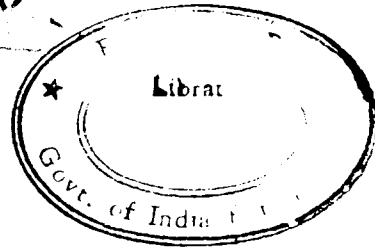


FOR REFERENCE ONLY



# REACHING OUT FURTHER

## Para Teachers in Primary Education

### An In-depth Study of Selected Schemes

(As a first part of the study on Para Teachers, an earlier document titled *Reaching out Further – Para Teachers in Primary Education: An Overview*, had outlined various para teacher schemes.)

DPEP



जिला प्राथमिक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम  
DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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Ministry of Human Resource Development  
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October 16, 1999

## Foreword

A large number of educational programmes in various states aiming at Universalisation of primary/ elementary education are using para teachers, often called community teachers. Para teachers are working in alternative or community schools in remote unserved habitations. Para teacher based alternative schools have also been set up in areas where formal schools exist, but specific groups of children have been left out of the regular education system. Of late, a large number of para teachers are being recruited in formal schools to work along with regular teachers to ensure a better pupil-teacher ratio. Realising the significance of the para teacher programmes being initiated in different states, the District Primary Education Programme initiated a study: *Para Teachers—Concept and Practice in the Context of Universalisation of Quality Primary Education*. As a first step of the study, information on different para teacher programmes was compiled and published in 1998 in a document titled *Reaching Out Further—Para Teachers in Primary Education: An Overview*.

The second volume brings out the findings of the in-depth study of five para teacher programmes, viz., Shiksha Karmi Programme, Rajasthan; Alternative Schooling Programme, Education Guarantee Scheme, Shiksha Karmi Yojna, Madhya Pradesh; Volunteer Teacher Scheme, Himachal Pradesh. The study has been able to highlight the positive aspects of certain para teacher programmes like the greater accountability of the para teacher, better linkages of para teacher schools with the community and the fact that such schools have been able to provide primary education to marginalised categories of children. It also clearly brings out problems like inadequate teacher qualification and competence, unsatisfactory initial training and poor infrastructural facilities.

The cost effectiveness of para teacher programmes is definitely an attraction for the State Governments in their effort to expand the reach of primary education to hitherto unserved areas and population groups. The findings of this study have come at a very opportune time, when universalisation of elementary education is being given a big thrust by the Central Government and many State Governments. Policy planners and educational managers would do well to take into account various issues thrown up by this Study when planning and implementing para teacher programmes. It is also hoped that this study would prompt more research and in-depth analysis of alternative para teacher based education initiatives in the near future.

The Department of Education would like to thank Shri Yogendra, Bodh Shiksha Samiti and Dr. Surendra Kushwaha and their team for undertaking this study and preparing this volume.

MAHARAJ KRISHEN KAW

## Preface

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It is with a sense of fulfilment and humility, that the Bodh Shiksha Samiti presents this report on "Para Teachers—Concept and Practice in the Context of Universalisation of Quality Primary Education." Given the task of undertaking an in-depth study of a phenomenon that is so intricate, yet vaguely understood; widely accepted, yet met with considerable apprehension at various levels, the length of time taken in finalising this report has been worth it. The report covers all conceivable aspects of para teachers working in varying socio-cultural contexts and under different policy frameworks. The effort has been sincere and objective, keeping in view the larger perspective of education in terms of quality, equity and manageability. Shortcomings, mostly the product of unavoidable circumstances and insurmountable logistical problems cannot, however, be denied, and Bodh has no hesitation in owning them.

Bodh Shiksha Samiti places on record its great sense of appreciation of the MHRD, Department of Education, Government of India for entrusting the project to them and expresses its gratitude to Mr. R. S. Pandey, Joint Secretary-DPEF and Mr. Dhir Jhingran Deputy Secretary-DPEP in the Department of Education, for their help and guidance at crucial junctures.

Incisive comments received from numerous persons have greatly benefited the project. Special thanks are extended to Mr. M.L. Metha, Dr. Sharda Jain and Dr. S.N. Methi.

Bodh also acknowledges with profound thanks, the painstaking effort put in by Dr. Surendra Kushwaha, marked by his insistence on quality and factual reliability.

The consultants associated with the project, Prof. Shyam Menon, Ms. Divya Lata and Dr. Poonam Batra provided skilful inputs in the preparation of the research design and other methodological tools. Bodh is grateful to them. In this context, the contribution of Mr. Anand and Mr. Virendra Narain has also been immense and Bodh is thankful to them.

We also gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the research team: Ms. Kasturi Sengupta, Ms. Madhumita Pal, Mr. Prakash Nayak, Mr. Raj Kishore Dung Dung, Ms. Rani Singh and Ms. Reshma Aggarwal; as well as that of our Investigators: Mr. Anil Kumar, Mr. Hitendra Upadhyaya, Mr. Jagdish Jatav, Mr. Lohit Joshi, Mr. Mahendra Sharma, Mr. Surendra Mathur and Mr. Vikas.

Our sincere thanks are extended to EdCIL, New Delhi, and to Shri Dayaram who was always helpful and provided timely encouragement that helped us forge ahead despite difficulties; to the Secretary, Shiksha Karmi Board, Rajasthan; Managing Director, Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission, Madhya Pradesh and Director, District Primary Education, Himachal Pradesh for the institutional support provided by them.

Bodh is sincerely thankful to the The Aga Khan Foundation which ungrudgingly provided the necessary support for completing the study.

The study is also deeply indebted to all District, Block and village level officials in the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh, who have played an important role in making this study possible.

And finally, our thanks to all the para teachers, community members, parents, and the children, without whose support this study would not have been completed.

It is hoped that the report will add to a better understanding of the role of para teachers, in the universalisation of primary education and will contribute in bringing about much-needed clarity on the concept, practices and prospects of this most significant pillar of alternative school education programme in the country.

**Yogendra**  
**Project Director**  
(Executive Director-Bodh Shiksha Samiti)

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## Executive Summary

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The study of "Para Teachers—Concept and Practice in the context of Universalisation of Quality Primary Education", using the case study method, is an in-depth probe into five programmes/schemes in three states—Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

The overall objective of the study is to research the role, problems and prospects of para teachers in order to be able to make policy recommendations at the national level with regard to their efficacy in the universalisation of primary education. The specific objectives however are to examine:

- The nature of school and school management, its effectiveness and the nature of role (space) provided for the para teacher therein.
- The efficacy of the para teacher's role in ensuring quality and equitability in providing primary education.
- The desirability and viability of para teachers in a system considered as an alternative to the mainstream school system.

The following programmes involving para teachers were identified for in-depth study:

- Shiksha Karmi Programme, Rajasthan
- Alternative Schooling Programme, Madhya Pradesh
- Education Guarantee Scheme, Madhya Pradesh

- Shiksha Karmi Yojna, Madhya Pradesh
- Volunteer Teacher Scheme, Himachal Pradesh

Five districts, with one block from each, were identified in Rajasthan. Four districts were selected in Madhya Pradesh, taking one block from each while in Himachal Pradesh two districts with three blocks—one from one district and two from the second—were selected. The number of para teachers included in the sample was 32. The number of regular teachers from regular schools, situated in the vicinity of the selected para teacher schools, was 27. Thus, 59 teachers were covered. It must be underlined that regular teachers and regular schools were included only as a referral point wherever required.

### Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in scope on three counts. One, it does not cover all programmes nation-wide with their attendant varied characteristics (although care was taken to include such programmes which generally represented the major characteristics of a larger number of programmes); two, the sample is too small to permit large scale generalisations; and three, it does not provide a historical background of the genesis and evolution of the concept of para teachers, against which the findings of the study, and the concept of para teacher

as it now manifests itself in various forms, could have been interpreted in a more realistic and meaningful manner.

## Method of Analysis

The information/data collected can be classified into three categories. First, that which defines and also influences directly or indirectly the nature and quality of the para teacher's role. Second, that which throws light on the efficacy of the para teacher's role in the process of universalisation of education; and third, that which provides information on the social context in which a para teacher operates. Under these three heads the data/information related to each is processed and analysed. The analysis includes (i) the assumptions underlying a particular idea/phenomenon; (ii) reality as manifested in the case studies, and (iii) the conclusions followed by recommendations.

## Findings

### Para Teacher

**Qualifications:** In terms of the minimum prescribed qualifications, there is no difference between a para teacher and a regular teacher except in the Shiksha Karmi Project in Rajasthan. However, a regular teacher must possess a Teachers Training Certificate before s/he is appointed. Admission to training institutes is based on merit under different social categories. This in turn, has a bearing on classroom transactions. The study found that, by and large, classroom transactions were uniformly poor, but more so when conducted by para teachers with lower qualifications.

**Localism:** This is a positive feature of programmes involving para teachers. A para teacher who is a local, has better

linkages with the community, the school manned by her/him functions regularly and since para teacher schools function in areas populated by marginalised sections, both para teacher and school occupy a distinct position symbolic of the progress and upliftment of the community itself. However, in two programmes covered under the study—the Shiksha Karmi Yojna in Madhya Pradesh and the Volunteer Teacher Scheme in Himachal Pradesh—this element of localism has been diluted due to intervention by the judiciary.

**Voluntarism:** Voluntarism, an essential part of the very concept of these programmes, does not seem to work with para teachers. While most programmes pay honorariums and lay no explicit stress on the voluntary nature of the para teachers job, the study also found that most para teachers desired a salaried job and were not motivated by 'Seva Bhava'.

**Honorarium:** The honorarium for a para teacher varies from Rs. 500/- (EGS, Madhya Pradesh) to Rs. 1800/- (SKP, Rajasthan) per month. The honorarium under EGS has now been raised to Rs. 1000/-. The low salary, combined with the contractual nature of their job, has been the major source of discontent and this has led to demotivation among them. Para teachers have sought judicial intervention on these issues in many programmes. The payment of such low salaries, besides being untenable, is also not conducive to the long-term sustainability of these programmes, being inherently deficient of social justice. The study found that almost all para teachers complained of the low salary and job insecurity.

**Recruitment procedure:** The community's involvement in the recruitment procedure is a positive aspect, and the first



step towards realising the concept of community ownership of the school.

**Social background and outlook:** It was noticed that the social background of a para teacher did affect her/his behaviour and attitude towards children and the community. Caste, gender and community identities were found to overwhelm the liberal outlook expected of a teacher.

**Professional preparation and continuing professional support:** While pre-service and in-service training is generally regarded as a positive professional input by para teachers, in practice these inputs remain largely ineffective. Since the research team could not observe any training programme, it is not possible to offer any comment on the quality of training being imparted. However, from observations of classroom practices, it appears that training has failed to involve, enthuse and motivate these teachers to intellectually process the learning sought to be imparted to them. For the most part, they do not appear to have made their own judgement about the validity and applicability of what they were taught, before imbibing it and translating it into practice.

The duration of training is also a factor. The study reveals that the training periods have been very short and uneven. A few questions that immediately crop up are: (i) what should be the minimum level of academic competence for a person to be trained as a primary school teacher? (ii) what should the duration of pre-service/initial training be, in which a teacher could acquire basic skills and competencies? (iii) what would the appropriate curriculum be like? (iv) what are the parameters of quality training? and (v) what would an effective in-service academic support system be like?

The situation with regard to regular teachers in terms of classroom transactions was also found to be equally disappointing. The irony is that most government teachers, in the sample, were able to theoretically explain some of the basics of quality teaching but were found not to be using them. In-service training inputs also did not make any noticeable impact on them. This problem needs to be investigated thoroughly.

### Community

Para teacher programmes (EGS and ASP in Madhya Pradesh) were basically conceived for habitations with children of school-going age who have no schools to go to, or where dysfunctional government primary schools were required to be reactivated (SKP, Rajasthan). Most of these places are remote and inaccessible, where scheduled tribes and deprived sections of the society form the bulk of the populace.

However, the study reveals that most of these people living on the subsistence level would rather opt for some economically gainful activity than send their children to school. Also, a good number of parents in these areas kept their children back from school when there was pressure of agricultural work. Besides, the study found that the education offered by these programmes was not geared to the needs and aspirations of the community and to the socio-cultural and physical environment of the children. The curriculum content was found to be largely alien, as it did not relate to the child's environment. As a result neither did the children understand much of what was being taught nor did they enjoy their lessons.

**Community's participation:** The participation of the community in school affairs is not as active as it should be in any

of the 21 para teacher schools studied. In most of these programmes, the community has been involved in the selection of teachers. They are responsible for the supervision of these schools and they exercise control over teachers, since in many cases the teachers' salary is also paid through the community.

Apart from this, they help with minor problems like repairing the school building through financial contributions or volunteering manual labour. They also visit the school during functions such as Republic Day. However, the school does not make use of the intellectual resources and talents available in the community. Many members of the community possess skills such as making handicrafts, carpentry, pottery, narrating folk stories, etc, which could be taught to the children in schools.

### **School**

**Infrastructure:** The para teacher schools were found to be grossly lacking in appropriate physical infrastructure and a satisfactory school environment for carrying out effective and efficient teaching-learning. It appears that the planners, while opening these schools, failed to create conditions for effective learning in these schools.

**Classroom processes/classroom culture:** Classroom processes and classroom culture, as observed by the research teams in all the 21 para teacher schools and 12 government schools included in the study, were far from satisfactory. The traditional methods of teaching from textbooks, rote learning and corporal punishment, were the common features everywhere. In almost all schools there was hardly any attempt to make classrooms attractive and the environment conducive to a pleasant and effective teaching-learning process. There was a

great emphasis in training and workshops in all the programmes, on the use of innovative TLM and activity-based teaching, but barring one or two exceptions, these were not being used.

**School organisation:** The assumption is that teaching and learning activities are greatly facilitated in a school which is organised around children and the community. However, in many para teacher schools, neither daily timings nor the annual school calendar suited the children or the community—it was found that the community was not consulted before taking such decisions, in these cases.

