First Bell

Fig 4.3.2. Time lapse of the project

State and Name of the host

Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE)

Name of the Project

First Bell of KITES

Coverage (Geographical and Time)

The project was started during 2020 covering classes 1 to 12 in public schools across the state.
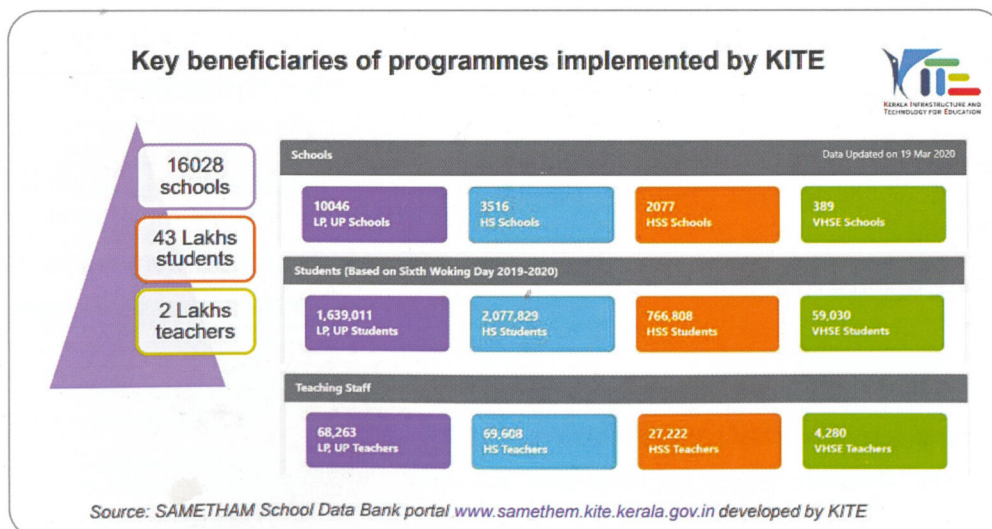
Beneficiary of the Project

Fig 5.2.2 Key Beneficiaries of KITE

Problem statement / situation before the initiative

First Bell is a digital teaching platform for primary education in Kerala, India. First Bell is an interim arrangement for regular classes for students of Standards 1 to 12 in public schools. It is an initiative by the Kerala Infrastructure Technology for Education (KITE) and a part of Kite Victers (Versatile ICT Enabled Resource for Students). It is owned by the Department of General and Higher Education.

First Bell started from 1st June 2020 through VICTERS Channel, in the situation of hiking crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is an effort by the State Education Department to ensure that the students do not miss out on lessons due to COVID-19 induced lockdown.

Project objectives

The project had mainly two objectives:

1. To ensure that education is imparted amid Covid-19 crisis through arrangements for virtual classes.

2. To cover all students from classes 1 to 12 in public and aided schools, including the disadvantaged sections, so that no child is left out or denied their right to education.

Project scope and methodology

Government had a three pronged approach for implementation –

1. First Bell digital classes were streamed on a free, public-run television channel available on cable networks, direct-to-home services and over the internet. KITE VICTERS channel was used for this purpose.

2. Ensuring access - Not even a single student should be left out. For this purpose, almost all villages in Kerala have at least one common centre which is either anganwadi, reading room or sports club. It was used by the education department to set up a classroom.

3. Follow up - Class teachers have to do the follow-up on a regular basis to ensure that the children are following what is being taught digitally. This is done through evaluating and providing feedbacks on worksheets which are to be filled by the students after each class, keeping a track of students' progress through social media groups, over phones or sometimes even through personal inspection. Counseling sessions are also provided to the students to ensure their productivity and safeguard their mental health.

