

Research into primary education in 10 government primary schools in villages in Moradabad District, Uttar Pradesh, India

There has been considerable concern in India about the dropout rate in government primary schools. Despite huge investment of money and resources and substantial support from the World Bank and the British government, the situation has not improved.

At the beginning of the year, the Amarpurkashi project therefore decided to initiate a programme of action research. On 1st February 2008, a young graduate was appointed as a researcher for four months. His job was to investigate ten local government primary schools.

He studied these schools every day for two months and then collated his findings and presented the following report:-

**SUMMARY OF ACTION RESEARCH REPORT
April 2008**

Under the guidance of the Gramodaya College and Research Institute, Amarpurkashi, action research was carried out in February and March 2008 in Moradabad district to see whether there had been any improvement in the quality of government primary education over the last four years, bearing in mind the amount of investment and effort that had been made with programmes such as Operation Blackboard and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

According to research carried out in 2004 by experts from the World Bank and Harvard University in the USA, 25% of government primary school teachers in India were found to be absent during surprise visits and of those who were present, only half were actually teaching. These figures were the national average.

Ten government primary schools in the blocks of Bania Khera and Bilari were visited without prior notice or knowledge.

Observations were made from village houses conveniently situated near the school. Neither students nor staff were aware of this. Observation began one hour before the schools were due to open and teachers' and students' movements were recorded every five minutes up to the close of the school day.

A summary of the results found the following:-

1. None of the schools opened at the officially specified time.
2. None of the schools remained open for the whole of the school day.
3. Out of a total of ten teachers working in these schools, two (20%) were absent for the whole day.
4. Out of a total of twenty assistant teachers, (Shiksha Mitra) five (25%) were absent.
5. None of the teachers or teachers' assistants stayed at the school for the whole day.
6. Those staff who were present moved in and out of the schools throughout the day without any formalities i.e. without asking permission or informing anyone.
7. Only two (20%) of ten schools held an assembly.
8. Pupil-teacher contact was 45%.
9. Only 20% of the total number of students on roll was present at the beginning of the school day.
10. Only 18% of the total number of students on roll was present at the end of the school day.
11. Approximately 90% of the total number of students attending school that day arrived before any of the teachers.
12. Only 20.8% of pupils were present for the midday meal.

These results indicate that there has been no improvement since the original survey was carried out four years ago. It is particularly interesting to note that there

was an increase of only 0.8% pupils at the time of the midday meal.

COMMENT

Just 20% of those on roll are attending school and 18% of those on roll stay for the whole school day.

These are the children who are influenced by the behaviour and attitude of the teachers.

What they see is that the teachers are always late, often absent, come and go without notice, only teach for 50% of the time and don't bother with assemblies. This is the education they are receiving.