**School management:** Village Education Committees (VECs) in formal as well as in para teacher schools were functioning with varying degrees of involvement. It was found that the role of the VEC's in school management was limited to non-academic aspects only. Also the way in which the VECs have been constituted does not make them fully representative in character and therefore, not as effective as they should be. The VEC's role is central to effective school management, and they have to be strengthened and take more interest in academic matters, if they are to fulfill this role.

**Learners' achievements:** The rationale and utility of para teachers, as also their prospects, largely depend on their performance in the classroom, which is reflected in achievements of their students. The performance of some students in classes III and V in the sample para teacher and government schools was assessed with regard to Hindi and Mathematics. The findings are summarised below:

1. The overall performance of students in all four para teacher programmes and in government schools was poor. The

achievement levels in para teacher schools and government schools (with regular teachers) was more or less similar.

2. Learning achievements of Class V were significantly lower than Class III, in all the schools where learner-performance was evaluated, especially in Mathematics. This aspect requires serious attention, particularly in para teacher programmes in which the teacher competence and preparation is of a lower level.

The analysis of the data contained in the Case Studies (Chapter II) has thrown up a realistic perspective on the role, problems and prospects of para teachers in the universalisation of elementary education and has made it possible to put forward the following recommendations.

## Recommendations

### Para Teacher

There is need to lay greater stress on the para teacher's academic competence to provide quality education up to Class V, and to this end it is necessary to develop parameters of minimum academic competence required of them. In areas where competent candidates are not available, as is reportedly the case in remote areas inhabited by deprived sections of society, arrangements need to be made to upgrade their academic competence.

- Initial, as well as in-service training has proved very inadequate, both in terms of duration and quality. This situation demands in-depth research in the areas of:
  - (i) the ability and competence of trainees to be developed into competent para teachers
  - (ii) nature of the training curriculum

- (iii) the training methodology and the cascade system of training
- (iv) the duration of initial/pre-service training in which a trainee would acquire basic teaching skills and competencies
- (v) the nature of in-service training inputs required, and
- (vi) systematic and regular feedback with regard to effectiveness of the training inputs in the field.

- Besides, the training should enable para teachers to develop a democratic and liberal outlook towards their pupils
- The salary structure of para teachers has to be commensurate with the nature of work and responsibilities entrusted to them.

### Community

- By virtue of her/his localism, a para teacher occupies a pivotal position which can enable her/him to elicit the broader and deeper involvement of the community and the VEC in school affairs, activities, and teaching-learning processes. This aspect needs to be accorded due importance in training curricula. Para teachers need to be trained as educational activists. Besides, supervisors and officials at the block and district levels need to learn to interact with the community on an equal basis and with humility so as to create a sense of partnership for the common cause of UPE and community's development.

### School

- A suitable place for organised teaching-learning is a prerequisite for quality education. It is, therefore, recommended that para teacher schools be provided with adequate infrastructural facilities at a suitable place.
- In remote and tribal areas, a substantial

part of the school curriculum does not relate to the child's environment or respond to the community's aspirations. A locally relevant core curriculum, along with teaching-learning materials, needs to be developed so as to linked with the main body of curriculum wherever possible and required.

- Many para teacher programmes provide for community participation in deciding the school timings and calendar but this is largely not adhered to. To ensure maximum attendance, it is of the utmost importance that the convenience and consent of the community be taken into consideration, with due regard for peak working seasons and local culture-customs, festivals etc.
- Members of the local community possess many skills such as arts and crafts. These skills may be used as a resource in the school for the teaching-learning processes e.g. elders from the community may be invited to narrate folk stories, sing folk songs or artisans may teach children various skills. This will strengthen community involvement in the school and also make the teaching-learning activity more interesting.
- There is need for a more intense interaction between the para teacher and parents. S/he needs to be more concerned about the pace of learning and the learning achievements of each child and regularly share this information with the parents. S/he should seek parents' co-operation, where required in improving the child's performance.

## Objectives of the Study and the Research Methodology

### Objectives

Para teachers have been working in a number of states in India under various schemes of universalisation of primary education. A full-fledged system of primary education has come into existence around para teachers as distinct from the regular school system and regular teachers. The whole process of the emergence of this system has acquired legitimacy and, in fact, an alternative and parallel stream of primary education is being developed in the country.

The rationale, origin, and growth of para teachers and the impact of their role on the entire gamut of primary education has to be understood and evaluated, keeping in view this larger perspective of primary education—particularly in the context of those deprived sections of society for whom quality education continues to be elusive even after fifty years of Independence, but who are said to be the central concern of the scheme of the universalisation of primary education.

The background given above raises a number of questions relevant to a study of the role, problems and prospects of para teachers so as to arrive at policy suggestions at the State level.

First, that the poor and underprivileged

have no choice but to depend on the educational facilities provided by the state because these are within reach and affordable. Second, this leads us to the question of quality of education being provided to them, since universalisation of education aims at egalitarianism. It has to be ensured that the quality of education remains uniform for all.

Third, does the para teacher system do justice to the long term career prospects of the youth employed as para teachers? Fourth, exactly how will this mechanism, and its full flowering, impact the education system in the long run? Is it desirable to keep two streams of education, running parallel to each other?

Can the objective of universalisation not be achieved by strengthening and expanding the existing schools through innovations in curriculum, teaching techniques and school management? Have regular mainstream primary educational institutions deteriorated to a point of no return, necessitating the selection of alternative options?

All these questions have to be dealt with squarely while evaluating the role of para teachers. It is in this context that the present study was proposed.

The overall objective of the study is to research the role, problems and prospects

## Objectives and Methodology

- This study aims to research the role, problems and prospects of para teachers with regard to their efficacy in the universalisation of primary education.
- The case-study method, which highlights the subtlety and complexity of the phenomenon under study, made it possible to observe, probe deeply and analyse intensively with a view to establishing generalisations.
- The research design identified 13 areas, with further sub-areas, to build a holistic final picture about para teachers, their role, prospects and problems vis-a-vis training, interaction with district and block level officials, the community etc.
- Programmes selected for the study either (i) bolstered the functioning of mainstream schools or, (ii) conceived a kind of school which would accept the academic standards of mainstream schools. These were:
  - ◆ Volunteer Teacher Scheme, Himachal Pradesh, launched in 1984
  - ◆ Shiksha Karmi Project, Rajasthan, launched in 1987
  - ◆ Shiksha Karmi Yojna, Madhya Pradesh, launched in 1994
  - ◆ Alternative Schooling Programme, Madhya Pradesh, launched in 1994-95
  - ◆ Education Guarantee Scheme, Madhya Pradesh, launched in 1997
- A total of 21 para teacher schools and 32 para teachers were included in the study. Government or regular primary schools, in the vicinity of the para teacher schools, were also included in the sample for comparison in some limited aspects. Thus, 12 regular primary schools and 27 regular teachers were covered by the study.

of para teachers in order to be able to make policy recommendations at the national level with regard to their efficacy in the universalisation of primary education.

The specific objectives are to:

- Examine the recruitment, professional preparation of para teachers, as well as continuing professional support to them.
- Study classroom processes, community linkages and learner performance in the context of para teachers.
- Profile the status of para teachers (their social extraction, attributed status, perception, background).
- Examine the nature of school management, its effectiveness and the role (space) provided for the para teacher in it.
- Examine the efficacy of para teacher's role in ensuring quality and equitability in providing primary education. Examine the desirability and viability of para teachers in a system considered as an alternative to the mainstream school system.

### Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is limited in scope on three counts: one, it does not cover all para teacher programmes, with their varying characteristics, (although care was taken to include programmes which generally represented major characteristics of a larger number of programmes); two, the sample is too small to permit large scale generalisations; three, it does not provide a historical background of the genesis and evolution of the concept of para teachers, against which the findings of the study and the concept of the para teacher as it now manifests itself in various forms, could have been interpreted in a more realistic and meaningful manner.

### Research Methodology

Methodological theories provide principles to design a research study, develop field techniques and interpret data.

A theory can be based on a scientific paradigm that rests upon the creation of theoretical frameworks in which the experimenter manipulates variables to determine their causal significance.

Or, it could be quantitative in nature, where a surveyor puts standardised questions to a large representative sample of individuals; or qualitative in nature, where emphasis is laid on the interpretative, subjective dimensions of educational phenomena, best explored by case study methods. The strength of all these methodologies, however, is reflected in their capacity to address questions raised by an educational enquiry.

Given the fact that methodological theories differ in many ways—each has its distinctive strengths and weaknesses and sources of error vary from one methodology to another—it often becomes necessary to use them in complementary ways to fulfil the needs of the enquiry.

In the present study, the thrust of enquiry centres around people and institutions that a para teacher interacts with. The personal background and qualities of the para teacher and the nature and quality of interactions may play a decisive role in her/his performance. This calls for an insider's view of the total situation in which a para teacher finds herself/himself and has to act.

The case study method makes it possible to observe, probe deeply and analyse intensively, the multifarious phenomena

that constitutes the professional life-cycle of the unit under study—which in our case is the para teacher—with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population, to which that unit belongs.

The major criticism raised against the case study method is its subjective nature and lack of precise quantifiable measures—the hallmark of survey, research and experimentation. How do we know that the results of this research are applicable to other situations? The answer lies in the very nature of data collected through the case study method, which delves into the depth and expanse of the social reality and thus provides a natural basis for generalisation. Its peculiar strength lies in the attention to the subtlety and complexity of the phenomenon under study. Educating children is a social process involving multifarious activities/phenomena influenced and/or controlled by many people

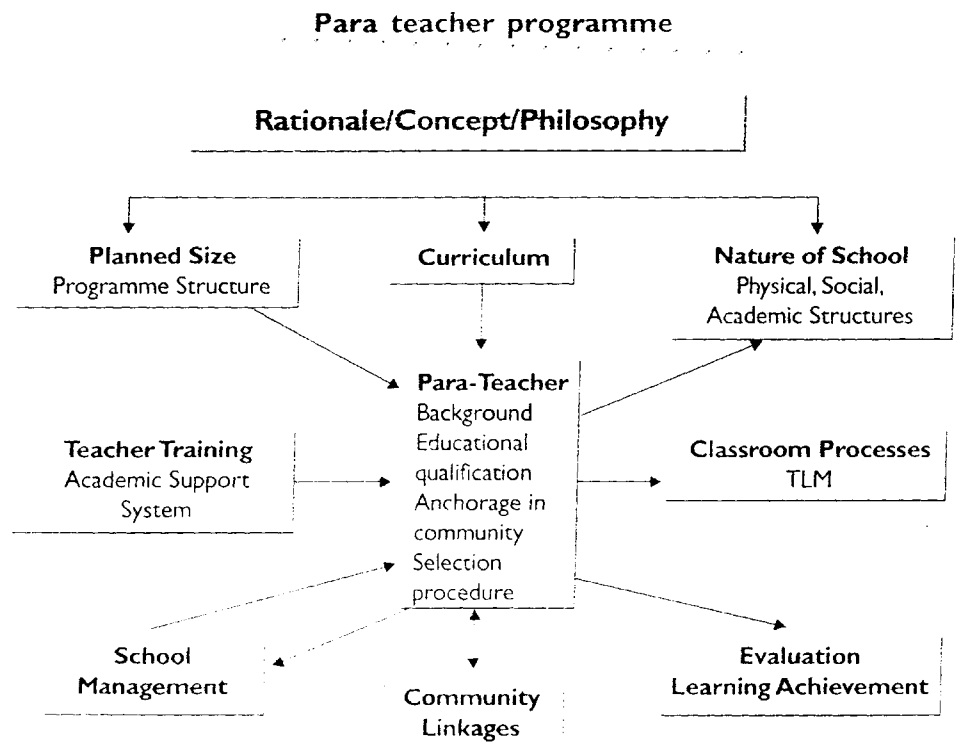
and institutions where a para teacher occupies a pivotal position. The process is subtle, complex and anchored in local specificities.

It is for this reason, and the reasons mentioned above, that we opted for the case study method. The following chart gives an overview of para teacher's field area of operation/interactions.

### Research Design

As stated earlier, the overall objective of the study is (i) to research the role, problems and prospects of para teachers (with a view) (ii) to assess their efficacy in the universalisation of Primary education, (in order) and (iii) to make appropriate policy recommendations at the national level. The central research question, therefore, revolves around:

- The nature and quality of the para teacher's role.





- The nature of problems s/he faces.
- Her/his prospects in view of the role of para teachers in the role of the universalisation of education.

Research on para teachers is relatively new and there are hardly any studies available (with the exception of the Shiksha Karmi Programme in Rajasthan which is well documented overall, as also with regard to para teachers) which exhaustively deal with the role, status and problems of para teachers.

The few other available studies, pertain mainly to instructors of Non-Formal Education (NFE) centres—a centrally sponsored scheme started in the late 1970s in some states and later extended to almost all states of the country. Therefore, the present study is to a large extent, exploratory as well as descriptive.

In an exploratory study one has to tread new ground, areas about which one knows very little. Researchers do not, and possibly can not, have all the guidelines to help determine what to include or leave out of investigation; whom to interview, or what leads to follow-up. For these reasons, the research plan in an exploratory study is more open than in other kinds of research. It is also descriptive in the sense that it seeks to describe systematically and precisely those dimensions of well identified entities, which are at the focal point of research.

The following areas were identified to be included in the research plan. A brief overview of the scope of each is given below

**Background information, litigation and budget:** These areas have been dealt with in the programme profiles<sup>2</sup>—*Reaching Out Further*—for which material was provided by the Bodh Research Team.

**Programme profile:** This area focused on the origin, rationale, concept and philosophy behind the various para teacher programmes; on para teacher qualifications; the nature of the schools that employed para teachers; the curriculum taught and various sources of funding.

