



for THEIR MAGICAL YEARS

a katha-bulb project report on work done april to september 2009

dear friends at bvlf,

The months, April to December, 2009, have sped by on feet of happy, scampering children! And so we come to the presentation of our 6-monthly report to BvLF. We hope it does justice to the joy and satisfaction the work has given all of us, the questions it raised, the many answers we need to find ...

Our objective is to make India a friendly place for children and young people to grow up in. The research component as well as the publishing projects supported this goal very nicely. Work on the ground has taken forward the research surveys we started last year with hands-on activities with children in both the controlled and experimental groups.

The major effort has been to include 0-6 year olds in policy frameworks and national policies. We know that around two million children in India do not celebrate their first birthdays each year. And through these six months, we have tried hard to not let political rhetoric stop governments from understanding the reality at ground level. Since the formation of KHEL [Katha Holistic Early Learning] Centre under this BvLF grant, it has taken nearly a year of concentrated effort and discussions at various levels to make the ECE roundtable and the national workshop happen. Both were good platforms to discuss policy, especially in the light of the Right to Education Bill which has just turned into Law. Both brought together a galaxy of experts — practitioners, experts and academics in the field of ECED — to come up with a resolution that we could present to government.

KHEL sets out an ambitious plan. Our progress in 2009 is thanks to all the children and their parents and teachers in our early learning programmes whose work has influenced and taken forward much of what we have been doing in KHEL. This report is a celebration of this.

Thank you BvLF!

*Warmly
Geeta*

GEETADHARMARAJAN
EXECUTIVEDIRECTORKATHA



executive Summary

KHEL, KATHA HOLISTIC EARLY LEARNING CENTRE [KHEL means PLAY in Hindi] was set up specifically under the BvLF funded project as a way for Katha to focus on early learners. It is partially funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation. The work so funded saw positive impact on the lives of children 0-8 years, in the following areas:

1. Grassroots Work with children towards attaining research worldviews

A social constructivist worldview dominated our thinking this half-year, leading to a lot of interactions for making meaning of child needs. Side by side, we chose other complementary methods that work best within the context of urban poverty, a non-literate family environment in a city that is struggling to provide basic benefits to preschoolers. This combination has had impact on our research methodologies and design.

The work entailed

- Curriculum development
- Activities with children in ECE centres
- Activities with children in municipal corporation schools

2. Research

The above activities led us, this year, into a series of activities that have bolstered and strengthened the IMPACT STUDY under this project to study the effects of ECE and development of reading skills on the sustained performance, attendance and retention of children in primary school.

The work entailed

- The Katha National Workshop on Early Learning and Intuitive Teaching. In association with NUEPA, the National University for Educational Policy & Administration..
- Discussions with ECE teachers on the Right to Education Law that, to all appearance, seems to take away the rights of the 0-6 year old to education that were bestowed earlier.



3. Influencing Policy

Hence the large engagement with policy makers through a series of discussions at various levels, including government and NCERT, leading to

- Katha Roundtable on The Education of 4-8 Year Olds in the City of Delhi. In association with NCERT, the National Council for Educational Research & Training.
- ECD Teachers workshop on the Education Law, 2009.
- In June, a half day session on the Education Bill and its impact on the education of children living in urban slums. In August, discussion the Right to Education Bill, 2009. Article 14A.
- The Call for Action! Through the months of October to March 2010, Katha will follow up on the policy level meetings with discussions that NUEPA hopes to partner on the status of inclusion of all children 0-14 in the Right to Education Act. A children's colloquium is being planned around the Act in December.

4. Publishing

- 7 books are planned of which six would be completed by March 2010, including the translations. Three have gone to illustrators; one due to be released for Christmas 2009. The rest of the books in Hindi and English to be in the market by February/March 2010.

