

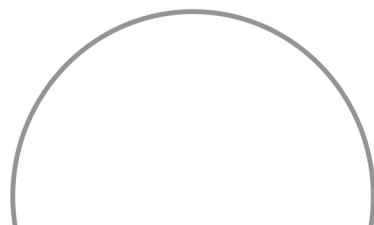
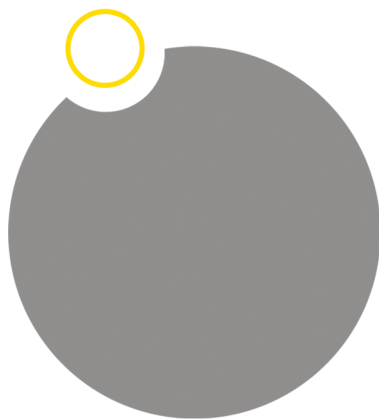
FINDINGS FROM THE  
GRAM PANCHAYAT (GP)  
**MATHS CONTESTS**

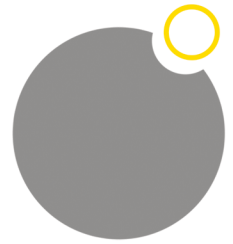
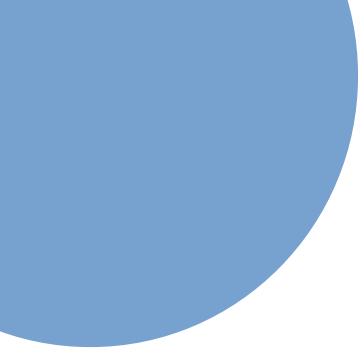
**2023 – '24**

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India's Biggest Community-led  
Maths Contests

**- ODISHA -**





Between November 21, 2023 and February 11, 2024

Akshara Foundation facilitated Maths Contests

for children in grades 4 to 6 across

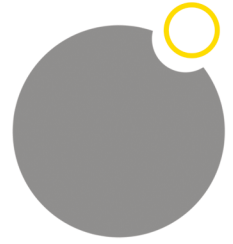
*361 Gram Panchayats* in the districts

of Dhenkanal, Ganjam and Mayurbhanj. The initiative engaged

more than *54,000 children* from over

2,400 schools and aimed at understanding the learning levels of children in maths, through a community-driven approach.

# What is a Gram Panchayat Maths Contest?



The Gram Panchayat Maths Contest, a pioneering initiative in India, serves as a community-driven endeavour to assess the quality of maths education. **These Contests, independently organised by local communities, have proven effective in sparking conversations among parents, teachers, and community members.**

Except for the question paper, which we at Akshara Foundation print, these Contests are organised entirely by the community members. On the chosen day, children in grades 4, 5 and 6 turn up at the contest venues, usually at the GP headquarters or school forecourts. They sit in neat, disciplined rows, under a colourful shamiana, and await their maths test.





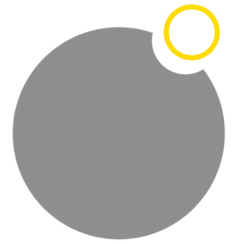
The timer is set to 1 hour as they begin the test. Village Education Volunteers evaluate the answer sheets soon after the hour is over, before finally announcing the winners. The volunteers are local village youth who are educated and willing to give time and effort to helping their community without any monetary reward, and are identified, selected and trained by Akshara's field coordinators.








The concept of Gram Panchayat Maths Contests has opened up many a healthy dialogue between stakeholders like parents, teachers and other community members regarding their children's learning levels.



# Distinctive Features

## Of a Gram Panchayat Maths Contest



-  **Transparency at the Core:** The Contests adopt a transparent approach, providing a fun setting for assessing children's maths skills.
-  **Local Involvement:** Entirely managed by trained Education Volunteers and GP Team Leaders within each Gram Panchayat.
-  **Objective Evaluation:** Observers, including teachers and parents, can witness the Contests but are not permitted to intervene during the process.
-  **Swift Recognition:** Winners are promptly announced, and prizes distributed within three hours, enhancing the excitement and impact of the initiative.
-  **Community-driven Funding:** Entirely funded by local communities, showcasing a collective commitment to education.
-  **Reward System:** Acknowledging academic excellence, the top nine scorers in each Contest receive prize money and certificates.
-  **Impressive Participation:** The Contests achieved large attendance.

# Methodological Insights



- The question papers were printed by Akshara and shipped to the GP locations just-in-time
- **Grade-Appropriate Assessment:** Children from grades 4 to 6 were evaluated based on the competencies of the preceding grade.
- **Local Expertise:** Answer sheets were meticulously graded by dedicated Education Volunteers using an answer key provided by Akshara Foundation.