**State's perception of the programme/s:** A look at the need for a diversity of programmes aimed at the same objective; the problems faced and success achieved by these programmes; and whether they managed to inculcate a sense of ownership in the community vis-à-vis the para teacher schools, or not.

**Village location-the setting:** Site accessibility, road links and distance from the nearest urban centre. Area profile in terms of population, its social composition; literacy rates and the extent of development.

**Number of children in the village:** Information on the school-age child population—name, sex, age-group, caste; class/level in which studying; nature of work done at home, in fields and parents occupation, etc., was gathered to gain a broad understanding of the reality faced by these children.

**School inventory:** This focused on the location and environment; the maximum distance a child has to travel; conditions in

<sup>2</sup> For Annexure 1 for a detailed listing of all the areas covered under each of the programme profiles of all the programmes refer to "Reaching Out Further—Para Teachers in Primary Education: An Overview" (1998), Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi.

school such as light, ventilation, cleanliness, safety from the elements; space to sit, work, play; availability of toilets, etc. Related statistics were also looked at, such as comparative annual enrolment figures, number of drop-outs; student attendance, etc., among other factors related to school organisation.

**Teacher profile:** A look at the teacher's socio-economic background; whether s/he was a native of the village or not, how far s/he had to travel to school and whether this became a deterrent to his/her attendance; total earnings; her/his world view, future aspirations and ambitions, etc.

**Programme organiser's (BEO, CEO, DPO) perception of para teacher:** A look at whether the para teacher was able to fulfil her/his role/responsibilities; para teacher-related problems faced by these officials; what in their opinion was the community's perception of the para teacher etc.

**Recruitment/Selection procedure of para teachers:** The minimum qualifications; selection procedure; total time taken in the appointment process. It looks at who the members of the selection committee are; whether any reservation policy is followed in selecting candidates, etc.

**Professional preparation and continuing professional support:** The nature of training imparted to para teachers is the main focus of this section which examines the methodology; assessment of trainees; content of the training module—who prepared it and when; flexibility in its use, in-service training, etc.

**Classroom processes/classroom culture:** Other than the obvious physical features such as the sitting arrangement in

classrooms, etc., the research plan sought information on the girl-boy ratio; use of corporal punishment as a means to discipline and the quality of teacher-child interaction and their relationship, among other areas.

**Community participation:** The research plan hoped to probe the feeling of ownership of the school within the community, which would be reflected in the setting up and functioning of a Village Education Committee; the community's concern for the school and its perception of the para teacher, among other things.

**School management:** The structure, systems of monitoring, community involvement, etc.

**Learning achievement:** Tests prepared by experts were to be administered to assess the level of learning achievement of students who had passed Class II and were now in Class III; and those who had passed Class IV and were now in Class V.

## Programme Selection

There are a great variety of para teachers in different programmes running in the country. The rationale, concept, and philosophy of these programmes vary according to their short-term and long-term objectives. For example, there are programmes where the main objective is to provide out-of-school children immediate access to education, transferring them to mainstream schools after a couple of years orientation to the world of learning.

However, there are also programmes which aim at providing out-of-school children the full cycle of primary education years. These programmes have come up as an alternative to mainstream

schools in terms of curriculum, years of schooling and the terminal examination after the completion of Class V, although the nature of these schools differs from that of mainstream schools in many ways.

There are also mainstream schools where para teachers have been employed under different schemes and projects like the Volunteer Teacher Scheme in Himachal Pradesh, the Shiksha Karmi Yojna in Madhya Pradesh and the Shiksha Karmi Programme in Rajasthan, where dysfunctional mainstream schools were operationalised by employing Shiksha Karmis (para teachers).

Thus, only those selected programmes were included in the study which were either started 'to bolster' the functioning of mainstream schools or have conceived a kind of school which would accept the academic standards (terminal examination, etc.) of mainstream schools. Based on the above criteria the following programmes were included in the research study:

- The Shiksha Karmi Project, Rajasthan.
- The Volunteer Teacher Scheme, Himachal Pradesh.
- The Shiksha Karmi Yojna, Madhya Pradesh.
- The Alternative Schooling Programmes, Madhya Pradesh.
- The Education Guarantee Scheme, Madhya Pradesh.

## Sample Selection

The following criteria were used for sample selection:

- The general literacy level of the area.
- The accessibility factor.
- The longevity of the sample unit under the scheme.

- Geographical and cultural diversities.

### Shiksha Karmi Project, Rajasthan

The Shiksha Karmi Project, as adequately dealt with in the Programme Profile, has been launched primarily to take primary education to remote and inaccessible areas where no schools existed, or where there were schools but no teachers. Believing in the philosophy that "the agent (of change) ... must have social and educational attachment" with the community with which s/he works, the Shiksha Karmi Programme envisages the recruitment of locally available literate youth to work as Shiksha Karmis and run schools in their villages.

Shiksha Karmi teachers have been working for more than a decade in Rajasthan and have established themselves as significant contributors to the cause of universalisation of primary education in rural areas. They are today emerging as an alternative to regular teachers, particularly in the context of children's education in remote and inaccessible areas.

The present study seeks to probe the performance of Shiksha Karmis, and gain an in-depth understanding of their problems and prospects in order to fully comprehend their role in the realm of primary education.

For the purpose of this study, 11 Shiksha Karmi teachers, from five Shiksha Karmi schools, each from a separate block in a separate district—taking at least two Shiksha Karmis from each school—were selected.

Wherever a female Shiksha Karmi was available, she was included in the sample as one of the two. However, just one Shiksha Karmi was selected from the Shiksha Karmi School in Ramgarh.

### Shiksha Karmi Project sample

The districts and blocks selected in Rajasthan were as follows:

- Ajmer district, block Arain—Located in Central Rajasthan, the programme originated in this district
- Bharatpur district, block Kaman—Populated by a distinct social group called the Mevs, a Muslim community which is highly educationally backward and socio-culturally a closed community
- Banswara district, block Ghatol—A predominantly tribal area, largely inaccessible, educationally at the lowest level, possessing distinct socio-cultural traits
- Barmer district, block Chauhatan—Desert land, isolated and bordering Pakistan. It is a backward and famine-prone area
- Karauli district, block Karauli—Though in Rajasthan, it has socio-cultural characteristics quite different from the rest of the state.

Alongside the Shiksha Karmi schools, five government primary schools (in the same block and closest in proximity to each Shiksha Karmi school) were selected. From these, sample group of seven regular teachers was identified.

### Alternative Schooling Programme, Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh has a literacy rate of 43.42 per cent, of which 57.43 per cent males are literate while only 28.39 per cent women are literate. The outreach of schooling facilities is only 75 per cent, due to the remoteness and inaccessibility of a large percentage of population living in a hilly and difficult terrain. The majority of this population is tribal and lives below the poverty line. To reach out to these disadvantaged groups, the state evolved a scheme called

Alternative Schooling Programme (ASP), which has been operating here since 1994-95. As of January 1998, the number of Alternative Schools running in 34 districts of the state was 3224.

### Education Guarantee Scheme, Madhya Pradesh

The Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) has been in operation since 1 January, 1997. At present, EGS schools are running in all 45 districts of the state. As of 30 April, 1998, the number of EGS schools in the state has gone up to 16,551. Though the EGS programme is new, it has attracted attention at national and international levels. The Central Budget for 1999-2000 has provided for 1,80,000 schools on the EGS pattern. The Government of Rajasthan's Budget for 1999-2000 made a provision for the opening of 16,000 schools on a pattern similar to EGS.

### Shiksha Karmi Yojna, Madhya Pradesh

The Shiksha Karmi Yojna (SKY) was instituted by the Government of Madhya Pradesh in 1994. Under this scheme, Shiksha Karmis were appointed for 10 months (one academic session) in regular government schools. Now, a new scheme has been formulated which follows the Madhya Pradesh Panchayat Shiksha Karmis (recruitment and conditions of services) Rules, 1997. All vacancies arising in government schools are being filled by Shiksha Karmis. Thus, the appointment of regular government teachers has been stopped. The scheme covers primary, upper primary as well as secondary schools.

The following districts and blocks were identified:

- Dhar district, block Nalcha—Situated in the extreme western part of the state. Dhar has a large percentage of

Scheduled Tribes (53.48 per cent) and its rural literacy rate is 29.36 per cent, well below the state average of 44.20 per cent

- Tikamgarh district, block Tikamgarh—Intruding into Uttar Pradesh, this district has a large population of Scheduled Castes (22.75 per cent) and a low rural literacy rate of 30.57 per cent. The tribal population in this district is strikingly low at 4.13 per cent
- Raigarh district, block Manora—Situated in the tribal belt of the eastern plateau of the state, this district has a high percentage of Scheduled Tribes (47.70 per cent) and a low rural literacy rate of 38.18 per cent
- Raisen district, block Obedullaganj—Located at the heart of the state, in close proximity to the capital, Bhopal. The rural literacy rate in this district is 36.13 per cent, despite its proximity to the capital.

The selection of districts/blocks for the study of the para teacher programmes—the Alternative Schooling Programme, the Education Guarantee Scheme and the Shiksha Karmi Yojna—is based on criteria mentioned in the first paragraphs of the 'Sample Selection' of each as given below.

#### Alternative Schooling Programme sample

Four Alternative Schools (one in each block) and four government primary schools (also one in each block and the nearest to the Alternative School selected in that block) were chosen.

While selecting Alternative Schools it was kept in mind that these should belong to the first batch of schools opened in 1995, so that the children's performance could be assessed at the Class III-level at least.

#### Education Guarantee Scheme sample

Four EGS schools (one in each block) and four government primary schools (also one in each block and nearest to the EGS school) were selected. One teacher—regular and EGS—was selected from each school. Achievement tests were administered on children of government primary schools but not to children of EGS schools, since the EGS has been in operation only for two years.

#### Shiksha Karmi Yojna sample

Four such government primary schools were to be selected where at least two Shiksha Karmis and one regular teacher were working. However, this condition could not be fulfilled in three blocks, as field realities were different for various reasons. As a result, the schools selected have the following composition:

- The school in Obedullaganj block, Raisen, had one Shiksha Karmi teacher and no regular teacher
- The school in Tikamgarh block, Tikamgarh, had two Shiksha Karmi teachers and no regular teachers
- The school in Nalcha block, Dhar, had one Shiksha Karmi teacher and one regular teacher
- The school in Manora block, Raigarh, had two Shiksha Karmi teachers and one regular teacher.

Schools for all three programmes were selected on the basis of accessibility. This was to ensure that the task was accomplished within set budgetary limits and within the stipulated time frame of five-days per school. There were two members to a research team.

Other than this, socio-cultural variations also played an important role in conducting field investigations. The local staff at the district and block levels provided the

research teams with strategic information required to complete the process of final sample selection.

### **Volunteer Teacher Scheme, Himachal Pradesh**

The Himachal Pradesh Volunteer Teacher Scheme (HPVTS) launched in 1984, was primarily introduced to help single-teacher government schools cope with increase in primary school enrolment. The secondary purpose of the scheme was to provide temporary employment to educated youth in the state. In 1991, the scheme was revised to further expand and absorb competent volunteer teachers on regular basis. The minimum qualification was kept as Matriculation, whereas in some programmes in other states it was Class VIII-pass or, even Class V-pass in the case of women teachers.

The total number of posts sanctioned up to 1991 was 9547, of which 4032 posts were converted into those of Junior Basic Teachers (JBT), provided that the candidates fulfilled underlying conditions such as a minimum of five years experience as a volunteer teacher and the successful completion of 90 days training (a two-year JBT course condensed into 90 days). However, the scheme was discontinued in 1991, following litigation, and no appointments have been made after 1992. Based on the criteria mentioned earlier, the following districts/blocks were selected for the study:

- Sirmour district, block Shillai— Situated in the south east of Himachal Pradesh, Sirmour lies in the Shivalik Hills. It shares a common border with Uttar Pradesh (Jaunsar Bawar), Punjab and Haryana. The district is mountainous except for Panota Sahib valley (an important place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs). The literacy rate is

51.62 per cent (male 63.20 per cent and female 38.45 per cent), much below the state's literacy rate of 63.86 per cent

- Chamba district, blocks Tissa and Salooni—Situated in northern Himachal Pradesh, these blocks are located on a little plateau about 100 metres above the river Ravi. Bordering Jammu and Kashmir, these blocks are greatly influenced by their culture, social customs, etc. The literacy rate is 44.70 per cent against the state's literacy rate of 63.86 per cent.

### **Volunteer Teacher Scheme sample**

Four Government primary schools, where volunteer teachers were working, were selected—two in Shillai in Sirmour, and one each in Tissa and Salooni in Chamba.

### **Sample Size**

After selecting the programmes for the research study, the sample size drawn from each of the selected programmes was determined taking into consideration the main objective of the study.

However, the sample size originally planned could not be maintained due to the following reasons:

- Pairs of schools (one belonging to the para teacher programme and the other to a government primary school closest to it) were selected to ensure comparability wherever possible. However, in the field it was often the case that the number of para- and regular teachers working in these schools did not meet the requirements of the sample.

For example, Rajasthan's Shiksha Karmi Schools had the required number of para teachers, whereas the government primary schools had only seven,

Table 1.1 The final position of sample units included in the study

Sr. No.	Place	Programme	Number of districts	Number of blocks	Number of schools		Number of teachers	
					Para-teachers	Regular teachers	Para-teachers	Regular teachers
1.	Rajasthan	Shiksha Karmi	5	5	5	4	11	7
2.	Madhya Pradesh	Shiksha Karmi	4	4	4	-	6	2
		Education Guarantee Scheme		4	4	4	4	7
		Alternative Schooling Programme		4	4	4	7	7
3.	Himachal Pradesh	Volunteer Teacher Scheme	2	4	4	-	4	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>For all programmes</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>

instead of ten, teachers available for the study.

- In Madhya Pradesh, the study planned to cover five districts in as many blocks, with one school in each block belonging to each of the three para teacher programmes viz., ASP, EGS and SKY, with one mainstream school to compare each of them with.

