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# Learning maths, the smartphone way



Tanu Kulkarni

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A girl using the maths app, Building Blocks. | Photo Credit: [Handout E Mail](#)

Devika M.N., a class four student of Government Lower Primary School, Manchappanahalli in Hoskote, Bengaluru Rural district, scrolls through a smartphone, fingers flying across the screen with ease.

Unlike parents who grumble when they see their child glued to a phone, her mother is thrilled. Devika is trying to feed 12 carrots to six rabbits. As she feeds two carrots to each animal, she exclaims, “Twelve divided by two equals six.”

She is ‘playing’ a game on an app, designed by Akshara Foundation, for first-generation learners who may not have access to books and educational

resources or come from households that don’t often have an environment conducive to learning.

Called Building Blocks, the app has over 150 maths games for students between grades one to four.

## Pilot project

Over the last five months, more than 1,500 children in three districts across Karnataka have been using it as part of a pilot project.

Devika is one of the students, and going by her interest in the lessons, Building Blocks is likely to be a success. It will be launched shortly and can be downloaded free at Google Play.

Keeping in mind the penetration of smartphones in India, Akshara Foundation decided to develop the app with games that are interactive and intuitive and follow the National Curriculum Framework 2005. The project was funded by CISCO.

The app can be downloaded in English, Hindi, Kannada and Odia, and was to work on low-cost smartphones, both in online and offline modes. Ramanamma T., head of the Government Lower Primary School, Manchappanahalli said that it was easier to teach the children basic concepts such as addition, multiplication and division with the games as they were able to visualise better due to the images on the screen.

“Usually when we teach these concepts, we use props like stones to help students visualise the maths. But with the app, they are able to grasp these concepts faster,” she said.

Parents, too, have noticed an improvement in their children’s learning abilities. “Now when I send my daughter to the shop with ₹100, she comes back with the right change and explains the calculations more accurately to me,” said Suvarna S.G., mother of a class four student in the same school.

Ashok Kamath, chairman of the Akshara Foundation, said that the games in the app have been designed so that they are not repetitive or appear identical.

“This is to ensure that the child does not get bored,” he said.