Wen Su's pencil draft 1





12 books
6 in Hindi
6 in English
translations

children's books

BOOKS CONTRACTED OUT TILL SEPTEMBER 2009:

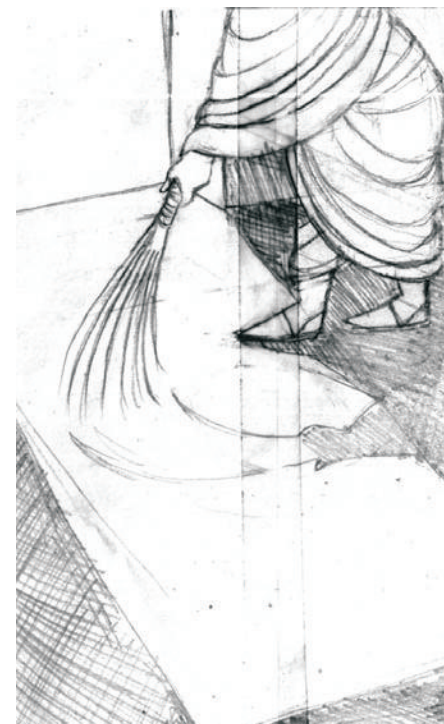
1. For the Love of a Cat By Rosalind Wilson. Art by Wen Su: A painter loves his cat as much as he loves painting. When a group of priests commission the starving young artist to paint a beautiful picture of the Buddha, he is asked to stick to a single rule. The Buddha in the painting is to be surrounded by all creatures except the cat. Caught between his art and love for his pet, the painter gets help from an unexpected source. A deeply interesting, rich story about sharing and caring.

2. Kisne Banaya By Katha Editors . Art by Students of Katha Schools . Based on a song that many mothers have sung to their babies and many children have grown up singing, it celebrates the world of nature. The world is a happy home because your friends make it so. Birds and bees and bugs, soft-eyed bears and mighty elephants, butterflies and fishes ... They chirp, glide, flit from flower to flower, dance on waves that rise. Who made these delightful friends of yours? Who made smiles warm and nice, simple joys, a world so nice?

3. Golden Sparrows and the Fireflies By Gopini Karunakar , retold from the Telugu original. Art by Hassan Amrekan. The golden sparrows complain to the gods that their homes have no light. Men light lamps, owls have eyes that shine. But sparrows have no way to get through the night. The gods feel sorry for them and let them collect moondust when the moon rubs against the sky. With nests of moondust, the sparrows catch fireflies who happily light up their homes.

BOOKS IN THE PIPELINE FOR SEPTEMBER 09 – MARCH 2010 :

4. Days With Thathu By Geeta Dharmarajan , translated from the Tamil by the author. Days with Thathu (grandfather) are magical. Whether it is a trip to the cinema or a boat ride in the open sea, every moment is a joy to



Wen Su's pencil draft 2





Sample artwork by Hassan Amrekan for Gopini Karunakar's book

12 books
6 in Hindi
6 in English
translations

treasure. At night, when Thathu settles down to read a book, you can't help wonder... Is Thathu a magician? How does he fill the days with colour and make them come alive with ease?

5. I am Aan By Meenakshi Bharadwaj. This book is reserved for a folk artist. And will be presented to illustrators participating in the Chitrakala workshop, Winter 2009. Deep in the jungles of the western ghats lives a baby elephant called Aan. His mother and brother and sister all dote on him. Growing from pampered baby of the herd to adult, Aan learns many invaluable lessons. His journey from the magical world of childhood to the tough adult one is an exciting voyage of self-discovery.

6. MY BIG Delhi BOOK! By Katha Editors. A First Book on India. Culture. About the capital city of India, it introduces children to many interesting facts about Delhi. It is an illustrated tour of the city, taking you to places like Chandni Chowk and India Gate, giving you a glimpse of the diversity that exists in the city which belongs to all. The illustrations capture with minute details the buzz, and discoveries hidden under the veil of the obvious, for all to discover.

7. RAIL MEIN .By Katha Editors. This book is reserved for one/many folk artists. It is being presented to illustrators participating in the Chitrakala workshop, winter 2009. Train journeys fascinate children. And Katha's book takes preschoolers on a train journey to Orissa and Karnataka, helping them discover many interesting facts about places enroute from Delhi. It is an illustrated tour of the diversity of cultures inside the train and the specificity of foods, dresses, and ethos outside, at each major station at which the train stops. The book will have a colouring book to go with it, thus making culturelinking possible and fun!

Contracts have been signed. Payments will be made to writers and illustrators once the book is sent to press. Translations are being readied.



search for
excellence

Katha's ongoing search for illustrators has added 75 new illustrators to our pool of illustrators. We still have a lot of work to do to expand our pool of writers.

search for
excellence
the chitrakala

The Chitrakala International Search for Excellence in Illustrating for Children in India.