However, due to time and logistical constraints coupled with local factors, the study could be conducted only in four districts and in as many blocks. Above all, it was also felt that the quality of the sample would not be affected in any major way, were the fifth district dropped, as the characteristic features of this district were sufficiently represented by the sample units drawn from the other four districts.

It must be admitted that field realities were too unfamiliar, at the time when sample sizes and their make-up was initially being decided. For example, Shiksha Karmi postings (para teachers) in government primary schools in Madhya Pradesh and volunteer teachers (para teachers) in government primary schools in Himachal Pradesh

do not follow any policy because it doesn't exist.

One could find schools where only para teachers were working, or where there were no para teachers and only regular teachers were posted. Due to this reason, and other factors which were decisive in the selection of the school (e.g. close vicinity of the two 'pair' schools), the proportion between the total number of para teachers and regular teachers in the sample could not be maintained despite our best efforts.

### Data Collection

It has been stated earlier, that the nature of the study called for the use of the case study method to understand the role, problems and prospects of para teachers. Case studies, which entail field research as most studies do, are basically observation studies. Field observations are supplemented by other methods of survey research and analysis of documents and available data. After preparing the research design, which identified the areas and sub-areas of research, to address the central

question contained in the overall objective of the study, the sources of information and/or a list of informants concerned with research areas was prepared. Structured and unstructured questionnaires and interview schedules were prepared to elicit information.

### **Pre-Testing in Jaipur District**

A pre-test of research tools was carried out in a rural setting near Jaipur. After the pre-test some changes were considered necessary with regard to the structure, sequencing and wording of some of the questions. Some new questions were also added in a bid to gain more knowledge

about a particular phenomenon. However by and large, no major changes were required after the pre-test, which spanned two days in two villages and involved six researchers. Participant and non-participant observations worked out to be the most effective tools for gathering valid and truthful information. Researchers were constantly aware and sought corroborating feedback for their observations from others in the setting. They checked for inconsistencies between informants and tried to find out why they disagreed. Whenever possible, they also checked informant-reports against other sources of data, such as institutional records.



## Case Studies

### Shiksha Karmi Programme, Rajasthan

#### The Setting

This analysis of the Shiksha Karmi Programme, Rajasthan is based on the case studies of five Shiksha Karmi Schools as given below:

Table 2.1 **School location**

Sr. No.	Name of village	Block	District
1.	Khedli Nanoo	Kaman	Bharatpur
2.	Bawerwala	Chauhata	Barmer
3.	Ramgarh	Arain	Ajmer
4.	Mia Ka Padla	Ghatol	Banswara
5.	Piprani	Karauli	Karauli

Located in relatively remote areas with populations between 350 to 900 people, these schools reflect the social make up of each village. There is a predominance of

Scheduled Castes in Bawerwala and Scheduled Tribes in Mia Ka Padla. In Piprani and Ramgarh, Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Castes are in the majority. In Khedli Nanoo, Muslims, called Mevs, predominate. These schools provide children of weaker sections/groups living in relatively remote areas access to education. It is interesting to note that most of these children belong to the first generation of learners as the table indicates:

Table 2.3 **Literacy rates**

Sr. No.	Village	Population	Literate	Percentage
1.	Khedli Nanoo	846	90	10.63
2.	Bawerwala	843	105	12.45
3.	Ramgarh	366	70	19.12
4.	Mia Ka Padla	653	32	4.90
5.	Piprani	909	31	3.41
<b>Total</b>		<b>3617</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>9.06</b>

Table 2.2 **Caste-wise break up of the five villages**

Sr. No.	Village	Population	Muslims	Scheduled Caste	Other Backward Castes	Scheduled Tribes	General	Caste group not known
1.	Khedli Nanoo	846	748	98	-	-	-	-
2.	Bawerwala	843	-	828	-	-	15	-
3.	Ramgarh	366	-	54	231	81	-	-
4.	Mia Ka Padla	653	-	-	-	653	-	-
	Piprani	909	-	344	241	6	162	156
<b>Total &amp; Percentage</b>		<b>3617 (100)</b>	<b>748 (20.69)</b>	<b>1324 (36.60)</b>	<b>472 (11.72)</b>	<b>740 (20.46)</b>	<b>177 (4.89)</b>	<b>156 (4.31)</b>

## Shiksha Karmi Programme

- Regular schools that had become dysfunctional due to teacher absenteeism were converted to Shiksha Karmi schools by posting para teachers in place of regular teachers.
- The children had to work hard at home and in the fields. School provided an escape from the dreary tasks at home.
- Of the eleven Shiksha Karmis studied, the male Shiksha Karmis had completed class VIII or IX except one who was a graduate. The female Shiksha Karmis had qualifications between class V and VIII.
- Shiksha Karmi schools ran regularly, had achieved more than 90 per cent enrolment and had generated a high level of community involvement.
- The teaching-learning process was book-based. The teaching plan drawn up during the cluster-level review meetings was followed rigidly. Corporal punishment was frequently used.
- The Shiksha Karmi occupies a strategic position between the school and the community. This situation also confers on the VEC and the community a power of social control over the Shiksha Karmi.
- The Shiksha Karmis had a positive image among parents, other community members and officials.

All five villages were at different levels of awareness and development in terms of social customs and traditions, values, beliefs and aspirations, means of transport, communication and health facilities. One thing in common, however, was that none of these villages were connected to a metalled road or had electricity.

The main occupation in all the five villages was agriculture and animal husbandry and most people worked as agricultural and casual labourers to supplement their income. The situation was especially bad in Bawerwala, a desert village and Mia Ka Padla a tribal village, where most of the population was found to live at the subsistence level because they depended on rain-fed crops.

As a result, it was found that not only were the children of both villages put to work as wage labourers during the season, but the villagers themselves also seasonally migrated to Gujarat in search of work. In Khedli Nanoo too, some families seasonally migrated to Punjab. Children in all three villages were taken along and again put to work as wage labour. Needless to say, being away from home acutely affected their schooling.

Aspiration levels, of both parents and children, were found to be slightly lower in Bawerwala and Mia Ka Padla than in the other villages, because of the lower value they placed on education and also because the area they lived in was very remote.

### The Children

The study found that children in all five villages had to work hard both at home and in the fields. They took the cattle out to graze, worked on the fields, looked after the animals and poultry, looked after their siblings and fetched water. Girls

additionally, also cooked meals, washed clothes and dishes and fed younger siblings. It is therefore, no wonder that what the children disliked most was taking cattle to graze, looking after animals, and household and agricultural chores; and what they liked best was '*padhna aur khelna*' (studying and playing).

If study found favour with these children, it is probably because they found more time to play in school than at home; and because they played games which they did not have at home—such as football, snakes and ladders and *kho kho*—in the company of other children their own age. They also enjoyed group activities in school. Therefore by '*padhna*' they did not mean only 'studying' but also all else that they associated with school. They were able to ignore the fact that school also meant stoically accepting the corporal punishment meted out by teachers. Overall, it provided an escape from the dreary tasks at home.

To parents in all five villages education meant their sons might be able to find a job. However, they wanted to educate girls up to Class V only after which "*shadi hogi to use accha ghar mil jayega*" (when she gets married she will get a good home because she has some education). Girls were married off between the ages of 12 to 15 years and boys between 15 to 20 years.

When children were asked what they would like to become after completing their education, most said they wanted to become teachers, the remainder wanted to become mechanics, tractor drivers, shopkeepers and *patwaris*. One child aspired to become the Prime Minister.

It was noted that children were more precise than their parents as far as

articulating their aspirations were concerned. Most parents, being illiterate, did not follow the educational progress of their wards. Although they did show some concern, they also did not hesitate in stopping them from going to school if there was pressure of work at home or in the fields.

Needless to say, the children's exposure was limited. The study found that except for children in Bawerwala, Mia Ka Padla and Khedli Nanoo, who migrated seasonally to Gujarat or Punjab, the remainder had only a limited exposure and had visited a fair, a *haat* or their relatives in nearby villages.

The Shiksha Karmi belonged to the same village and community and was perceived by the villagers as a 'volunteer' or a 'social worker'. The role of these para teachers, therefore, needs to be understood in the above context.

### **Teacher Profile**

#### **Personal background and world view**

Eleven teachers— two Shiksha Karmis from each school, including three women from Mia Ka Padla, Piprani and Ramgarh— with five to ten years experience were selected for an in-depth study that would look at their educational and social background, nature and impact of pre and in-service training on their work, and their role as social workers.

The average age of female Shiksha Karmis is 26 years and male Shiksha Karmis, 31 years. As far as the minimum educational qualifications went, the male Shiksha Karmis selected for the study had completed between Class VIII to XI, with the exception of Khedli Nanoo where one Shiksha Karmi was a graduate. Female Shiksha Karmis, had completed anywhere between Class V and VIII.

All the Shiksha Karmis were married and resided in the village where they taught. Other than working as Shiksha Karmis, all were either unemployed, engaged in casual labour and other such jobs. This assignment was sought by the majority of them as a permanent employment opportunity.

There was no mention, except in one case, of their role as social activist dealing with development activities or imparting information and education about these to villagers.

Though all the Shiksha Karmis expressed progressive views on educational and social problems, their world-view and level of concern did not reflect the kind of perspective on education which would drive them to fulfil this role.

However, it was evident that due to the laudable efforts of the Shiksha Karmis these schools had achieved more than 90 per cent enrolment, they ran regularly and generated a high level of community participation in non-academic areas.

#### **Academic inputs**

On selection, a Shiksha Karmi receives initial training of 37 days conducted by NGOs. Since the trainees have only completed Class VIII and come from humble families, the major emphasis is on generating self-confidence, capacity-building, developing competencies to treat and teach children of Classes I and II and sensitising them on social issues and issues related to village development.

The aim is to develop her/him as a social worker who is a teacher. S/he is also trained in the techniques of evaluating and maintaining necessary records. The training is activity based, participatory and provides ample opportunity for creative expression.

Table 2.4 Training schedule of Shiksha Karmis

Sr. No.	Year of service	Days	Training I (Summer)	Training II (Winter)		Nature	Evaluation
			Content	Days	Content		
1.	Pre-service	41	Self confidence building, capacity building, social issues and village development awareness develop competencies to teach Classes I and II with 15 days in-1 school teaching	-	Follow upon feedback	Compulsory	During last days of the training and feedback from the field
2.	In-service 1st year	30	Improving subject knowledge base, teaching methodology	10	Review, evaluation and recording methodology	-do-	-do-
3.	In-service IInd year	30	Updating subject knowledge and competencies to teach Class III	10	-do-	-do-	-do-
4.	In-service IIIrd year	20	Developing competencies to teach Classes IV and V	10	-do-	-do-	-do-
5.	In-service IVth year		Developing competencies to teach Classes IV and V		-do-	-do-	-do-

Apart from the above, there is a 20-day training each year for self improvement and remedial work.

Trainees also teach in a school for 15 days as a part of this training. Following this, they also attend a number of in-service training programmes, listed below.

Through these programmes Shiksha Karmis improve their subject knowledge base, learn new methods of teaching, preparation and use of innovative teaching-learning materials, multilevel teaching, peer learning etc.

### The School

All the five schools studied were government primary schools (Rajkiya Prathamik Vidyalayas) which had become dysfunctional due to teacher absenteeism. The year they opened and the date they were converted into Shiksha Karmi Schools is given below:

Ramgarh was the first to be included in the Shiksha Karmi Programme immediately after its inception, and has been functioning for the last 10 years. The other schools have been functioning for more than four years.

However, despite these schools having had ample time in which to organise the basic necessities, the study found that the school in Bawerwala had no building in which to house its classes; in Khedli Nanoo the building lay in ruins, its roof leaked at every drizzle, two of the classrooms were dark and damp and the toilet was dysfunctional.

Overall, the schools were short of space and short of teachers, but not short of students. As a result one teacher had to simultaneously take more than two classes

Table 2.5 From government primary schools to Shiksha Karmi schools

School	Bawerwala	Mia Ka Padla	Khedli Nanoo	Piprani	Ramgarh
Year of opening	1959	1983	1978	1953	1970
Year of conversion	1992	1993	1994	1990	1988

Table 2.6 **Teacher-student ratio and availability of classrooms**

Item	Bawerwala	Mia Ka Padla	Khedli Nanoo	Piprani	Ramgarh
Teacher-Student ratio	4:124 (1:31)	3:145 (1:48)	2:147 (1:73)	5:141 (1:28)	3:45 (1:15)
Available classrooms	3	4	2	4	3

in the same room; or two teachers taught two classes in the same room (the resultant racket precluded the possibility of very much teaching or learning). The scenario was the worst in Khedli Nanoo, where the research team found that one teacher often taught three classes at a time.

It was also observed that when compelled to teach more than one class at a time Shiksha Karmis were unable to cope adequately since they lacked knowledge of multigrade teaching.

Drinking water was available only in two schools, in the other three, children fetched water from a distant hand-pump or well. Teaching continued in their absence and this hampered their studies.

According to the teachers, once again with the exception of Khedli Nanoo, all other schools received a regular and adequate supply of teaching-learning materials and had sufficient amounts of TLM stocked as well.

Each school had a small library. The number of books ranged from 60 in Bawerwala to 400 in Ramgarh. Shiksha Karmis in all schools—with the exception of one in Mia Ka Padla who did not even know that the school had a library—claimed that children used the library. However, none of the research team members saw any child using library books in any of these schools. It was found that the library was usually safely stowed away in a steel trunk and kept under a key.

When it came to cleaning classrooms and school premises, the study found that only in Mia Ka Padla did the teachers and students undertake this together—providing the children with a worthy example of equality and dignity of labour in practise.

In two of the five schools it was observed that teacher-teacher relationship was not cordial especially among female Shiksha Karmis.