# Highlights

3

**Districts**

out of 30 participated in  
the GP Contests

**361  
GPs**

participated  
in the GP Contests

District	# Schools Covered	# GPs	# Children in Grade 4	# Children in Grade 5	# Children in Grade 6	# Team Leaders	# Education Volunteers
Dhenkanal	156	31	1,292	1,274	1,282	30	153
Ganjam	623	147	7,907	8,199	7,426	279	1,050
Mayurbhanj	1,636	183	9,083	9,837	7,930	245	1,508
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,415</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>18,282</b>	<b>19,310</b>	<b>16,638</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>2,711</b>

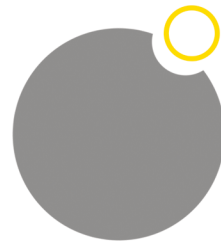


The GP Contests  
were managed by  
GP Team Leaders and  
Education Volunteers

**Pro Bono  
Service**

This entire team gave their  
services *pro bono* – their  
giving back to the schools  
where they studied

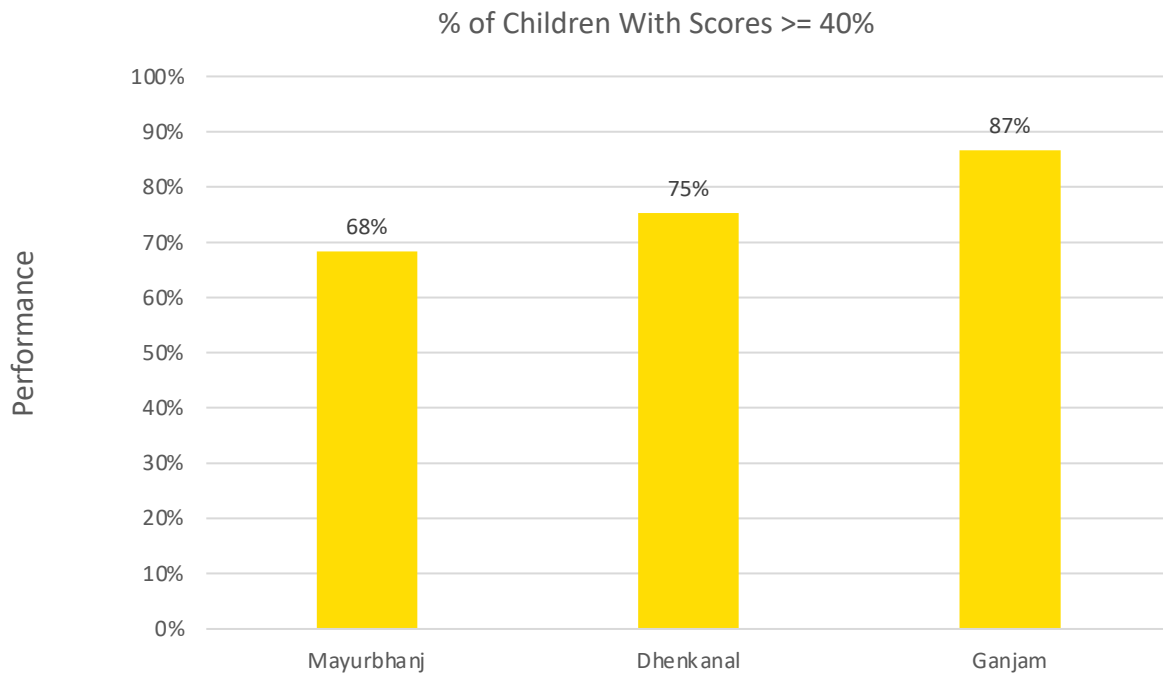
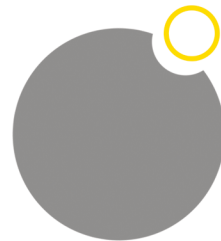






And we found...