Last date for submission of entries: November 1, 2009.

Total mailers sent: 7720

Total posters sent: 190 . Total registration forms sent: 1456

Posters and flyers sent to:

- Art galleries, art schools and art colleges in India; their students, by name. International Design Schools
- 2005 Chitrakala illustrators; Friends of Katha & illustrators Delhi and outside Delhi. Other Painters
- Bookshops in Delhi
- Foreign embassies in India
- Indian publishers of children's books

the Chitrakala
illustrators
workshop

As part of our efforts to find new illustrators, Katha is organizing a workshop mainly for folk artists. Discussions are on with Dastakaar, the premier organization that works with crafts people. The workshop is hoped to be held in Winter 2009-10. We also hope to have young school students of talent to participate in the workshop — in an effort to make illustrating for children attractive in the long run.





action research

The initial data of the control group and experimental group was collected, in terms of background information; name and age of the child; the formal school in which the child was enrolled; time span of attending ECD programme for the experimental group etc. In 2008, around 900 students entered formal municipal and private schools from Katha Preschools. Out of this, around 250 who entered into around 25 primary schools are included in the controlled group for research purposes. Given below is a sample data sheet [first sheet of the 916 student list].

Complete List of Students who graduated from Katha Preschools, 2008-9						
S.No	Name of Teacher	Katha Schools	No. of Girls	No. of Boys	Total No. of Children	MCD Schools into which they have got admission
1	Seema Pal	Bandhu Camp. B5-Vasant Kunj	16	17	33	Two MCD School-Masood Pur and Kishan Garh Vasant Kunj
2	Shazia	Gali No. 10 Bangali Mohalla Tug. Village	21	18	39	Two MCD school Kangar Mohalla Tug village.
3	Yasmeen	Gali No. 14 Bangali Mohalla Tug. Village	21	19	40	Two MCD school Kangar Mohalla Tug village.
4	Poonam Roy	Gali no 15 Bangali Mohalla Tug. Village	15	15	30	Two MCD school Kangar Mohalla Tug village.
5	Rubi Kumari	Veeru House Churiya Mohalla Tug. Village	14	21	35	Two MCD school Kangar Mohalla Tug village.
6	Mahjabeen	Bittu House Churiya Mohalla Tug. Village	17	18	35	Two MCD school Kangar Mohalla Tug village.
7	Asiya Bano	Gali No 1 Churiya Mohalla Tug. Village	10	14	24	Two MCD school Kangar Mohalla Tug village.
8	Deepa Giri	Block 11 Kalyan Puri	20	30	50	MCD School Block-12 Kalyan Puri
9	Pooja Bhardwaj	Block 18 Kalyan Puri	46	21	67	MCD School Block-12 Kalyan Puri Govt. Sarvodya Bal Vidyalya Kondli.
10	Archana Singh	Block 19/20 Kalyan Puri	11	17	28	MCD School Block-16 and 19 Kalyan Puri
11	Lakhmi Soni	Block 17 Kalyan Puri	21	12	33	MCD school Block-12 ans 14 Kalyan Puri Govt Sarvodya School Kalyan Vas
12	Renu	Block 5 Khichri Pur	11	19	30	MCD school Block-5 Khichdipur Puri MCD School Block 3 Kalyan puri. Govt Sarvodya School Kondli
13	Rena	Block 7 Khichri Pur	28	22	50	MCD school Block-7 Kalyan Puri Govt Sarvodya School Kalyan Vas
14	Jamna chaudhry	Dumber House Balmiki Mohalla Tug. Village	7	12	19	Two MCD school Kangar Mohalla Tug village.
15	Asma Bano	Shera House Churiya Mohalla Tug. Village	13	18	31	Two MCD school Kangar Mohalla Tug village.
16	Sana Khatoon	Kangar Mohalla Tug. Village	19	12	31	Two MCD school Kangar Mohalla Tug village.
17	Sunita Sharma	S.G. Camp Prahalad Pur	20	23	43	Two MCD school Kangar Mohalla Tug village.
18	Poonam Kumari	Bilaspur Camp. Jaitpur	14	9	23	Two MCD school Kangar Mohalla Tug village.
19	Anuradha Sharma	Jawahar Camp. 2 Shashi Garden	24	16	40	MCD School Shastri Mohalla Patpad Ganj Govt Sarvodya School Patpad Ganj
Totals, this page			348	333	681	





collection of initial data contd

The Katha team also collected information from 10 slums we work in, to assess how many children in the 5-12 age group were actually out of school.