With regard to daily routine, Shiksha Karmi school timings are from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. in the winter and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. in summer, with a half-an-hour lunch break in between. Children who came late to school were questioned and warned. The school's routine is pre-decided by the Shiksha Karmi Board. It was found that prayers or the morning assembly, which went on for 30 to 60 minutes, followed a similar pattern in all five schools.

In Khedli Nanoo, which is a Muslim village, in place of the *Saraswati Vandana*, Urdu prayers are recited in praise of Allah. Prayers are followed by *bhajans* and *dohas* (couplets) on the philosophy of life and moral values. How much of this is understood by the children is a matter of investigation. As far as developing personal hygiene goes, the study found that children are regularly checked for the cleanliness of body, clothes, hair and nails.

Shiksha Karmi Schools follow the school calendar developed by the Education

Department and published in Shivira, a magazine brought out by the Education Department. When a teacher wants to go on leave, s/he informs the senior teacher in school. If the senior teacher has to go on leave, s/he informs the BDO's office.

### Classroom Processes

Four types of classroom sitting arrangements were observed in all the five schools:

- The students and teacher sat in a circle enabling the latter to have easy access and eye contact with any student.
- The children sat in rows one behind the other.
- The students sat next to each other.
- The students sat as they pleased.

An appropriate sitting arrangement contributes tremendously to the quality of teaching-learning processes. It appeared that most teachers were not conscious of this fact.

As mentioned earlier, a two-day meeting is organised at block or cluster level to solve the academic difficulties of Shiksha Karmis. Above all, the meeting aims to assess the previous month's teaching plan and learn how much was accomplished as well as to prepare next month's plan for each class and subject. It was observed that there was a tendency to push through the teaching plan as scheduled, without paying due attention to the fact as to how much of the content was followed by how many of the students.

Another factor that impacted the above is that only those students can appear in the year-end examination who have completed two-thirds of the curriculum. Thus there is an inbuilt pressure on the teacher to achieve this target irrespective of the level

of learning achieved by the students.

Neither the existing knowledge base of the student nor her/his pace of learning are taken into consideration.

It was also observed that of the eleven Shiksha Karmis only one from Ramgarh and two from Piprani prepared a daily lesson plan. All the rest came unprepared. They didn't even read the lesson which they were going to transact in the class beforehand.

The question whether homework should be given to children whose living conditions do not permit them to do any, could well be debated. It was observed that homework included memorising poems, learning difficult words, *path nakal* (copying a lesson verbatim) and writing answers to questions in their text books. It was felt by the research teams that the school timetable should be constructed such that the learning achieved by doing homework is instead accomplished in class.

The research teams also found that the homework was not checked regularly, nor were the students told why an answer was wrong and what the correct method to solve the problem; or what the correct answer was.

In a Shiksha Karmi school, every child is supposed to be tested using a ten point test, called *ikai parakh*, that judges the learning achievement of students after the completion of each lesson in language and Mathematics. A few questions related to the text are written on the board which children have to solve. Results are evaluated in a separate notebook for each child, and the marks are added in the final total.

In three schools teachers claimed to follow the *ikai parakh* system but would not

show the evaluation notebooks maintained for each child. In one school, the teacher said that children were evaluated orally and collectively as a class every day. However, no effort was made to give special attention to weaker students.

Annual and half-yearly examinations are held in April and November-December respectively and the dates are decided by the Education Department. The first in-house evaluation takes place in August, the second in October and the third in February.

#### Classroom culture and pedagogy

Keeping in view constraints such as the shortage of space in all five schools and a very high student to teacher ratio, the research teams observed teaching-learning processes for two to three days spending about one or two hours daily on each subject, i.e., Hindi and Mathematics. These observations are given below:

- What was disheartening was that corporal punishment was used in all the five schools, including by teachers who told the team that they did not beat the children but, "*sirf dhamkate hain*" (we only threaten them). Only two or three Shiksha Karmis out of eleven studied in the sample did not use the hand or stick to punish.

Children revealed that some teachers beat them more than others but added "*jab galti karte hain tabhi marte hain*" (they beat us only when we are in the wrong). This goes against the of Shiksha Karmi edict which lays down the "banishment of corporal punishment". Team members saw Shiksha Karmis in two schools hitting children. The teacher-child relationship, by and large, did not appear to be friendly or comfortable. In class children spoke only when asked to.

- In all the five schools the teaching-learning process was book-based and with the exception of one or two, no other activity or material was used. However, all the Shiksha Karmis said that while in training and during workshops they had learnt to prepare and use TLM. They said they had also learnt new ways of activity-based teaching.
- All classes began with a song, in all five schools. This was mostly sung by the teacher and repeated after him by the children irrespective of the fact whether the song had any relevance to the subject or teaching points planned. For, Shiksha Karmis had supposedly learnt during training that this helped to build an environment conducive to learning since it drew the attention of students to whatever was happening in class.
- The monthly lesson plan prepared in a two-day meeting at cluster or block level for each day, each class and each subject was implemented too rigidly. The Shiksha Karmis failed to interpret it in a creative manner nor did they provide space for children to let their own imaginations soar and use their initiative and creativity.
- Shiksha Karmis used the local language extensively during classroom transactions, irrespective of the subject area (and it is happening in these schools especially in Bawerwala and Mia Ka Padla). Children thus lose out on the opportunity of learning Hindi.

The following are some salient points of pedagogical significance observed during the classroom transactions:

- Only two or three teachers were able to or felt the necessity of drawing upon information or knowledge children brought into class. The others remained unconscious of this



opportunity even when the children themselves provided an opening.

- Most of the time it was teacher who spoke in the class. Children spoke only when asked questions, but did not ask the teacher any questions of their own. The entire classroom transaction, thus, sounded like a monologue. Besides, there was also a lack of clarity and in-depth conceptual understanding of the subjects being taught.
- While teaching Hindi, teachers did not ask children the meanings of difficult words, but wrote these on the blackboard and then explained them. No further effort was made to use these words in different contexts.
- Emphasis on rote learning was clearly visible in most of the teaching-learning activities.
- No independent learning activity was offered to children except copying from the blackboard.
- Teacher's interaction with the children was limited to asking questions, repeating lessons and listening when the children read aloud. The teacher usually did not try to find out whether her/his students had understood the lesson or not.
- Undertones of gender bias were also observed when teachers made eye contact more with boys than girls or when they asked questions more from boys than girls.
- Some teachers were found giving more attention to bright students than to weaker ones.
- There was no attempt on the part of the teacher to promote peer learning in the class.

### Shiksha Karmi Management

The Shiksha Karmi school is managed by the Block Development Officer (BDO) at

Panchayat Samiti level and by the Shiksha Karmi Sahayogi, Pradhan (Head) Shiksha Karmi and Village Education Committee (VEC) at the village level. (Where the Lok Jumbish programme is in operation there is also a cluster-in-charge providing support to Shiksha Karmi schools in his cluster).

The BDO is responsible for the overall management of Shiksha Karmi schools in his block. He is assisted by Shiksha Karmi Sahayogis (there is one Shiksha Karmi Sahayogi per unit consisting of about 15 schools) who is supposed to visit each school at least once a month.

Shiksha Karmi Sahayogis opined that due to their involvement in other development work, meetings and long distances, it becomes very difficult for them to meet the target. Some Shiksha Karmi Sahayogis felt neglected as the BDOs had other priority programmes of development.

The role of the Shiksha Karmi Sahayogi has been visualised as a person who will provide continuous support to the Shiksha Karmi by working as his friend, facilitator and helper.

Some of the Shiksha Karmi Sahayogis are doing commendable work whereas others make routine supervisory visits devoid of any academic support to the Shiksha Karmi. The administrative officials meet the teachers only during monthly meetings or whenever the need arises.

The teachers felt their supervision was routine and ritual in nature and wanted the authorities to visit the school more often as that would help them sustain their motivation. The administrative officials on the other hand had a very high opinion of the Shiksha Karmis. They felt that the

teachers being local persons not only worked efficiently but were “actively involved in the affairs of the community.”

Village Education Committees (VECs) were found to be functional in all five villages with varying degrees of involvement. VECs did try to solve infrastructural, enrolment and student-retention problems and also ensured that the school ran smoothly.

As one member of a VEC put it, if a teacher was absent, on leave, did not take interest in her/his work, they learnt of this without delay and then “*hum uske kan kheench sakte hain:*” (we can pull her/him up).

### **Teacher, School and Community**

Since the Shiksha Karmis belong to the same village and community, it is natural that they have knowledge of its beliefs, values, customs, traditions, behavioural norms, taboos and cultural ethos. Further, a Shiksha Karmi's personal and family history is well known to at least some members of the community. Thus, there is a historically established social link between the Shiksha Karmis and the community, and it is on the basis of this link that the community views her/him as a teacher. Even after becoming a teacher, s/he remains one of them and speaks their language in the widest possible sense.

Thus, the Shiksha Karmi occupies a strategic position between the school and community. This situation also confers on the VEC and the community a power of social control over the Shiksha Karmi. There is a reflection of this fact in all the case studies.

However, since most children belonged to the first generation of learners, it was

observed that the VEC, parents and community members were happy that Shiksha Karmi schools opened on time, regularly and the teachers came to school and taught. But what and how they teach, whether the children are learning at their natural pace, whether the teacher-child relationship is conducive to learning are questions which may not strike them.

Community members helped with minor building repairs, put up boundary walls and attended Republic Day celebrations etc. armed with sweets for the children. All this shows the community's sense of ownership of the school in varying degrees.

### **Image of para teachers**

Shiksha Karmis are well thought of by the officers, parents and other community members. All Shiksha Karmis felt they were respected in the village and the villagers looked up to them.

The villagers who were familiar with the working of government schools appreciated the fact that Shiksha Karmis spoke their local language and could explain difficult things to children in “our language”. They were also happy that these teachers paid attention to their children and contacted them whenever the child failed to attend class. “Because he is from our place, we don't feel afraid of talking to him,” they said. This might not have been the case had the teacher been an outsider.

## **Government Primary Schools (Rajkiya Prathamik Vidyalayas)**

### **The Setting**

The population of these villages varies from 360 in Arauda to 1400 in Oodwadia. There is a predominance of one single caste in three villages namely Maley Ka Wadia where Kolis, a Scheduled Caste

predominate, Oodwadia which has a predominance of a Scheduled Tribe and Satpuda where only Muslims called Mevs live. Dhos has a mixed population with a majority of Scheduled and Other Backward Castes. Arauda has a population of only Brahmins and Gujjars (OBC).

Maley Ka Wadia and Oodwadia are located in relatively remote desert and tribal areas respectively. The other three villages are closer to urban centres.

The main occupations of the villagers are agriculture, animal husbandry and in one village, mining. Many people work as casual labourers and there is seasonal migration to Gujarat from Maley Ka Wadia and Oodwadia.

Satpuda, Arauda and Dhos are relatively prosperous and better developed. For example, all houses in Satpuda have electricity and most houses in Arauda are paved. Arauda also has two to three havelis. These villages are also more easily accessible. The schools selected for the study are mentioned in table 2.7.

The rate of literacy is low in all the villages but it appears that people are becoming aware of the value of education, though Maley Ka Wadia stands out as an exception. As table 2.8 shows, most children in these villages also belong to the first generation of learners.

Table 2.8 Literacy rates

Sr. No.	Village	Population	No. of literate	Percentage
1.	Maley Ka Wadia	561	11	1.96
2.	Dhos	300	100	33.33
3.	Satpuda	761	80	10.51
4.	Arauda	300	60	20.00
5.	Oodwadia	1400	35	2.5

### The Children

Children in these villages also worked hard at home and in the fields. The exception was those families which were keenly concerned about the education of their children. This usually occurred when there was someone in the family who was educated and ensured that the child found some time at home to study and did study.

Children were found engaged in agricultural work, animal husbandry and household chores like fetching water, caring for siblings, washing clothes and dishes, etc. Girls also did the cooking. Some children worked as wage-labourers during the season.

All the children said that they liked studying or going to school. As with the children studying in Shiksha Karmi schools, these children too, probably found some relief in school from the dreary tasks they would have to do at home as well as an opportunity to play with other children. They disliked doing agriculture work or work related to animal husbandry.

Table 2.7 Government primary schools (GPS) selected for the study

Sr. No.	Village where school is located	Nearest Shiksha Karmi school	Distance in kilometres from Shiksha Karmi school	Block	District
1.	Maley Ka Wadia	Bawerwala	4	Chauhatan	Barmer
2.	Oodwadia	Mia Ka Padla	8	Ghatol	Banswara
3.	Dhos	Ramgarh	2	Arain	Ajmer
4.	Satpuda	Khedli Nanoo	2	Karauli	Karauli
5.	Arauda	Piprani	-	Kaman	Bharatpur

## Government Primary School, Rajasthan

- The children were engaged in agricultural work, cattle-grazing and household chores. All the children said they liked studying or going to school.
- Teachers travelled long distances to reach school. Their attendance was irregular. All teachers used corporal punishment to discipline the children.
- All the schools had a library and adequate teaching-learning materials.
- In most classrooms it was the teacher who spoke the most, making it a monologue. There was an emphasis on rote learning.

Outside the school also children were able to find some time to play, with the exception of Satpuda where children had to spend two to four hours receiving religious education at the Masjid in addition to going to school. Here, the children got, if at all, very little time to play.

A few parents seemed very concerned about the education of their children whereas the majority took only a casual interest in the education of their wards. Parents of boys educated them with a view to their getting a job eventually, but with daughters, they felt education would improve their marriage prospects. Girls were married off between 10-15 years and boys between 15-20 years.

When children were asked what they wanted to become, most said, they wanted to become teachers. Others wanted to

become a *Hafisji*, *Maulvi*, tailor, farmer, doctor or Collector.

With the exception of a few children, the exposure of most was limited to visits to the *haat*, to a nearby town and visits to relatives in nearby villages and towns.