# Grade 4



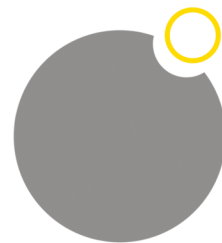
In order of

**PERFORMANCE**

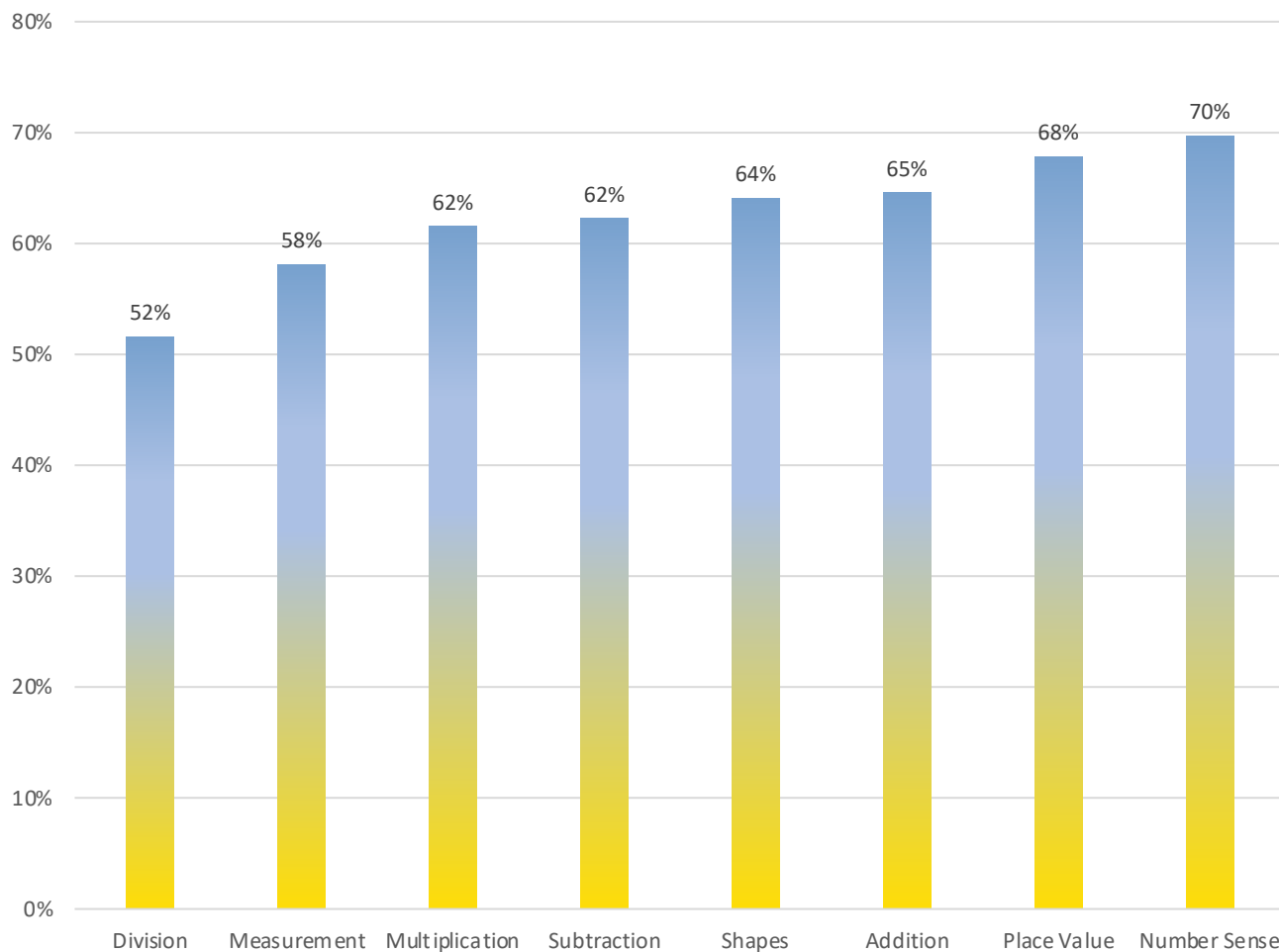
 Ganjam

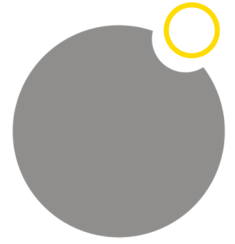
 Dhenkanal

 Mayurbhanj



Percentage of Children Who Could Correctly Solve These Competencies





The  
**EASIEST**

*competencies*

 Number Sense

 Place Value

 Addition

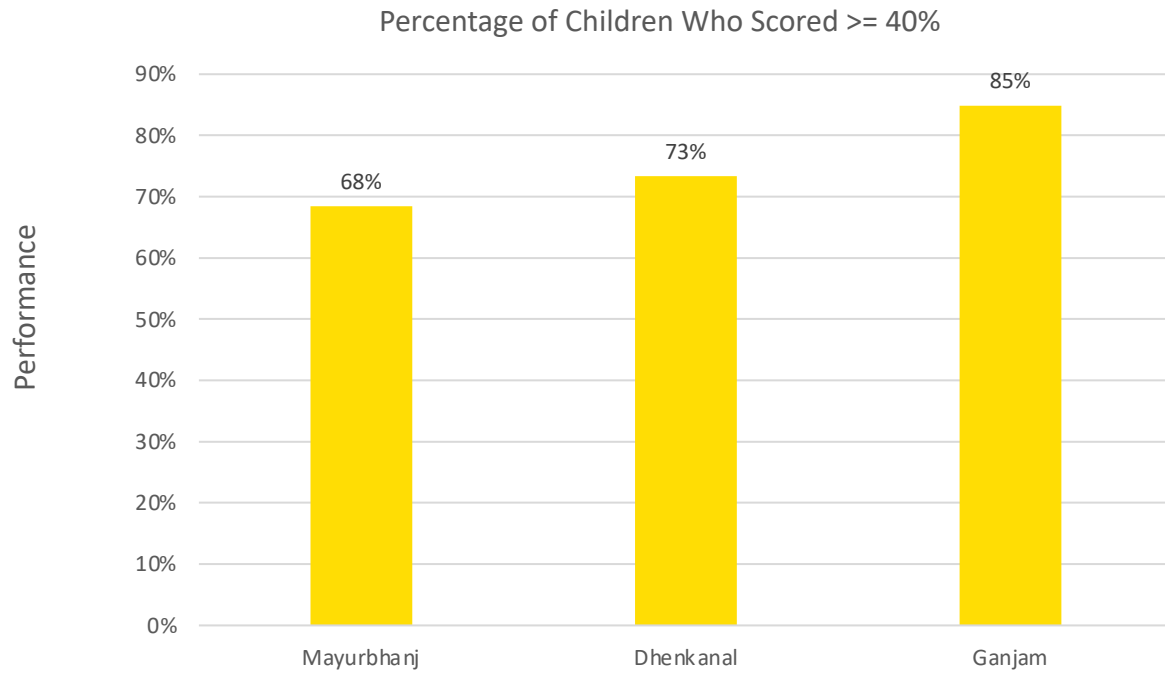
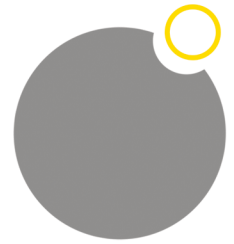
The  
**TOUGHER**