Extent of process re-engineering

First Bell stands as Kerala's pioneering virtual teaching platform, introducing a range of innovative teaching methods right from its inception to facilitate seamless knowledge dissemination to students. It employs two primary channels for live broadcast: the free-to-air television channel VICTERS and the YouTube channel 'ITS VICTERS,' hosted by KITE VICTERS. These dual approaches have effectively ensured the effective transmission of educational concepts from teachers to students in a user-friendly and accessible manner.
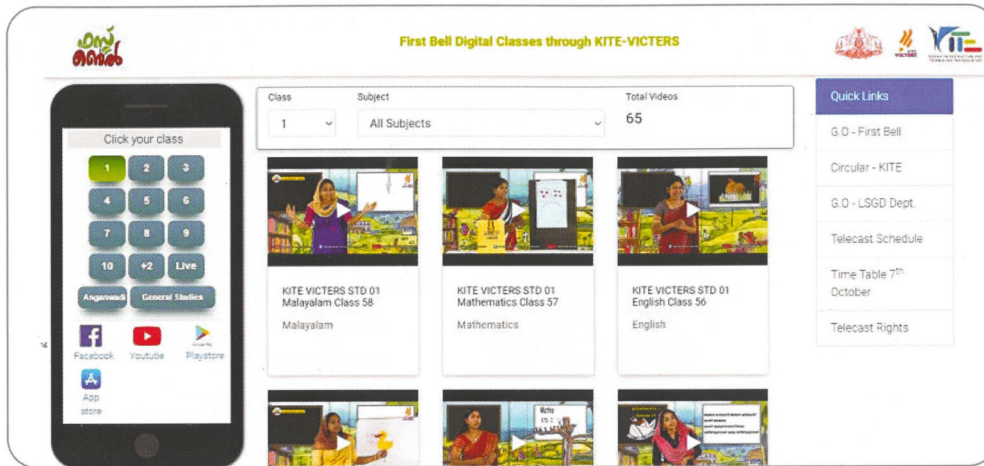
Fig 5.2.3. First Bell Digital Classes though KITE–VICTERS
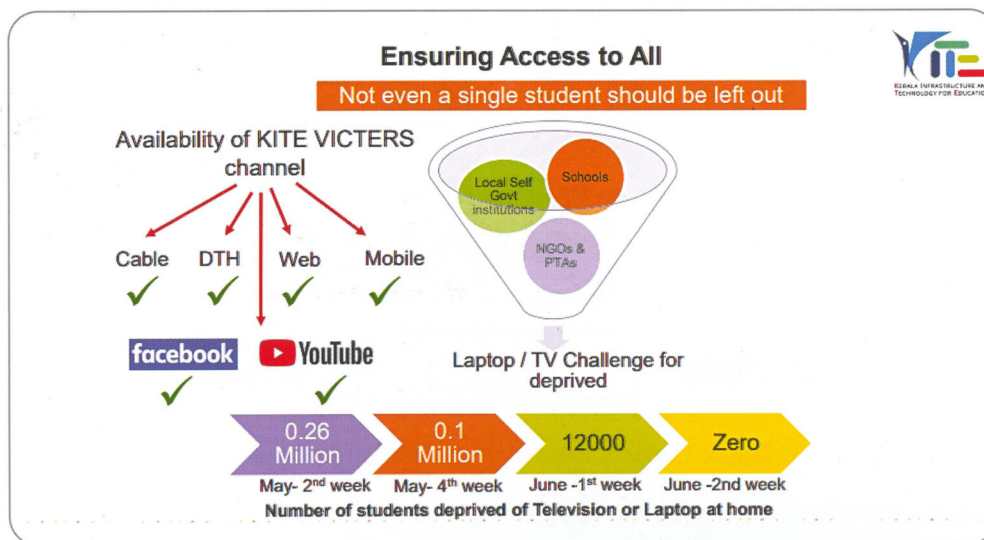
Citizen centricity

Fig 5.2.4. First Bell Citizen Centricity

The project had citizen centric approach making sure that the digital content reaches the beneficiaries through cable, DTH, web, mobile and through YouTube and Facebook.

Efficiency enhancement

Efficiency enhancement was ensured mainly through:

o   Capacity Building

o   Content Development and Dissemination
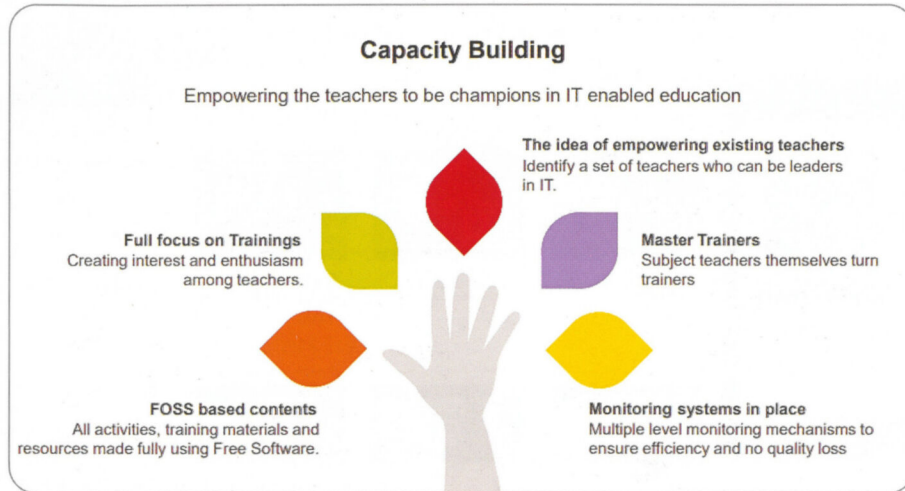
o   Developing ICT infrastructure