### Teacher Profile

The average age of GPS teachers was 32 years and varied between 25 to 45 years. The only female teacher was 25 years old. The majority of teachers were graduates and had other additional qualifications. They belonged to socially backward SC/ST/OBC categories.

Almost all the teachers were found to have improved upon their qualifications while teaching. All of them had undergone in-service training conducted by District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET).

under the Lok Jumbish project. Improved qualifications and greater exposure had equipped them with a wider perspective.

The attitude of all seven teachers towards children was almost similar to that of the Shiksha Karmis: Both sets of teachers believed that children cannot learn or be disciplined without inculcating in them a sense of fear. Corporal punishment, thus, becomes an essential part of the school environment.

Six out of seven teachers covered by the study lived in places as far away as 60-400 kilometres from the village in which they taught. Their families usually had been left behind in their native place, and due to these factors they tended to be irregular. This is probably due to the non-availability of proper accommodation in areas where these schools were located.

GPS teachers also felt that their academic responsibilities suffered due to their involvement in government programmes such as the Pulse Polio immunization campaign, the census, *Samasya Nivaran Shivirs* and visits to block offices.

### Academic Inputs

District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) were set up to fulfil educational and training needs of Government primary school (GPS) teachers of the district. In Rajasthan, the Lok Jumbish Project has also been entrusted with improving the quality of primary education provided by EGS' in those districts where it is operating, i.e., in two of the five blocks covered by the study. The project is operational in Arain block (District Ajmer) where the village of Dhos is located; and in Kaman block (District Karauli) where the village of Satpuda is located.

Training programmes conducted by Lok Jumbish not only dwell on academic aspects such as curriculum, pedagogy, creation and use of TLM and child psychology but also on non-academic aspects like village-mapping, skills of community mobilisation and the formation of *prerak dals*, *mahila samooths* and village education committees (VECs).

DIETs conduct training in the following areas: curriculum, material development and evaluation, developing and arranging training for ICDS and Guru Mitra Yojna, development of low cost teaching aids and planning and management for head masters. The duration of most of the training programmes is about a week.

DIET has no control over teacher-attendance at these programmes. DIET trainers were of the view that successful completion of training should be linked to teacher promotion and other incentives. Otherwise, they said the teachers were not motivated to attend or learn.

In Satpuda and Dhos both teachers covered by the study had received, since 1994, on methodology, MLL, creation and use of teaching-learning aids, community mobilisation etc.

### The School

Of the five schools, information on Arauda government primary school could be collected only from children and villagers since the school was found closed. The teacher belonged to a village in Bharatpur. Villagers informed the research team that he usually stayed in Bharatpur and opened the school for eight to ten days in a month. The school had been identified as dysfunctional seven years earlier, and an attempt was made to convert it into a Shiksha Karmi school, but the attempt failed owing

to differences and disputes amongst villagers. All the five schools were opened between 1978 and 1992. Due to shortage of space and teachers, children of two to five classes sat together in a room or a verandah.

During the rains, the roofs of all of these school buildings leaked (Arauda has been excluded from this discussion). Drinking water was available only in three out of four schools. In the fourth—Satpuda—children had to walk to the hand-pump inside the village to get a drink of water.

All the four schools had an adequate and regular supply of teaching-learning materials. However, teaching-learning aids were found to be insufficient in Maley Ka Wadia and Oodwadia. All four schools had a library and the number of books varied from 264 in Maley Ka Wadia to 680 in Satpuda. As with the Shiksha Karmi Schools, here too, books were safely kept under lock and key in a steel trunk. Teachers in Maley Ka Wadia and Dhos said that books were issued to children to read at home. But, the children did not confirm this. In the other schools too it did not seem that children had access to library books.

The school premises were cleaned by students. In Satpuda and Dhos, students were supposed to wear a uniform to school though this was not compulsory. Parents in these two villages could probably afford the cost of the uniforms.

The school timings were pre-decided by the Panchayat Samiti and were from 9.30

a.m. to 3.30 p.m. and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the summer with a 30-40 minute break in between. In Dhos, Oodwadia and Satpuda the community and children found these timings inconvenient and wanted the school instead to function from 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

The school calendar for the whole year was developed by the Education Department. Teachers together made the timetables and, in consultation with each other, could make changes as and when required.

The schools charged Rs. 10/- per month from students of Class III to V and Rs. 5/- from students of Class I and II. The schools received a contingency fund of Rs. 500/- which was usually late. Moreover, the Rs. 500/- assigned for the fund was found to be inadequate for the running of the school.

### Classroom Processes

In three of the four schools, the usual seating pattern was observed—the teacher seated on a chair and the children sitting in front of her/him on *dari pattis* in rows or as a group. In Dhos, however, teachers sat in a circle with the children or stood in the centre of that circle.

This kind of arrangement provided the teacher with greater mobility and eye contact with all children, as compared to the other pattern of seating. The seating arrangement assumes greater importance when a teacher has to teach two or more classes at a time. Most teachers did not seem to be conscious of this fact.

Table 2.9 Teacher-student ratio and availability of classrooms

Item	Maley Ka Wadia	Oodwadia	Satpuda	Arauda	Dhos
Teacher-student ratio	1:84	3:86	3:143	Not available	2:33
Available classrooms	2	3	2	Not available	4

In a multigrade teaching it is imperative that the teacher makes a daily teaching activity plan and makes preparations for its effective implementation. GPS teachers, however, did not consider this necessary because, as one teacher put it, “we know the material. We have been teaching for so long.” Nor was a record of the children’s work or performance maintained. But there are exceptions too.

The research team observed a teacher teaching Classes III, IV and V simultaneously and managing fairly well as the this excerpt from the case study suggests: “While he is teaching one class, he expects the other children to study on their own without disturbing him. He is able to break problems down to simpler units and supplement them with examples while explaining new concepts to the children. Because he interacts with children continually and asks them to work out problems with him, step by step, they generally understand the concept before they are asked to attempt problems independently. Because of his systematic way of teaching, all the children seem to be following his lesson with complete attention and interest. Further his relationship with the children seems very neutral. Neither are they frightened of him nor are they affectionate towards him.”

—Once a topic was completed, homework was generally given to students of Class III, IV and V. This included handwriting practice, *path nakal* and memorising and answering questions. When the homework was checked, most teachers—with the exception of one who called the children individually and explained to them how his/her answer was wrong and how to do it correctly—marked the questions right or wrong and returned the copies to the children without any further explanation.

One teacher was seen checking copies without even looking at what was written there, marking a correct answer wrong and putting a tick mark on a wrong answer. Homework was checked once every two to 15 days.

Children studying in GPS are tested annually and semiannually through test papers developed by the Panchayat Samiti. Students of Classes I to V are tested in Hindi and Mathematics. Test papers are corrected by teachers and sent to the Panchayat Samiti for approval. Students of Classes III, IV and V also undergo class tests prepared by teachers every two months. Besides, twice a year homework is reviewed and student-performance recorded in a register. Parents are informed of test results by progress reports which they have to sign. Children of Classes I and II do not get report cards. But the irony of the whole evaluation process is reflected in a teacher’s comment, “there is unwritten rule not to fail students in any class.”

#### **Classroom culture and pedagogy**

The teaching-learning processes observed for one or two hours each in Class III and V for two to three days by research teams reveal characteristically almost the same features as described in the Shiksha Karmi section of this analysis. The following two excerpts, one each from the case studies from Oodwadia and Satpuda throw light on the nature and quality of classroom transactions.

#### *Excerpt, Oodwadia*

“On the day Teacher I is observed teaching, there are five students of Class IV and nine of Class V (five boys and four girls). The teacher writes Class V-Hindi on the blackboard, then sits on the chair with a Hindi book while the children remain

seated on the floor reinforcing the belief that a teacher is a *guru*, an authority to be respected.

“He next mentions to the children that they are going to do a new lesson called Begum Hazrat Mahal. Communication of knowledge is by and large textbook based. To introduce the word ‘Begum’ he begins by asking out of context questions that are unrelated to the topic. ‘*Hamare parivar me kaun kaun log rehetre hain*’ he asks, (who are the members of our family?).

“Some children reply ‘*ma pita*’ (mother father). The teacher continues ‘*ghar mein mukhiya hota hain aur uski patni ko begum kahte hain*’ (the wife of the head of the house is called a *begum*). He then begins reading from the text in a monotonous tone and asks the children to underline difficult words. At the end of each paragraph he writes the difficult words such as ‘*nazar bandh*, Lord Dalhousie’, on the blackboard which is the only teaching aid used. However, he does not ask the meaning of difficult words, nor does he use it in a different context.

“The questions are largely textual. Every now and then the teacher pauses to inquire whether the children have understood and then continues to ask questions from the text. Children are asked to write difficult words in their copies. Children who do not understand difficult words hesitate in asking questions.

“Some children who are unable to see the blackboard do not have the courage to request the teacher move a bit, but bend sideways to copy what he writing. Whilst writing, these children stoop over their notebooks and no attempt is made by the teacher to correct their posture. There is no peer interaction. At the end of the class,

he asks the students to memorise the lesson at home. No multigrade teaching takes place and the children of Class IV are left on their own. Some are distracted, some sit idle, some play, some talk and some look at the teacher.”

#### *Excerpt, Satpuda*

“In Class III Teacher I revises the concepts of even and odd numbers, explaining them wrongly, moves on to the place value of digits and then goes on to addition. He uses two teaching aids to explain the concept of place value. He uses the board and asks the children also to do sums on the board. He selects children randomly and asks them questions.

“If the child fails to answer or answers incorrectly, he pulls their hair or ears and then explains the process to them. He uses appreciative words if the child gives the correct answer. The children have problems in identifying even and odd numbers because he earlier explained the concept wrongly. The teacher now writes sums on the board and asks the children to do these in their notebooks/slate:

“He then goes around to check their notebooks/slates and explains the method to those having a problem. Throughout, he leaves the class often, sometimes to fetch teaching aids and sometimes to manage the other classes.

“The class is held in the open under a tree. There is little room for the teacher to move around because there is water all around. He stands and teaches throughout the class. Some children who are sitting at the far end are ignored.

“At the end of the class the teacher gives them a few sums for homework. Throughout the class the teacher gives instructions



in the local language, which the children find easy to follow.”

Major characteristics of the teaching-learning processes observed in these schools are given below:

- Corporal punishment was used as an easy way to discipline children and stemmed from the conviction that children cannot learn without fear of punishment should they do wrong.
- Dependence on corporal punishment increases when the teacher-student ratio is abnormally high.
- The whole teaching-learning process was largely book-based. There was hardly any use of other TLM.
- During the teaching-learning process hardly any attempt was made to base the classroom transaction on the knowledge possessed by the child.
- All teachers covered by the sample did not feel any necessity to prepare daily, weekly or monthly lesson plans.
- In most classroom transactions it was the teacher who spoke the most, making it a monologue.
- There was an emphasis on rote learning in most of the teaching-learning activities.
- There was no conscious attempt to promote peer learning.
- Teacher interaction with children was limited to asking questions or listening to what the children read aloud. Often they did not bother to find out how much the children understood.

### School Management

Government primary schools are managed at the village and the block level. The officials involved at the block level are the Block Development Officer (BDO), the Education Extension Officer (EEO) and where the Lok Jumbish operates, the Cluster-in-Charge.

During their visits, the EEOs inspect the school and its surroundings, the classroom processes, check records and talk to members of the VEC to ascertain if they are satisfied with the school. In three of the four villages under study, the VECs have functioned effectively.

The EEOs felt that the teachers were doing good work. However, they received complaints about irregularity, unpunctuality and lack of interest in teaching. These complaints mainly came from the VEC, parents and the Headmaster of the concerned school. These problems are sorted out during school visits and by talking to the community members. It was, however, found that problems were faced when such complaints were found to have political overtones.

Some EEOs felt that the monitoring structure was weak. They received instructions from both the BDO and the Education Department, and most of their time was spent taking care of administrative tasks. They were, therefore, in favour of increasing the role of the Village Panchayat in the monitoring of schools and felt Panchayat members should be responsible for feedback on teacher-performance.

### Teacher, School and Community

The members of the community held good an opinion about the school and its functioning. However, there were also complaints about teachers who were irregular.

Discussions with community members and teachers indicated that villagers occasionally visited the school and also held discussions with teachers. Community members were also invited to attend the functions held on 26 January and 15

August and contributed monetarily toward sweets, etc. At teachers' requests they also raised small amounts for repairing the school building or the road that led to the school, etc.

#### Image of government teacher

Interactions with the community members clearly brought out the fact that GPS teachers have a positive image in the community. However, administrative officials felt that not enough respect was given to primary school teachers.

### Alternative Schooling Programme, Madhya Pradesh

#### The Setting

The data collected on the following Alternative Schools forms the basis of this analysis:

Table 2.10 **School location**

Sr. No.	Village	Block	District
1.	Kumhar Toli	Manora	Raigarh
2.	Gaumal	Nalcha	Dhar
3.	Dheemro Ka Pura	Tikamgarh	Tikamgarh
4.	Camp No. 5	Obedullaganj	Raisen

Although Alternative Schools were opened in remote and inaccessible areas, the schools in Dheemro Ka Pura didn't fall in this category as it was located just 10 kilometres away from the district headquarters, Tikamgarh.

All four villages were underdeveloped, although in Camp No. 5 all houses had electricity. There was hardly any industrial activity within a radius of 25 kilometres of these villages: the sole exception being a shoe factory 15 kilometres away from Dheemro Ka Pura where 20-25 people were employed.

The nearest upper primary school from Gaumal, Dheemro Ka Pura, and Camp No. 5 was three to ten kilometres away, but only one kilometre from Kumhar Toli.

The population of Kumhar Toli, Gaumal and Camp No. 5 was less than 400. Gaumal was the least populated with only 205 people and Dheemro Ka Pura, the most heavily populated, with 940 people.