*competencies*

Division 

Measurement 

Multiplication 



In order of

**PERFORMANCE**



Ganjam

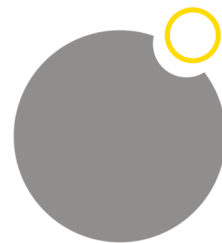


Dhenkanal

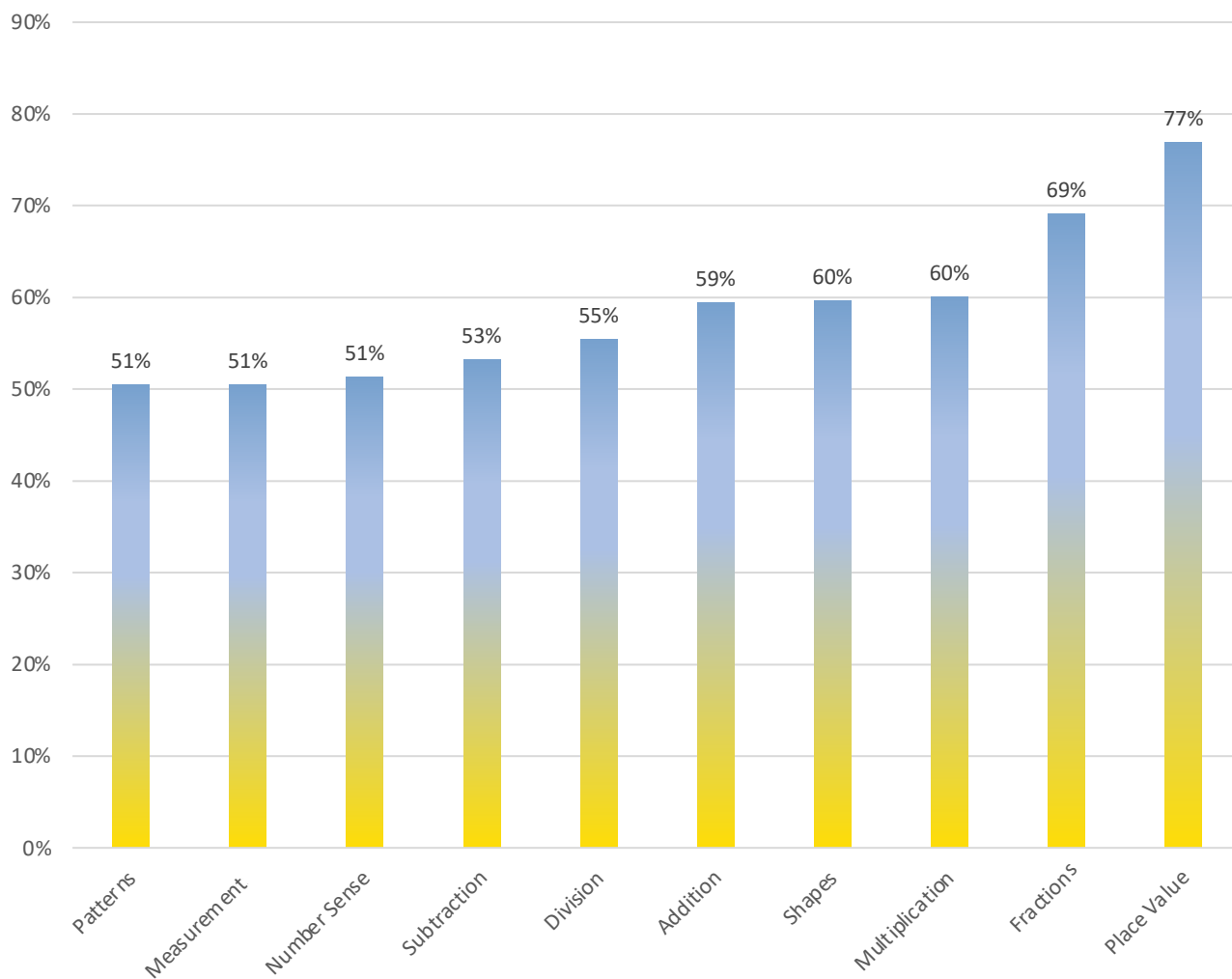


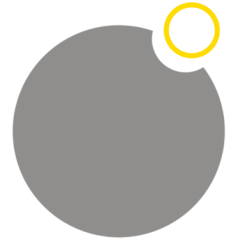
Mayurbhanj