Fig 5.2.5. Capacity building
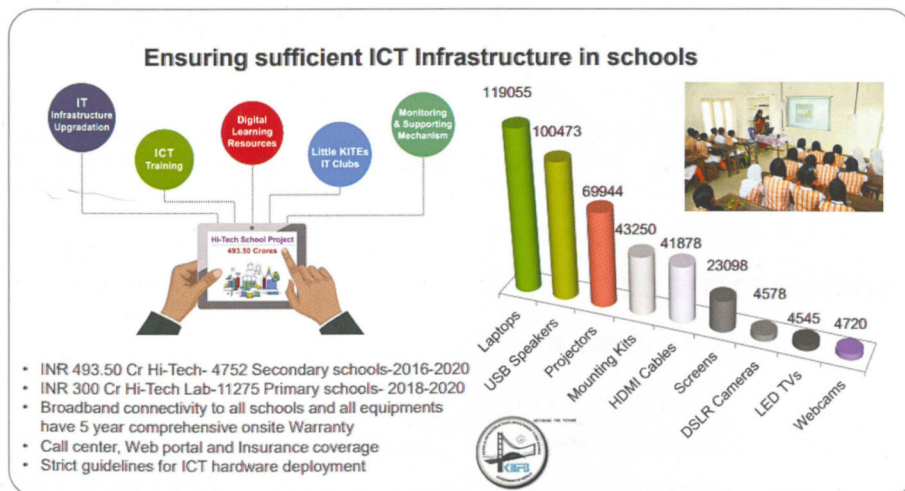

Fig 5.2.6. Content Development and Dissemination

Fig 5.2.7. Developing ICT Infrastructure
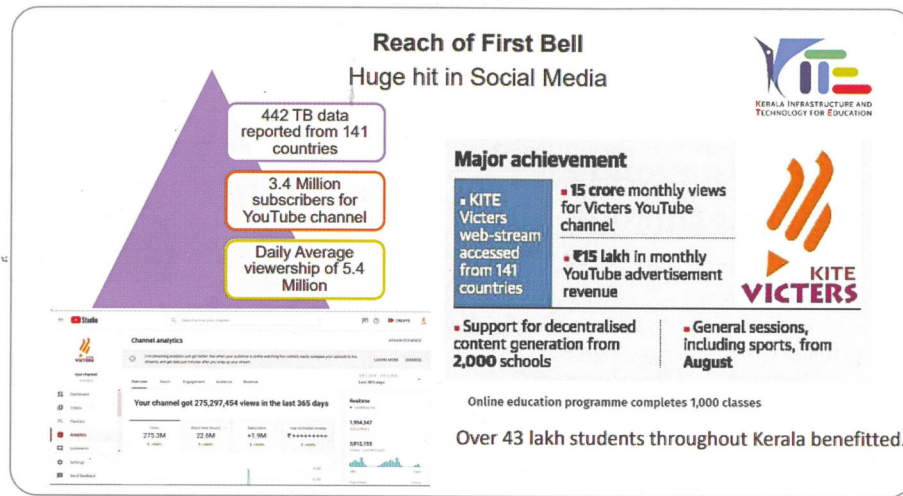
Results achieved / value delivered

Fig 5.2.8. Results of FIRST BELL

Adaptability and Comparative analysis

Holistic ICT deployment in school education helped Kerala to compact the Covid-19 challenge. The Kerala model is self-sustainable and piggy backed the existing Digital Education system. On October 12th, Kerala became the 1st State in India to be Completely Digital in Education. The model can be replicated anywhere with proper planning and its sustainability to be ensured by Govt.

Risk analysis

The classes were started on trial mode from 1st June, 2020. The online classes brought to focus the digital divide in the state. Kerala has around 45 lakh students following state board syllabus. However, a survey revealed that 2.61 lakh students don't have access to TV or smartphone, making them out of the network of online classes. Such students were in most destitute families mainly in remote villages and tribal areas.

With the government and civil society interventions, the 2.61 lakh number has reduced to 1.20 lakh. Local businessman provided TV sets as part of a 'TV challenge' launched by the State's Industries department. MLAs were allowed to use their local development fund to buy TVs and laptops for students.

Other distinct features / accomplishments

Kerala Chief Minister's Award for Innovation in Public Service under the category of Procedural Intervention in 2019.

Meet the Presenter

Shri. Anvar Sadath K
CEO, KITES