The population of all four villages comprises of SCs, STs and OBCs. This indicates that Alternative Schools predominantly serve the deprived sections of society in remote areas where children previously did not have any access to education. This is suggested by the data that is presented in table 2.12.

Besides, most children who have access to Alternative Schools belong to the first generation of learners as the following table suggests:

Table 2.11 **Literacy rates**

Sr. No.	Village	Population	Literate	Percentage of literates
1.	Kumhar Toli	250	Not known	-
2.	Gaumal	205	3	1.46
3.	Dheemro Ka Pura	940	12	1.28
4.	Camp No. 5	331	29	8.76

The major occupations of these people are agriculture, labour, and collecting and selling the forest produce.

#### The Children

Children, in all four villages, not only help in household chores, animal husbandry, collecting firewood and agricultural work but also work seasonally as wage earners (this is minimal in Kumhar Toli) by

## **Alternative Schooling Programme, Madhya Pradesh**

- Most children had to work hard at home. The parents were interested in schooling of their children but also did not hesitate to detain them from attending school if there was work at home.
- All teachers are higher secondary pass. Their monthly remuneration is Rs. 1000/-. These teachers had undergone intensive initial and in-service training programme.
- Three of the four schools did not have appropriate accommodation. The teacher-student ratio varied from 1:12 to 1:35.
- As per programme design, the teaching learning in the schools is to be activity based, with the children divided into groups according to their academic levels. The teacher is to prepare a daily plan for teaching and also conduct continuous internal evaluation. In all four schools the classroom atmosphere was relaxed and in two schools children were divided into groups. But the prescribed pedagogy was not being fully followed in any of the schools.
- A supervisor is responsible for every 10 schools and he undertakes regular school visits and a two day review meeting each month with the teachers.
- The community members had a positive opinion of these schools which functioned regularly for the prescribed four hour duration each day. The teachers belonged to the same village and had good relationship with the community.

Table 2.12 Caste-wise population break up of villages with Alternative Schools

Sr. No.	Village	Population	SC	ST	OBC	Muslims
1.	KumharToli	250	20	178	52	-
2.	Gaumal	205	-	205	-	-
3.	Dheemro Ka Pura	940	-	16	885	39
4.	Camp No. 5	331	-	-	331	-
<b>Total &amp; Percentage</b>		<b>1726</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>1268</b>	<b>39</b>
		<b>(100)</b>	<b>(1.16)</b>	<b>(23.12)</b>	<b>(73.46)</b>	<b>(2.26)</b>

harvesting crops, picking soyabeans, and working at kilns. Some, from Camp No. 5, migrate to Punjab to work as labourers harvesting cotton. Their schooling is disrupted during this period for anything up to two months.

In spite of the heavy workload at home and in the fields, they do find some time to play local games, *kho-kho*, *kabaddi* as well as and other games in school. All the children said they liked studying and playing the most, and most disliked household chores like cooking, sweeping, collecting firewood, grazing animals and working as wage labour or '*mazdoori karna*'.

Given the situation in which these children live, their aspiration level was amazingly high and reflected concern for the society in which they lived. Most of the children, in all four villages, said they wanted to become a teacher after finishing school. Other occupations they named, included becoming a doctor, a shopkeeper and doing 'some' job.

In Camp No. 5, some children not only named their favourite occupation but also gave reasons as to why they would choose that particular occupation, e.g., one child wanted to become a doctor so that she could open a hospital--she had lost her brother for want of proper medical

treatment; another child wanted to become an honest policeman so that she could put brewers of country liquor behind bars.

However, the aspiration level of parents for their children, with the exception of Camp No. 5, was not only low but also reflected a sense of dejection and fatalism due to helplessness, generated primarily by poverty and the hard struggle for survival. As one parent put it, "I do not aspire for anything. I did not get a job, how can he?" Others hoped their children would get a job after school but some were sceptical about being able to afford to educate their children in the first place.

In Camp No. 5, parents seemed concerned for the education of their children, hoping they would then get a job. One parent wanted her son to become a '*thanedar*'.

In spite of the general feeling of dejection among parents, they seemed to care for the schooling of their children in as much as it was possible. They would remind the child it was time to go to school and make inquires from the teacher about the child's progress.

On the other hand, it is also true that parents detained their children if there was some pressing need for work at home.

As with the Shiksha Karmi Programme, here too as far as a girl's education went, most parents saw the limited objective of 'chitthi patri padh sakegi' (she will be able to read and write letters). Girls were married off between 10-18 and boys between 15-22 years, depending on the community a girl or boy belonged to.

Most children's exposure, in all the four villages, was limited to the nearby *haat*, the nearest town, and visits to the fair. The exceptions were a few children who had also visited cities like Raisen, Tikamgarh, Bhopal and towns in Punjab.

### Teacher Profile

In Gaumal there was only one teacher (male) while the other three schools had two teachers, one male and one female, as required under the Alternative School Programme. Out of the seven teachers covered by the sample, two belonged to the Muslim community, two to OBCs and three to STs.

Six teachers were in the age-group of 20-30 years, while one teacher was 40 years old. Six teachers were Higher Secondary pass and one was a graduate. Since the Alternative Schools Programme is three to four years old, all the seven teachers joined Alternative Schools between

1994-96. Table 2.13 provides this information at a glance.

It may be mentioned that one teacher in Camp No. 5 and one in Dheemro Ka Pura did not belong to the same village—a violation of a necessary condition for the recruitment of Alternative School teachers.

As table 2.14 shows, out of seven teachers, three disclosed their family income, (this is other than their salary which stands at Rs. 1000/- month) which varied between Rs. 2500/- to 16,000/- per annum. Three teachers lived below the poverty line and three above the poverty line. The status of one is unknown.

Of the seven, five teachers believed that for a small family to live simply, a sum of Rs. 1000/- (Kumhar Toli) to Rs. 3000/- (Camp No. 5) was required. One teacher (Kumhar Toli) mentioned needing Rs. 4000/- per month. This seemed to be a non-serious observation as it did not conform to ground realities in the village. Three teachers belonged to the first generation of learners (FGL) while another three teachers' families had an educational background. Information about one teacher could not be obtained.

Table 2.13 Teacher profile-Alternative Schools

Sr. No.	Village	Teacher	M/F	Age	Qualifications	Caste	Year of joining
1.	KumharToli	T-I	M	25	Hr.Sec.	ST	1995
		T-II	F	25	Hr.Sec.	ST	1996
2.	Gaumal	T-I	M	22	Hr.Sec.	ST	1996
		T-II	-	-	-	-	-
3.	Dheemro Ka Pura	T-I	F	40	Hr.Sec.	Muslim	1995
		T-II	M	30	Hr.Sec.	Muslim	1995
4.	Camp No. 5	T-I	M	22	Hr.Sec.	OBC	1995
		T-II	F	20	Hr.Sec.	OBC	1996

Table 2.14 Teachers' family income

Sr. No.	Village	Teacher	Other family income	BPL <sup>1</sup> Yes/No	Belongs to FGL <sup>2</sup> Yes/No	Income required for small family
1.	Kumhar Toli	T-I	Not disclosed	No	Yes	4000/-
		T-II	Not disclosed	Yes	No	1000/-
2.	Gaumal	T-I	16000/-	Yes	No	1700/-
		T-II	-	-	-	-
3.	Dheemro Ka Pura	T-I	-	-	No	2500-3000/-
		T-II	2500/-	Yes	Yes	-
4.	Camp No. 5	T-I	4000/-	Yes	Yes	3000/-
		T-II	No extra income	No extra income	No extra income	No extra income

<sup>1</sup> Below Poverty Line

<sup>2</sup> (Belongs to the) First Generation of Learners

Teachers in Kumhar Toli, Dheemro Ka Pura and Camp No. 5 said that they made a daily teaching plan. However, the research team in Kumhar Toli found no evidence of any such plan. A teacher in Dheemro Ka Pura had access to newspapers and TV as she lived in Tikamgarh and belonged to a relatively prosperous family.

All of these teachers aspired to improve future prospects, either by studying further or by getting a permanent job as a teacher. Five out of seven teachers were able to articulate their views on educational issues and social problems, whereas the rest lacked clarity in their perceptions.

The research teams noted that three teachers demonstrated concern about their students' education by keeping in touch with the parents so as to ensure that the child regularly attended classes.

### Academic Inputs

Alternative School teachers receive an initial training of 21 days, followed by a series of in-service training sessions of 17 days, 10 days or even shorter periods, depending on the objectives of these courses. The objectives include: to improve

teaching methodology, keeping in view the curriculum (content), develop understanding and competencies of multilevel teaching, making teaching plans, recording and evaluation of learners' performance etc. Four teachers had attended three such training programmes for 17, 12 and 10 days, while the remaining three teachers had attended one or two.

### The School

The Alternative Schools in Kumhar Toli, Dheemro Ka Pura and Camp No. 5 were opened in August 1995 and the one in Gaumal in November 1996. The school in Camp No. 5 had its own concrete building constructed with the contribution of Rs. 5000/- from the village community and Rs. 50,000/- from DPEP.

The schools in Gaumal and Dheemro Ka Pura were run under a tree or, in an inclement weather, in the house of the teachers. The school in Kumhar Toli was run from a very small room that was (which is part of a house constructed under Indira Awas Yojna) dark and damp and could hardly accommodate more than six children, since a huge trunk was also kept there to store TLM. The other two

schools stored TLM in teachers' houses. Thus, three of the four schools did not have an appropriate place in which to store TLM. The teacher-student ratio in the four schools and the dates of their opening are given in the following table:

Table 2.15 **Teacher-student ratio**

Sr. No.	School/Village	Date of opening	Teacher-student-ratio
1.	KumharToli	August, 95	2:23
2.	Gaumal	November, 96	2:50
3.	Dheemro Ka Pura	August, 95	1:50
4.	Camp No. 5	August, 95	2:70

In Dhemroo Ka Pura and Kumhar Toli the Research team observed that children came and went according to their will. Nor was the teaching-learning activity systematic or properly organised.

In Dheemro Ka Pura only text books were provided by the school. Copies, slates, pencils etc., were purchased by parents. In all the other three schools, the TLM was provided by the school as has been laid down in the Alternative School Programme.

Teachers in all four schools stated that the TLM and other items prescribed for an Alternative School were not sufficient.

However, all of them were satisfied with the quality of the material. After the submission of the demand to the Block Resource Coordinator (BRC), the supply of TLM takes about a month or more. A teacher in Dheemro Ka Pura told the Research Team that there was no place to store TLM which was, therefore, temporarily housed in a trunk in his kitchen.

As prescribed in the programme it is the School Management Committee that decides school timings, the weekly holiday,

the holidays in a year (which are not to exceed 45 in number). However, in one Dheemro Ka Pura, it was found that the calendar of the State Education Department was followed, which according to the teacher, could be changed by the Block Education Officer or the Academic Coordinator.

An employee who also cooked the mid-day meal cleaned the school premises in Kumhar Toli; teachers or teachers and children cleaned the school in Dheemro Ka Pura and only children cleaned it in Camp No. 5. In Kumhar Toli it was also found that teacher-teacher relationship was not as smooth as it should be.

### Classroom Processes & Pedagogy

According to the Alternative Schooling Programme the pedagogy used in these schools should have the following characteristics: "(i) teaching-learning is activity-based (e.g. through songs, poetry, stories, plays, drama etc); (ii) the teacher prepares a daily plan for the children according to which she works the following day. She keeps a daily record of each child's performance and accordingly plans teaching for the next day; (iii) the children are divided into small groups. These groups are formed on the basis of the academic levels and are changed according to their pace of learning (multilevel teaching); (iv) children also do activities to gain skills in art and craft."

The programme document emphasises the continuous internal evaluation of the students: "(i) the internal evaluation of the children is based on the teacher's observation and oral and written performance of the students; (ii) a record of each child's progress is maintained. The mastery achieved in learning, doing the exercises and activities in different subject areas are

recorded every month; (iii) each student is evaluated by the teacher and the supervisor after the child has completed working on a book; (iv) after every three months, the oral, written and practical work of students is assessed and recorded."

Besides the above, it was also expected that children would learn at their own pace and would not be brought under any kind of pressure. The teaching-learning environment should be fearless and the teacher-child relationship, affectionate.

It may also be mentioned that the TLM for Alternative Schools was also developed to fulfil the needs of the pedagogy used. A particular 'word-based' method was developed to learn the language (Hindi).

It is against this background that the classroom processes of Alternative Schools need to be viewed. It was observed by the Research teams that in none of the four schools was the word based method of teaching Hindi used. The teachers had transformed this method into a *varnmala* system, within the framework of the lessons and exercises given in the book.

In Dheemro Ka Pura and Camp No. 5, the teaching-learning process was activity based. In all the four schools, the classroom atmosphere was relaxed, although in all of these schools, it was found that corporal punishment was used. During classroom transactions, there was enough interaction with the teacher.

In these two villages multilevel teaching was also practised. Groups were supposedly made according to the academic levels of children, but the teachers could not manage these groups and make sure that each group had something to do.

This task becomes easier when peer-learning is also promoted as an essential part of the teaching-learning process. But it was not to be seen in any of the schools. Art and craft work was done only in Gaumal, Dheemro Ka Pura and Camp No. 5.

Only in Camp No. 5 was planning and recording done daily while in Dheemro Ka Pura student performance was recorded on a weekly basis. Teachers of the other two schools neither made teaching plans nor maintained student records.

The academic levels of children were assessed every month in Dheemro Ka Pura, Camp No. 5 and Gaumal. In Kumhar Toli teachers said that no evaluation was carried out since they were yet to receive training on how to fill out the evaluation register provided by the Block Resource Coordinator.