Percentage of Children Who Could Correctly Solve These Competencies





The  
**EASIEST**

*competencies*



Place Value



Fractions



Multiplication

The  
**TOUGHER**

*competencies*

Patterns



Measurement

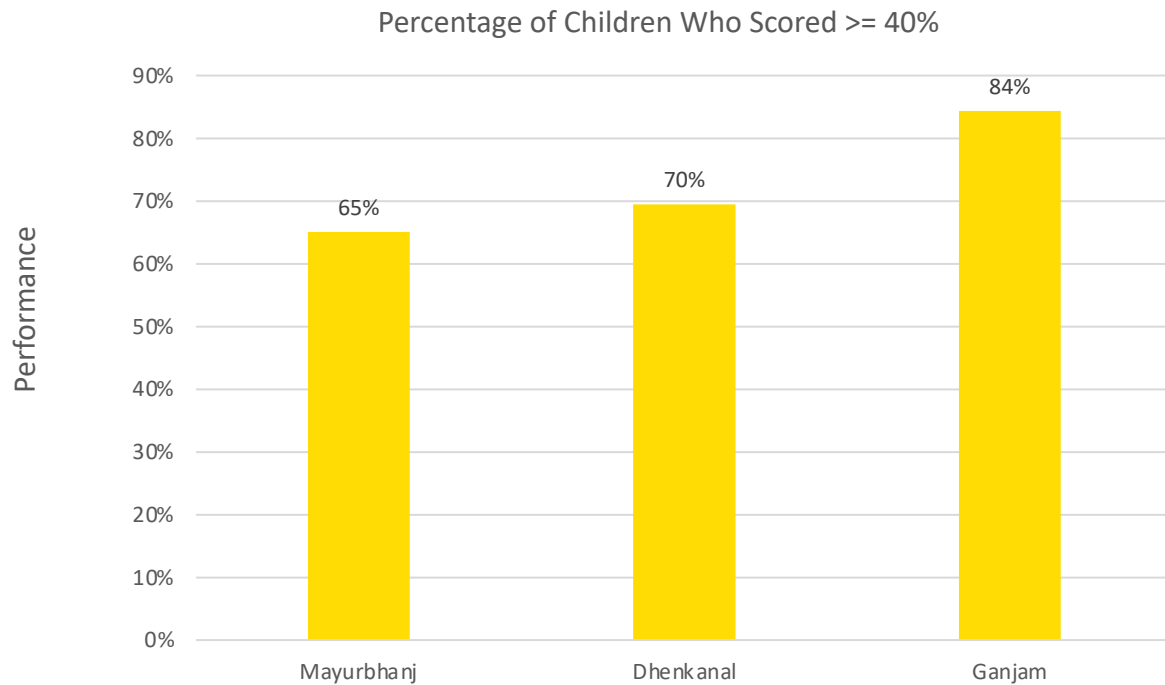
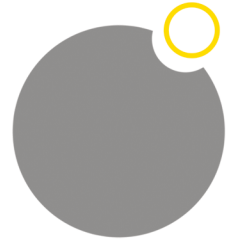


