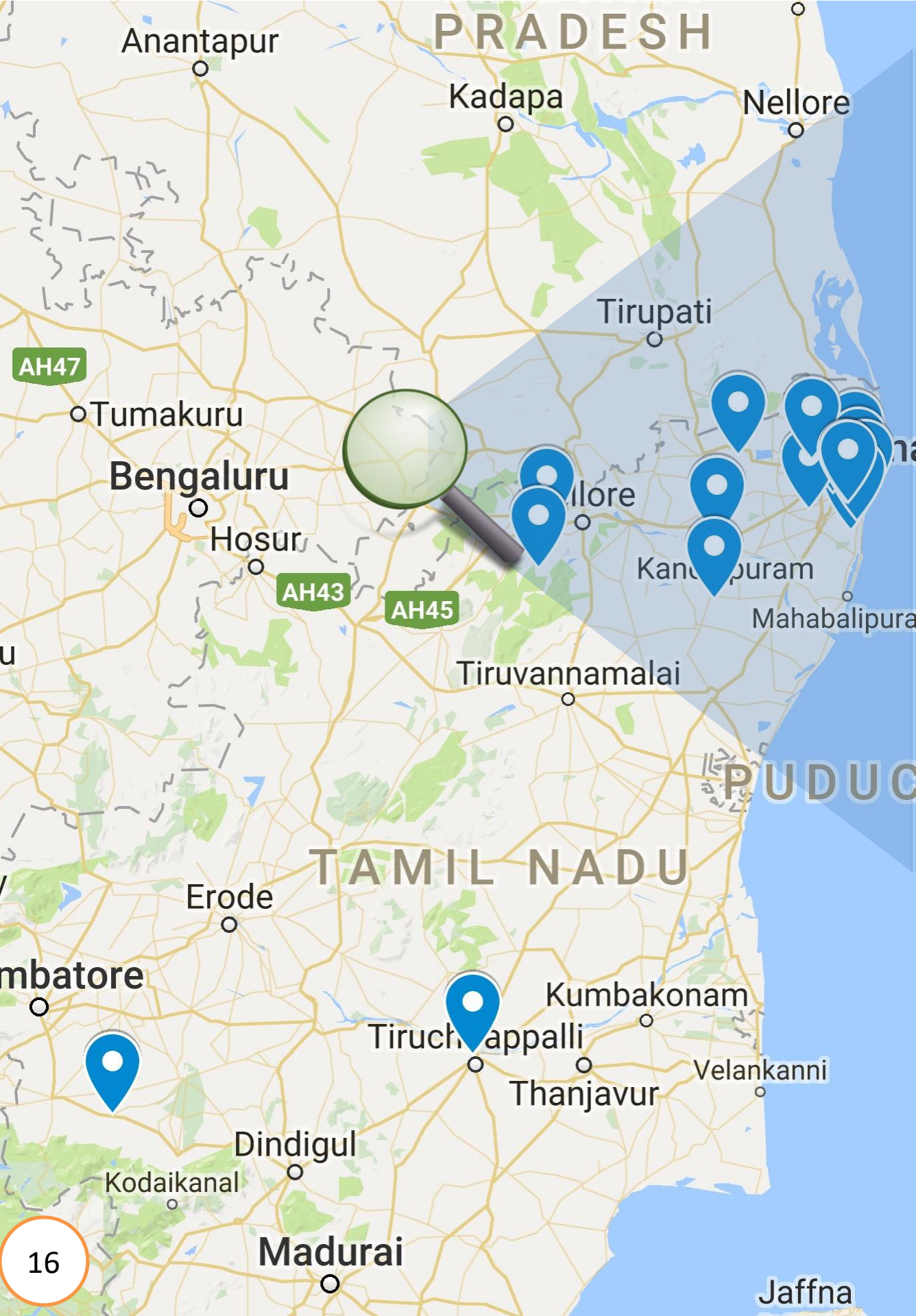
Saisankalp  
28<sup>th</sup> June 16



ASHA for Education  
28<sup>th</sup> Feb 17

Corporate Volunteers  
29<sup>th</sup> Nov 16





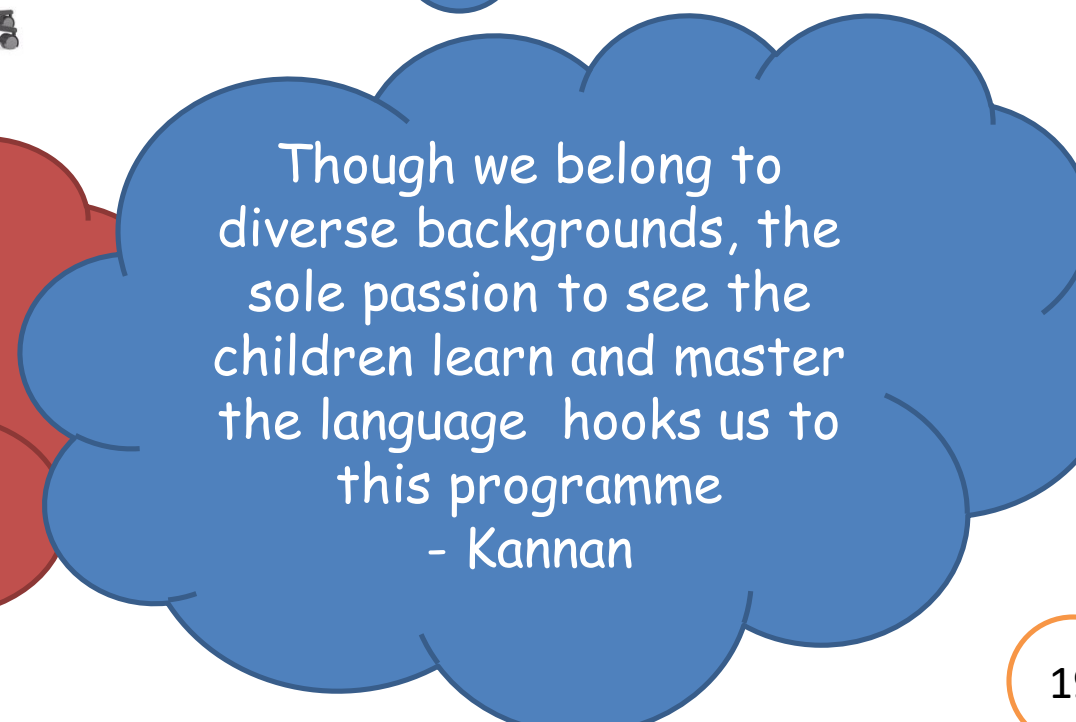
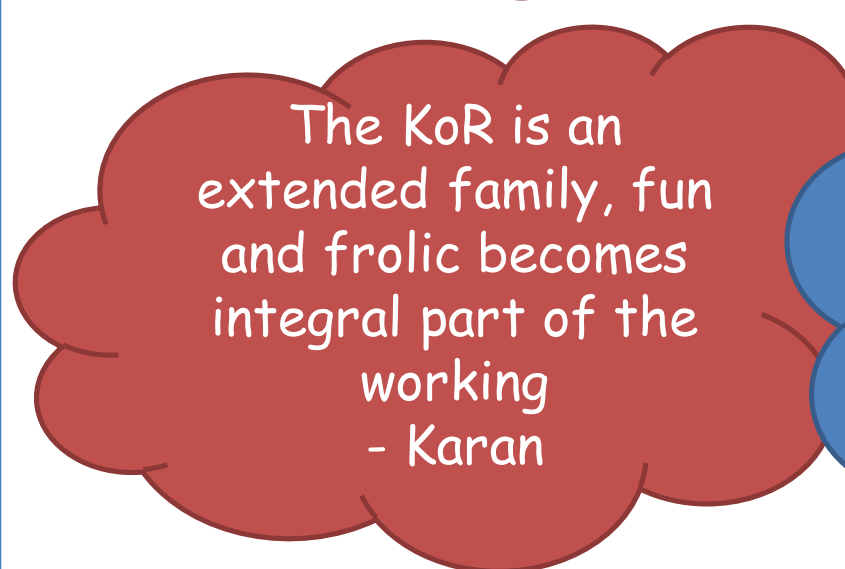
# Places where Ratha visited in 2016-2017



**Ka:** What a humbling experience it has been to see the Ratha grow and traverse far and wide to create life-long learners in a school ecosystem.

**Tha:** Very well put Ka, ceaseless efforts are quite evident; there must be some people greasing your wheels motivating and helping you to roll all along...

**Ratha:** Yes, a project is a reflection of the efforts of the team behind it. And we take pride in having a rich diverse mix of energetic and committed youngsters to steer this programme. Do you want to hear them out???





"Katha on Ratha" is a program conceptualized, designed and implemented by Sai Kedar Trust. "Katha on Ratha (KoR)" aims to instill the passion and build confidence in reading and learning among young children. KoR, relies on "train the trainer" model to sustain and scale. As part of this program, teachers and committed volunteers associated with schools are trained to become "Reading Coaches", who in turn independently facilitate the reading sessions in their schools. Bilingual books from publishers such as Pratham books and Eureka books are provided to support reading sessions through KoR mobile library .

### About Sai Kedar Trust

Sai Kedar Trust is a charitable trust with a focus on education. It aims to play a valuable role in the propagation of education and learning, by making available education related resources and services to the needy, irrespective of caste, creed, colour, religion, gender and age.

We are not just producing  
Fluent Readers of Story,  
rather we are moulding  
confident Leaders of  
tomorrow  
- Ganapathi

We believe in growing by  
partnering and learning  
together to design a  
holistic programme for  
the under-resourced  
schools...  
-Sairam

We strive to develop  
community of learning  
teachers, who in turn nurture  
the reading habit and passion  
for lifelong learning among  
children. -Rajashree

Every visit to schools enriches  
us with insights and opens new  
avenues of learning. When our  
students confidently read and  
earn applause, their beaming  
smiles fills our heart with pride  
-Sudha



..and Katha on Ratha rolls





Join us in our Ratha

**Reach us @**

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<https://www.facebook.com/KathaOnRatha/>