

## **Invisible Visible – Identification of dyslexia in Indian Languages**

Last Thursday on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017, Hon'ble Union Minister of India for Science & Technology, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, presented to the National Brain Research Centre, the Millennium Alliance (MA) Award for DALI (Dyslexia Assessment Tool for Languages of India).

Millennium Alliance is an inclusive platform to leverage Indian creativity, expertise, and resources to identify and scale innovative solutions being developed and tested in India to address development challenges that will benefit base of the pyramid populations across India and the world. It is a network that brings together various actors within India's social innovation ecosystem including, but not limited to, social innovators, philanthropy organizations, social venture capitalists, angel investors, donors, service providers, and corporate foundations, to stimulate and facilitate financial contributions from the private and public sectors and offer a range of support to innovators.

Led by FICCI, Center for Innovation; Science & Technology Commercialization (FICCI C-Tech) it completed this year, its fourth consecutive round of the Millennium Alliance of which USAID is a founding partner with Government of India's Department of Science & Technology through the Technology Development Board (TDB). It now has partners from UK's Department for International Development (DFID); ICCO Cooperation; ICICI Foundation for Inclusive Growth; Wadhvani Initiative for Sustainable Health (WISH); World Bank and Facebook.

DALI – Dyslexia Assessment for Languages of India was developed by Nandini Chatterjee Singh at the National Brain Research Centre in Manesar, India. DALI is the first standardized and validated screening and assessment tools for dyslexia in regional Indian languages. Dyslexia is the most common learning disability wherein children face serious difficulties in acquiring reading and writing skills as conventionally taught in a classroom. Dyslexia is caused due to differences in brain wiring and has been shown to have a genetic basis. It is estimated that nearly 1 in 6 children, across the world today have dyslexia, and the estimated number in India is 35 million.

The project 'Making the Invisible Visible' will use DALI in Indian primary schools to screen and identify children with 'dyslexia'. DALI contains screening tools for school teachers and standardized and validated assessment Batteries to be used by psychologists in Hindi, Marathi, Kannada and English. The objective will be to catch the disability early and consequently allow early intervention. Recently, the Indian Parliament passed a new disability bill on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016 to include special provisions for individuals dyslexia and related disabilities (SLD).

Since 80% of children who drop out of school have learning disability, it is hoped that such early screening might also help prevent school dropout. The primary aim is to train nearly 1000 primary school teachers and 300 psychologists primarily in Government schools to screen and assess children for reading disabilities and also suggest remediation. This project will extend DALI to 3 additional languages, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.