Number Sense



**Akshara**  
Foundation

EVERY CHILD IN SCHOOL AND LEARNING WELL



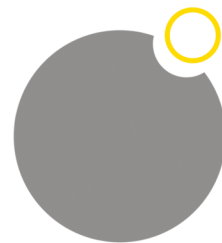
In order of

**PERFORMANCE**

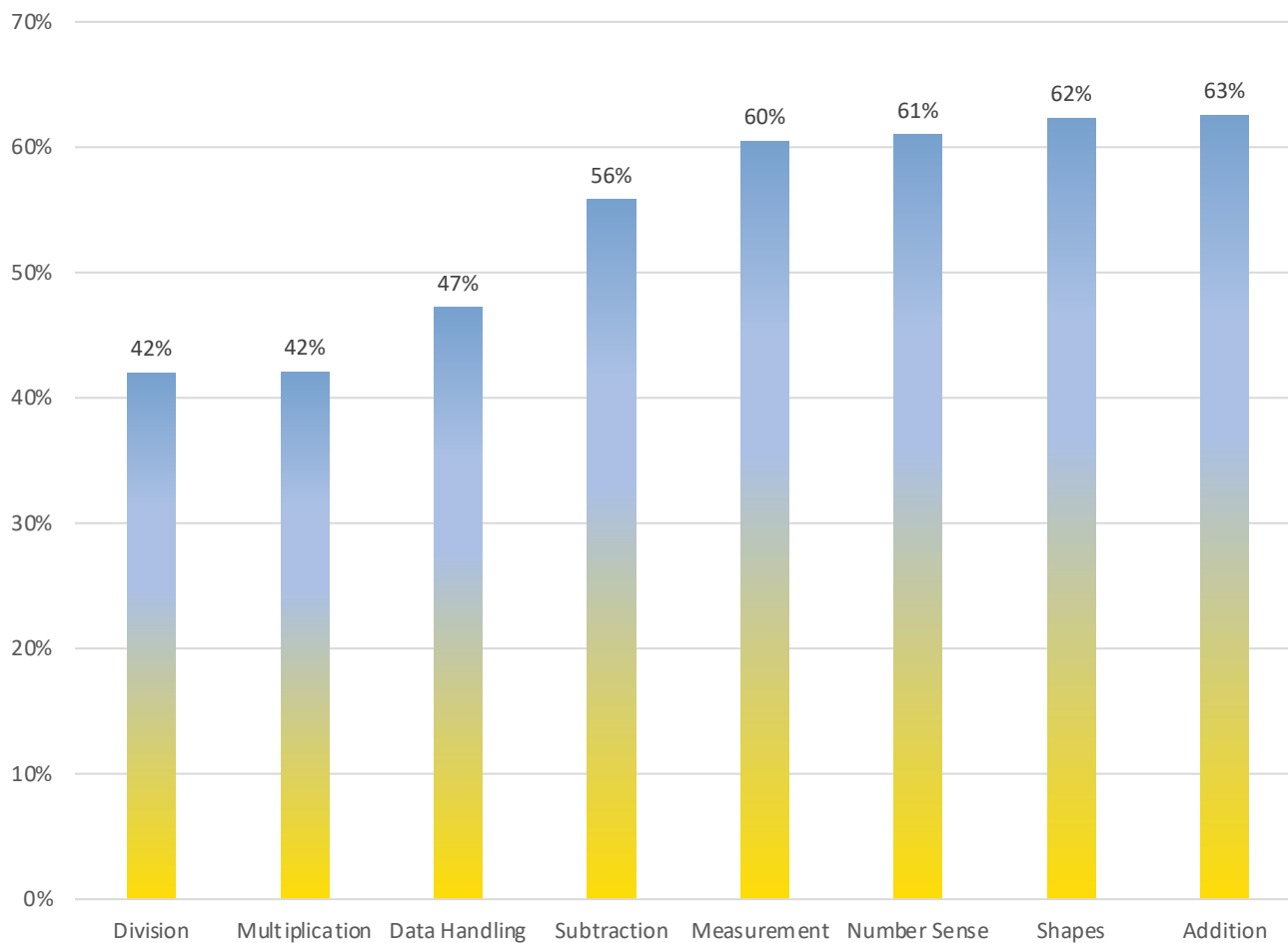
 **Ganjam**

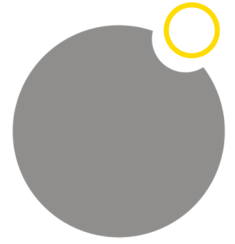
 **Dhenkanal**

 **Mayurbhanj**



Percentage of Children Who Could Correctly Solve These Competencies





The  
**EASIEST**

*competencies*



Addition



Shapes



Number Sense

The  
**TOUGHER**

*competencies*

Division



Multiplication



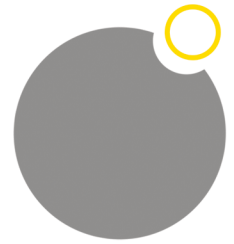
Data Handling



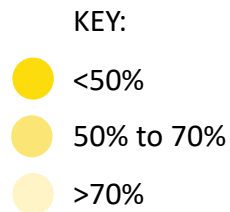
**Akshara**  
Foundation

EVERY CHILD IN SCHOOL AND LEARNING WELL

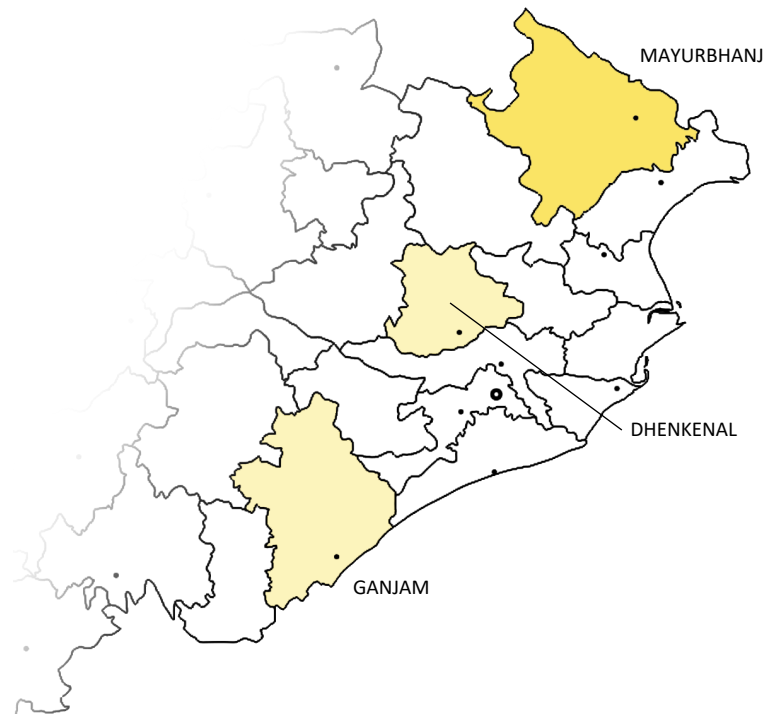
# Heat map of overall performance by districts