The team did a door to door study in these randomly-selected slums, as a dipstick survey. We found that nearly 46% of children in the 5-12 age group in these slums were out of school. The action-research we are doing should help us find some answers to this vexing question of why children living in urban poverty do not go to school. And what keeps children in school will follow.

Given below is a summary of the data collected from the 10 slums.

Base Line assessment, July 2009								
S.No	Name of the Slum	No. of MCD Schools	Morning/ Evening Shifts	No. of children Age group 5-12 years	No. of children Govt / MCD Schools	No. of children in Private Schools	Children not school going	No. of toilet blocks
1	Churriya Mohallah	1 in 500m + 2 in 2 Kms	1 Morn+ 2 Morn+ Even	21000	6200	6000	8800	1
2	Sonia Gandhi Camp	1 within 500 m	morn	5800	2100	2100	1600	2
3	Bilaspur	1 within 1 Km	morn	9500	3400	850	5250	1
4	Tamoure Nager	1 within 1 Km	morn	6000	1750	600	3650	1
5	Basant Kunj	1 within 500 met	morn	3200	1300	400	1500	1
6	Kalyan Puri	2 within 1 km	1 both + 1 Morn	10000	2900	3200	3900	1
7	Khichdi Pur	2 within 1 km	1 both + 1 Morn	11300	3100	1900	6300	1
8	Mandawali	1 within 1 km	1 Morn	6500	1675	875	3950	1
9	Shashi Gardan	2 within 1.5 km	1 Morn+ 1 both	7000	2200	2400	2400	1
10	Trilok Puri	2 within 1 km	2 morn	8500	2450	1700	4350	1
				88800	27075	20025	41700	



the conference as a
rich source of data
collection

What is the status of ECED in India in general?

After a lot of discussion on how we could best gather necessary data on Delhi, and, for comparison, practices in early learning from across the country, it was decided end of last year to hold a national workshop where learning and peer-advocacy and counselling could be facilitated.

The workshop was sponsored by NUEPA.

their magical years

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON EARLY LEARNING AND INTUITIVE TEACHING

This national workshop showcased best practices in early childhood development and innovative teaching across the world through discussions, a unique thought leaders' forum, and sharing of hands on experience. This three day conference provided an excellent opportunity for those working in the area to come together and explore recent developments, researches and innovative work which has taken place in this field with creative ECE experts and entrepreneurs. Some of the topics which we covered:-

- Understanding Early Childhood Care and Education — A Global Perspective
- Early Childhood Education (ECE): Then and Now: Dynamic Teaching
- Developing Need-based Teaching
- Innovation and Creativity
- Recent Researches in Brain Development
- Working with Children with Special Needs.
- Classroom Practices: Quality for all
- Mediation - Teaching Tolerance
- Children, Curriculum, Communities.

Abstracts and papers: We invited abstracts and papers with a variety of interpretations and perspectives on Early Childhood Care and Education from different disciplines. In Hindi and English. We hope to publish these papers on the Katha website.



honing the
katha ece
curriculum

What exactly do children want? What excites them? What makes them want to come to school regularly?

As part of our action-research, Team Katha helped teachers develop the existing Katha curriculum, under the direct leadership of Geeta Dharmarajan. The holistic development of the child in ECE that was first developed by her in 1990, as part of the Katha Relevant Education for All Round Development — KREAD is Katha's Curriculum for Life. This has been further honed by her many times since. This curriculum for early learning was strengthened this period, so that early learners get attracted to Katha's preschooling, with its strong component of pre-reading, pre-writing and cognitive skills. Katha's ECE also builds related skills like social, cultural and environmental awareness in children.

The model curriculum has the ability to be of some use to government schools in Delhi, to start with. Hence, since April of this year, Katha's team of teachers started honing the curriculum and syllabus to make it work for government and municipal schools of Delhi. Both curricular pathways and assessment tools were documented. The ramping up of the pedagogy and the educational system was made systematically, and each stem was clearly enunciated so that mass training of teachers could happen.