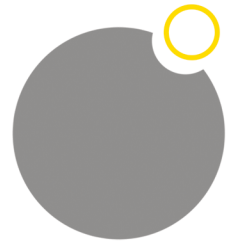
## GRADE 4



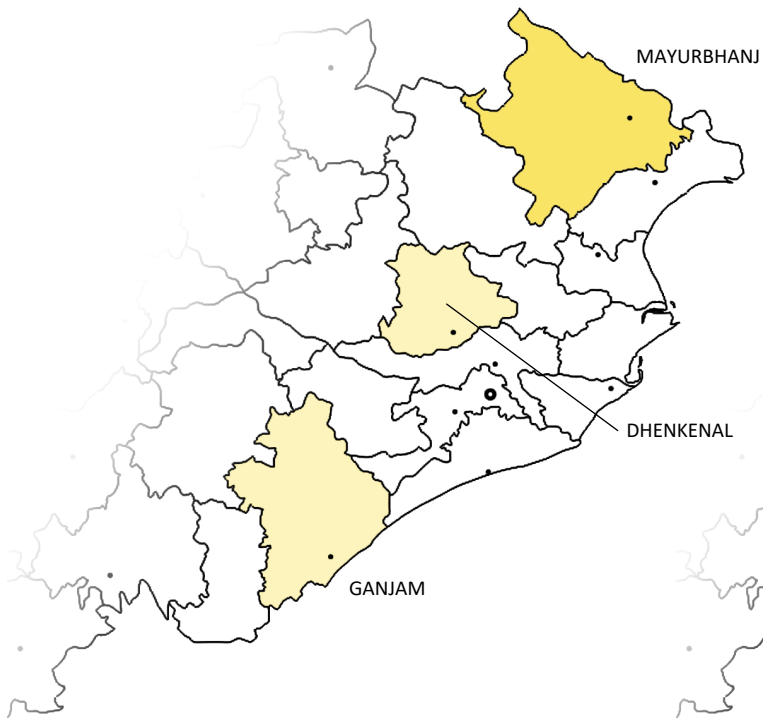
**Note:**  
The Key represents  
district-wise percentage  
of children with scores  
>=40%



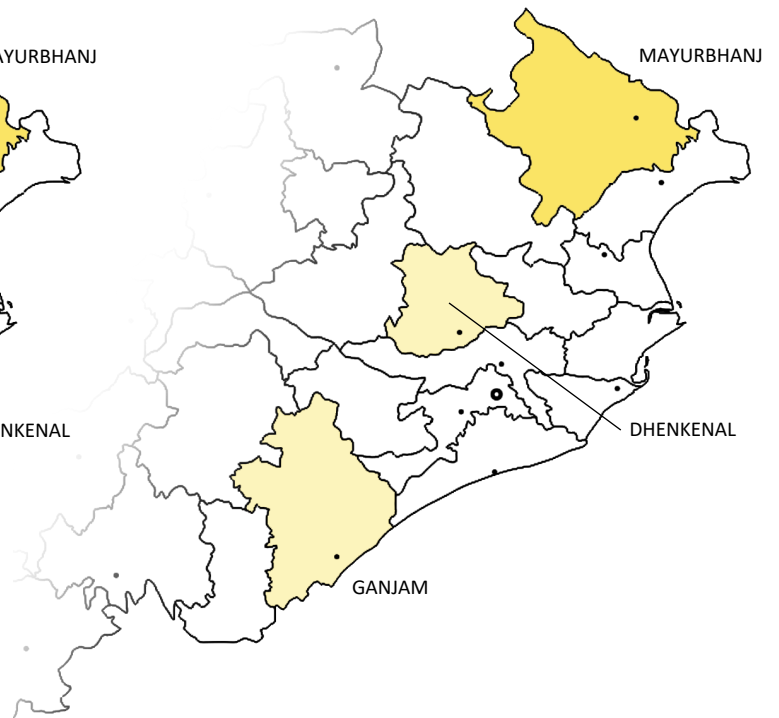




## GRADE 5

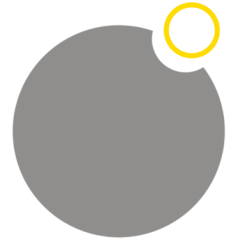


## GRADE 6



## Case Study

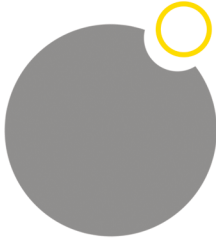

### *But We Did It*



The sea change this year for GP Contests was collaboration. The School and Mass Education (S&ME) Department, never known for half-measures or shying away from ambitious projects, had one condition. “We will do the Contests in all the GPs of the district this time.” “Mayurbhanj has 188 GPs,” says District Field Manager Manoj Kumar Panda.

The Department’s deadline too was uncompromising: “Cover all the GPs in one week in December 2023.” It was rushed and hectic and incessant. Those who were in charge of the Contests craved for time - the GPs, the team, the Education Volunteers, Department officials - and time went bustling by in a blink. “But we did it,” says Manoj. They overshot their timeline only by five days. “We proved we could do it.”





At the heart of it was a calm, measured approach, and for a first-time event, every detail was entrusted and allocated, and activity spread across the GPs of the district like it was preordained. For the team, the Nahandasol GP Contest in Betanati block was an exceptional experience. Out-of-the-ordinary because of the joint orchestration by two highly individualistic, warm-hearted officials, the GP Sarpanch Govinda Hansdha, and Kanan Bala Kar, the Headmistress (HM) of the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) where the Contest was held.

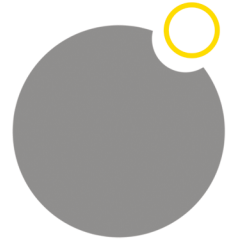
The KGBV students embodied hospitality as they welcomed officials and their peers from the five neighbouring schools taking part with respect, friendship, and warmth. Govinda Hansdha's interest in education took the Contest up another level. Sharing the spotlight with him that day was the KGBV HM, young, at 36, vibrant, compassionate, and a doer.

Kanan Bala Kar takes KGBV's lofty vision to heart and stamps on it her innate idealism. She's been in the profession for 23 years and there's little she doesn't know about the young girls and boys in her school. She has 213 students at KGBV, more girls than boys. "Most of them are seeing a school for the first time," she says.

"Maths is a problem," Kanan Bala Kar concedes. For two years now, Ganitha Kalika Andolana (GKA), Akshara's Maths Programme, has been implemented in her school, its kit a rich and enlightening resource. "My students have improved a lot," Kanan Bala Kar begins. Then emphatically, "Fear has gone. The fear of maths. Even my weak students have found a way to learn with the kit."

## Case Study

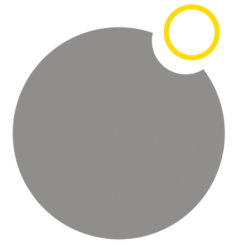
### *But We Did It*



The most represented school at the Nahandasol GP Contest was KGBV – 100 of the 154 participants were from Kanan Bala Kar's school. "We prepared them thoroughly. We motivated them. We told them they would be prizewinners. And they wrote their test fearlessly and with abandon. Our children have no fear," declares Kanan Bala Kar proudly. Six of the nine prizewinners at the Contest were KGBV students.

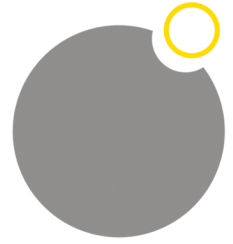
For now, though, Kanan Bala Kar is an overjoyed HM, basking in the celebrity of her star performers. "I love my students very much. I try hard to empower them, to grow and develop their inner qualities. They all have it in them. These children are my life." She can't say enough about their self-assertion, their dauntlessness, and the triumph they seized on the day of the Contest. She believes that ultimately, it's not their circumstances, their penury, or their lack that will underscore their personality. It's the facilities and opportunities, the nurturing, grooming and coaching that schools like KGBV provide that will be life-defining.





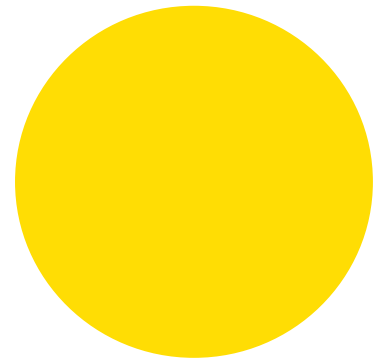


# Acknowledgements

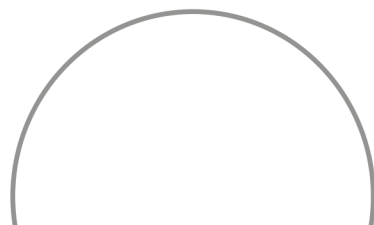
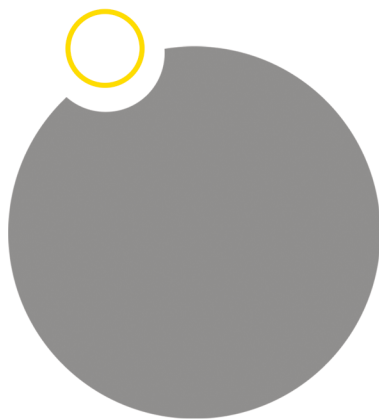


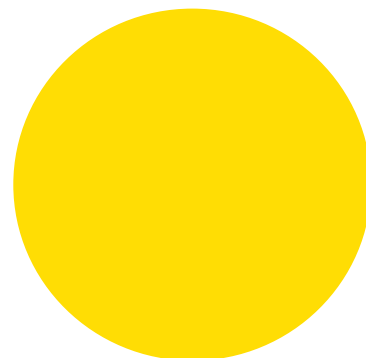
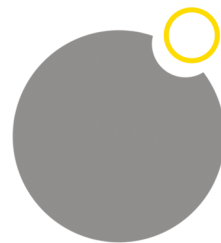
All stakeholders contributed to this effort:

- District Collectors (DCs)
- Chef Executive Officer (CEO cum CDO)
- Additional District Magistrate (ADM)
- District Education Officers (DEOs)
- District Welfare Officers (DWOs)
- Additional District Education Officers (ADEOs)
- District Institute of Education and Training (DIET)
- Block Development Officers (BDOs)
- Pedagogy Coordinator
- Block Education Officers (BEOs)
- Block Resource Centre Coordinators (BRCCs)
- Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators (CRCCs)
- Headmasters/Headmistresses (HMs) and all Teachers
- Panchayat Executive Officers (PEOs)
- Sarpanch and Gram Panchayat Members
- Community Members
- School Management Committee (SMC) Members
- GP Team Leaders and Education Volunteers









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