The value of PLAY and the support and participation of our large communities are the fulcrum for our ECE work.

development
of assessment
matrix

A matrix was developed for assessing overall development of children in early years. This was used for assessing children in MCD schools to judge if it is reliable and valid.

We saw the development as an exercise in both teaching and learning. To understand how a large group of ECE teachers understood evaluation practices, we started off with activities with teachers and led them into



a gathering of community at a katha mela



developing their own lessonplans tied to evaluation. Experienced early childhood teachers at Katha helped.

New Teachers and old, were introduced to the ideas of curriculum and the other cornerstone ideas of ECE at Katha. They were trained in taking forward holistic early childhood education practices, develop appropriate classroom activities and pedagogical tools and teaching-learning material.

Katha helped 900 children enroll in formal school after they had attended ECD programme at KathaKids. We have tracked the performance, attendance and retention of 250 randomly picked children in formal school. The data has been consolidated for 150 children till now.

The initial data of the control group and experimental group was collected, in terms of background information; name and age of the child; the formal school in which the child was enrolled; time span of attending ECD programme for the experimental group etc.

Activities in MCD Schools. Continuous assessment and activities to understand the situation in government schools. We have worked closely with the schools so we can also get buy-in for the research this year.

half yearly
assessment data
collection

relevant activities
for 500 children,
experimental group

an aerial view of a slum



work with 500
children in ece
centres

KATHAKIDS! PRESCHOOLS The schools have reopened on July 6. All the school rooms were white washed and prepared for the new sessions. Storybooks in place, games and puzzles and toys ordered – and a palpable excitement in the air. PALNA, the Pregnant & Lactating women's & Newborns Programme, started off with training for the community mobilizers. Now there are three women who will train a team of women in each of the 50 communities in care of foetuses and newborns, and their mothers.

Continuous assessment and activities to understand the situation in Katha schools were conducted as part of the research component of this programme.



policy level policy
level discussions on
the use of Katha
ECE curriculum in
government schools

As many people have noticed, “While the original Article 45 mandated compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14, the 86th Amendment to the Constitution mandated compulsory education only for children between the ages of 6-14. (Article 21a) To protect the 0-6 age group, the early childhood care and education (ECCE) was established but only as a directive for states wherein they would “endeavour to provide” preschooling to the 0-3 and the 3-6 age group.” Katha’s work at the policy level will continue to enjoin government to protect the rights of 0-6 year olds in the RIGHT TO EDUCATION LAW.

Our focus on early learning has taken us into the larger policy areas. And meetings with both Delhi Government and the NCERT, the national teacher training centre have meant more explorations of how we can make education for 4-8 year olds more meaningful:

1. A New Model of Education for MCD Schools : At the Office of the Lt Governor of Delhi. July 24. We had a meeting with the Lt Governor of Delhi This was followed by a meeting with the Director of Education, MCD. The discussion focuses on grades 1, 2, 3 in MCD Schools and how to make them effective especially for children coming from underserved communities.

RESULT: MCD has asked us to extend the programme into 100 schools! It will be a kind of all-school improvement programme, starting with Grades 1-3, to help/ support teachers to see themselves as the centre of creativity. [No funding in sight; so going slow as of now]

2. A meeting with the Principal Secretary, Education, Delhi Govt. to discuss the reading campaign in government schools and how Katha’s pedagogy and methodology could help in revamping state schools.

RESULT: The Delhi Government has invited us to train 4000 of their teachers in primary schools, based on KREAD, the Katha Relevant Education for All Round Development.

THE ROUNDTABLE ON the Education of 4-8 year olds

IN THE CITY OF DELHI

On August 18, 2009 | 9:30 am – 2:30 pm, at India International Centre, Delhi

The main purpose of this discussion was to focus attention on the challenges our city faces in addressing the needs of young children. As we know, systemic gaps between preschool and primary school makes it difficult for children to realize their full potential, especially if they come from underserved communities. Katha and NCERT invited a select panel of some 40 educationists, policy makers and academics to probe and discuss the factors which shape the quality of Delhi’s education for children in the pre- to primary school continuum.

Dr Krishna Kumar, Director NCERT and Dr R. Govinda, Vice Chancellor NEUPA led the discussion that was chaired by Dr. Abid Hussain, former Indian Ambassador to the US; and Geeta Dharmarajan. Ms Sheila



Professors Krishna Kumar,
R. Govinda & Anita Rampal
at the Roundtable on ECD



Dikshit, Chief Minister, Delhi, had kindly consented to be with us during the day and lead the discussion but was unable to be with us. The round table discussion concluded with a presentation of recommendations.

experts/resource
people

Some of the senior people from the field of education, research and ECCE who have been involved in our work over the last six months:

Prof Krishna Kumar is the Director, National Council of Educational Research and Training. Prior to this, he worked with the Central Institute of Education in 1982 and served as its Head and as Dean during 1988-91. He has been a National Lecturer of the UGC and Fellow of the Nehru Memorial Museum. He has also been a North-South Fellow of the IDRC, a Shastri Fellow, and a Visiting Fellow of the Centre for Modern Oriental Studies, Berlin.

Prof R. Govinda is the Vice Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration. Prior to this, he taught at the Centre of Advanced Study in Education, Baroda; was on the Faculty of International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO, Paris and Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, Consultant for UNESCO, UNICEF, ACCU, NORAD, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

Prof Anita Rampal is Professor of Elementary and Social Education at the Department of Education, Delhi University. Her special interests include participatory curriculum development with a focus on critical pedagogy, cognition and communication of science and mathematics, and policy analysis for equity in education.

Prof. Venita Kaul is the visiting Professor of Education in Ambedkar University, Delhi. She is engaged in setting up a Center for Early Childhood Education and Development (CECED) in the University for Policy Research, capacity building, advocacy and networking in ECED.

She was a Senior Education Specialist in the World Bank since October 26, 1998. She has also led several Bank projects in India in Basic and Early Childhood Education (ECE). These include the District Primary Education project (DPEP), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

Prof. Adarsh Sharma , visiting professor at the Ambedkar University of Delhi in the CECED. Adarsh Sharma is the Principal Consultant to the Academy for Educational Development's Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance project in India. Prior to that she was the Director of India's National Institute of Public Cooperation





and Child Development in New Delhi. Dr. Sharma is a member of the ARNEC Policy & Advocacy and Research & Dissemination Task Forces.

Dr. Asha Singh is a Reader in the Department of Human Development and Childhood Studies at the Lady Irwin College, Delhi University. Her forte has been using the Arts in Education especially for young children.

ways forward

We know that there is much to be done for early learners, 0-8 years, in India. And our plan for the next six months are:

In Publishing : To bring out the 6 books and make them available to government programmes across the Hindi speaking belt and other states where Hindi is an accepted language in primary education. To actively seek government programmes that gift books to libraries and nonprofits, rural setups. To step up our associations with large nonprofit programmes.

In Research: We carry forward the action-research as planned with on the ground activities that make it easier for children to stay in formal education.

In policy matters : We would like Katha's firm belief of play and play-related activities till the child enters Grade 1 to be firmly rooted in the culture of government schools this year.

The Education Bill, approved by the Cabinet on 2 July 2009. was passed in the Rajya Sabha and in the Lok Sabha by August 2009, and notified as law on 3 September 2009, as The Children's Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act. More dialogues and discussions are planned at both teacher and policy levels to advocate for positive change.

Talks are on with the National University of Education, Planning and Administration [NUEPA] and the Ambedkar University, Delhi to work in tandem with them for this and related issues.





preschoolers at the graduation ceremony for preschoolers moving into junior school!

thank you!



We thank the Bernard van Leer Foundation, our partner in progress, for being with us while we work to make life a little more fun and playful, lifelong and sustainable for our many children.



Warm greetings! Katha is a unique model that seamlessly connects grassroots work in education, urban resurgence and story for social justice and poverty alleviation through education. Since 1990, we've driven our education model on a powerful idea: Children can bring change that is sustainable and real. We run 96 schools in slum, street and tribal communities. Inter alia, we train teachers, help them prepare low-cost teaching/learning materials, and are into action-research. We work with communities and government as well as UNICEF and UNESCO, to bring the joy of reading to more than 200,000 children. We see translation as a non-divisive tool in nation building. We are a "profit for all" social organization.



A3 Sarvodaya Enclave. SriAurobindo Marg. New Delhi. 110.017. India

Ph. + 2652.1752. Fax. + 2651.4373. kathabooks@katha.org. www.katha.org