### School Management

At the village level, the functioning of the school is managed by two teachers, a Supervisor called the *Paryavekshak* who is responsible for 10 schools and the VEC or the School Management Committee where there is no VEC. At the block level the Block Education Officer (BEO) and BRC monitor and manage the Alternative Schools and at the district level, the District Project Coordinator (DPC). Besides monitoring, the academic input to teachers is largely organised by the *Paryavekshak* on the spot when he visits the school and during the two-day *Sammeeksha Baithak* or Review Meeting held each month.

Two *Paryavekshaks* told the research team that the academic problems of the teachers were related to the weakness of their subject knowledge in Hindi and Mathematics both, especially when the children



reach a higher level of learning equivalent to Class III or more. They were also weak in recording and planning for each child each day.

Other problems faced were the late delivery of books and insufficient quantity of TLM, absenteeism, late payment of TA-DA and honorarium.

The views of four officials at the district and block level, DPO, Raisen, BDO (with additional charge of BEO/CEO), Nalcha (Dhar), DPO, Tikamgarh and BRC, Manora (Raigarh)—were also sought on teachers' role and performance and their problems related to management.

Of the four officials spoken to, two felt the teachers were inefficient. One of them was highly critical and said, "The programme is a flop. It has not been able to meet expectations." He felt this was because the, "villagers are not alert, the teachers are not qualified and don't take an interest in their work. Moreover, they are from the same village and keep busy with their own, private work, regard their job more as a *naukri* than as social service. Also, the schools are located in the interiors and monitoring them is a difficult task."

The other two officials spoke positively about the performance of the teachers who, according to them, "work efficiently because the teachers think that one day they will become permanent."

Two officials from Dheemro Ka Pura and Camp No. 5 were in favour of an increase in the teachers' honorarium whereas the others felt that the present honorarium of Rs. 1000/- was adequate. The expectations of Alternative School teachers from these officials included: enhancement of their honorarium: "*sarpanch ke adhinastha na*

*rahna pade*" (we should not be made to remain subordinate to the Sarpanch); that they receive payment of honorarium and TA, DA on time and that their job is made permanent; humane (*'sammanjanak'*) treatment in view of the fact that "we have something new to offer them"; that they are not deployed in non-educational activities; and they receive TLM supplies on time.

The complaints received against teachers by these officials refer to irregularity and absenteeism.

### Teacher, School and Community

Community members in Gaumal, Dheemro Ka Pura and Camp No. 5 unanimously said that the schools opened on time, opened regularly and stayed open for the entire duration of four hours as prescribed in the Alternative Schools Programme. The teachers were also regular and taught well. Some also said, "*hum to jante nahin school mein kaisi padhai hoti hai*" (we don't know what kind of teaching goes on in school). The community members were aware of the problems of the school.

In Camp No. 5 villagers not only contributed Rs. 5000/- for the construction of the school building but also contributed voluntary labour and supplied bricks for the building.

In Dheemro Ka Pura the need for a school building was keenly felt as the school is presently situated under a tree. There is no facility for drinking water also.

With the exception of Kumhar Toli the teachers belonged to the same village had good relations with the community. As one community member put it, "The boy (teacher) is from our village. He is from

our family because all in this village belong to one family. The girl (teacher) comes from other village (Camp No. 5) but her relations (with us) are also good."

In Camp No. 5 villagers were concerned enough about their children's education to ask questions like "When will the Class V exams take place? Where will our children study after they have passed this exam?" They also demanded that the school be upgraded to Class VIII.

In Kumhar Toli however, it was the other way round. The villagers' concern for the school was minimal. The VEC only met when there were some serious problems. The Sarpanch said that the school was not functioning well. "The teachers don't take an interest and need to be warned."

#### Image of para teachers

Teachers in Gaumal, Dheemro Ka Pura and Camp No. 5 had a good image in the community, whereas in Kumhar Toli some members of the community were critical of the teachers' performance.

### Government Primary Schools (*Shaskiya Prathamik Vidyalayas*)

#### The Setting

Government primary schools (*Shaskiya Prathamik Vidyalayas*) selected for the study are mentioned in the table below.

In the districts of Bangrer and Asta Harakpur the schools were located in relatively remote areas of the blocks. The other two villages were situated closer to small towns.

In Bangrer and Asta Harakpur there is a predominance of a single caste, namely the Bhils and the Orans (both Hindu and Christians) respectively. The majority of the population in Palakmati (Semrikalan) belongs to Other Backward Castes, while Bavari has a Muslim majority. The population of the four villages varies from 296 in Bavari to approximately 1827 in Palakmati (Semrikalan)—see table 2.18.

The main occupation in the village is agriculture and work related to animal husbandry. However, many people also work as casual labourers in nearby towns and cities.

In Bavari and Asta Harakpur, there has hardly been any developmental work. In the other two villages, some minimal developmental activities have been carried out under the Jawahar Rozgar Yojna and the Indira Awas Yojna. With the exception of Palakmati (Semrikalan) and Bavari, electricity has reached the other two villages under study.

However, in Bangrer only 60 households and in Asta Harakpur 18, have access to

Table 2.16 **Government primary schools selected for the study**

Sr. No.	Village where school is located	Nearest Alternative school	Distance between the two schools	Block	District
1.	Bangrer	Gaumal	8 km	Nalcha	Dhar
2.	Asta Harakpur	Kumhar Toli	3 km	Manora	Raigarh
3.	Palakmati (Semrikalan)	Camp No. 5	4 km	Obedullaganj	Raisen
4.	Bavari	Dheemro Ka Pura	½ km	Tikamgarh	Tikamgarh

electricity. The rate of literacy is low in all the villages, but more so in Bangrer, Asta-Harakpur and Bavari as the following table shows.

Table 2.17 **Literacy rates**

Sr. Village No.	Population	Literate	Percentage of literates
1. Bangrer	595	20	3.36
2. Asta Harakpur	580	110	18.96
3. Palakmati (Semrikalan)	1827	669	36.61
4. Bavari	296	27	9.12

### The Children

The life situation of children in all the four villages was similar. They were overburdened with work at home and in the fields. This included household chores like fetching water, taking care of siblings, washing dishes (especially girls) and agricultural work including cattle grazing and looking after animals.

Some children in all four villages were engaged in economically gainful activities. For example, eight out of twelve children from the school in Asta Harakpur were working, but managed to find time to play.

All of the children interviewed liked going to school and playing. Some of them also liked going to the fair, watching TV etc. What they disliked was doing *majdoori*

(wage labour); work related to agriculture and household chores.

Almost all wanted to become teachers, while the remainder said they wanted to become doctors, *mandir ka pujari* (temple priest), truck cleaner (*khallasi*), get any government job, etc.

The parents' aspirations for their children were: "*padhega to hamari taraha majdoori nahin karega*," (if he learns to read and write he won't have to become a labourer like us) "*padh likh kar insaan ban jayaga*" (he will become a better human being after learning to read and write) "*naukri lag jayae*," (lets hope he gets a job). When asked what this job could be, they replied "doctor or police."

As for girls, it was the same old story. education would improve their marriage prospects. Girls, in these villages were married off between 10 to 18 years and boys between 15 to 22 years depending on which social group they belonged to.

Parents seemed concerned about the education of their wards in all the four villages but there were parents at least in three villages—Asta Harakpur, Bavari and Semrikalan (Palakmati)—who did not allow their children to go to school if they were needed for work at home.

Table 2.18 **Caste-wise break-up of the four villages**

Sr. Village No.	Population	SC	OBC	ST	General	Muslims
1. Bangrer	595	-	-	595	-	-
2. Asta Harakpur	580	55	132	338	55	-
3. Palakmati (Semrikalan)	1827	439	941	389	46	12
4. Bavari	296	-	135	-	6	155
<b>Total &amp; Percentage</b>	<b>3298</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>1208</b>	<b>1322</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>167</b>
	(100)	(14.97)	(36.62)	(40.08)	(3.24)	(5.06)

### Teacher Profile

Seven government teachers (one female and six male) were identified and in-depth interviews conducted to study their education and social backgrounds, the impact of training on their teaching methodology and to elicit their world view.

The average age of the government teachers was 44, varying from 25 years to 58 years. The only female teacher was 25 years old. With the exception of two male teachers, a graduate and a postgraduate respectively, the other teachers had only studied up to Higher Secondary. All the teachers were married and lived either as a nuclear family or with their extended families. The distance covered by them to reach school varied from three to 18 kilometres.

Of the seven teachers one was a Muslim, three belonged to Scheduled Tribes, one each to the Scheduled Caste and to Other Backward Castes and one to the general category. The female teacher's daily routine was far more hectic thanks to the double burden she carried of running the house

and going out to teach. This left her little time to pursue activities of her choice.

### Academic Inputs

Government school teachers receive in-service training through DIETs. The training schedule is shown in table 2.19.

All the seven teachers interviewed by the research team had undergone training under the DIET. While a majority of them had undergone seven to ten training programmes, two of them had received such training only twice. The teachers expressed satisfaction with the training inputs which, they felt, contributed in the improvement of their teaching abilities. The transformation if any, in their attitudes and behaviour towards children and the school management was however, not visible in the school environment.

All seven teachers regarded corporal punishment in a similar light. "Agar bachchon mein dar nahin hai to sikh nahin sakte" (if there is no fear in the children, they cannot learn).

Table 2.19 **Teacher training programmes**

	Training nomenclature	Objective	Training curriculum, fixed or need-based	Duration	When is the training held	Compulsory Yes/No	Method of evaluation	Is the trainee informed about her/his performance
Phase I	Seekhna-Sikhana package at least once a year; maximum twice a year	Teach children in an entertaining manner and make teaching 'saral aur sugam'	Fixed but room for flexibility; can be changed according to need	12 days	Summer Vacations	Yes	By asking trainees orally and/or written	No
Phase I	-do-	-do-	-do-	6 days	October/ November	-do-	-do-	-do-
	Science and Mathematics	Solving subject based problems	-do-	6 days	Between July and September	No	-do-	-do-

Concern for the children's education varied from teacher to teacher. For instance, one teacher in Palakmati (Semrikalan) and one in Asta Harakpur went over to children's houses to enquire after them, if they were absent.

Almost all teachers mentioned that their involvement in government-related programmes such as the Pulse Polio immunisation campaigns, in literacy campaigns, surveys and visits to block offices often disrupted their teaching activities.

The views of most of the teachers on education were very limited. The importance of education was seen by them in terms of reading the Railway timetable, finding jobs, etc. Views on social problems, too were narrowly focused.

### The School

The government primary school of Palakmati (Semrikalan) was opened in 1946 followed by Asta Harakpur (1954), Bangrer (1978) and Bavari (1995).

School buildings in Asta Harakpur, Bavari and Palakmati (Semrikalan) had two rooms and one office-cum-store room. The school in Bangrer had only one room as the other room was being used for Anganwadi activities. Thus, the space for teaching-learning activities in all the four schools was insufficient.

Table 2.20 **Availability of classrooms and teacher-student ratio**

Item	Bangrer	Asta Harakpur	Bavari	Palakmati (Semrikalan)
Teacher-student ratio	2:39	2:40	1:100	4:108
Availability of classrooms	1	2	2	2

In Bangrer children had to walk 250 metres to the hand-pump to drink water and this disrupted their studies.

Except Bangrer, teachers in the other three schools said that the TLM, as also other items prescribed in the programme, were not sufficient. The schools in Palakmati (Semrikalan) and Asta Harakpur were also not satisfied with the quality of TLM. The TLM, which is not prescribed but required by the school, is purchased from the contingency fund—a sum of Rs. 2000/- is received by each school and Rs. 500/- is received by each teacher.

As decided by the Education Department, all government primary schools are run for six and half hours with a recess of 30-45 minutes in between. A uniform school calendar is prepared by the Department for all schools which, therefore, does not take into consideration specific local situations.

Schools in Asta Harakpur and Bavari, were cleaned by the students, whereas in Palakmati (Semrikalan) and Bangrer the premises were cleaned by the teachers, or by the students along with the teacher.

### Classroom Processes

In view of the high teacher-student ratio and the shortage of the classrooms, it was necessary in all four schools to resort to multilevel and multigrade teaching. However, this was not reflected in either the teachers' attitudes or their efforts.

In all four schools, homework was given to children on the basis of what had been taught. This included *sulekh*, answering questions from text books, etc. In Palakmati (Semrikalan), however, homework also included the making of picture cards, writing the names of family members, making toys, etc. But, as one teacher

in Bangrer said, "though we give homework, the students don't do it."

This fact, and the admittance of this fact, by the teacher can be interpreted to mean that the burden of work at home and the poverty-stricken living conditions do not permit the child to do any homework. The research team observed that children came to school in tattered clothes.

Though all the teachers claimed to regularly check and correct copies and explain to children why their answers were wrong, the research teams observed that copies were either not checked, or not regularly.

The assessment of the academic levels of children in all the four schools was done once in a month and also according to the School calendar. Except in Bavari, parents elsewhere were informed about the progress of the child.

Again, with the exception of Bavari, *Bal Melas* were held in the other schools and parents were invited to see what the children had learnt and produced.

#### **Classroom culture and pedagogy**

Only in Palakmati (Semrikalan), did the teacher appear to have prepared a lesson plan before going to class, no other teacher prepared a lesson plan daily, weekly or even monthly in any of the other three schools.

Again, it was the teacher in Palakmati (Semrikalan) who appeared to be innovative in her approach to teaching a subject. She was teaching Class III Hindi, while children of Classes IV and V were also sitting with them.

She first prepared a mental environment by asking children questions like "*aapke*

*ghar mein chiriya, pariinda pale hain?"* (have you any tame birds at home?)

Children: "Pigeon, cow, goat, rat, parrot, horse".

Teacher: "*Tota ko jante hain, ji?"* (Do you know about the parrot?) Then she recited a small poem, "*Tota mithi tan sunata hai, mirch, dal roti khata hai- hum in par kavita suna rahe hain.*" She recited the poem in rhythm with body gestures and children repeated it after her. She was holding the picture of a parrot in her hand. Then, she picked up pictures of other birds one by one and replaced 'tota' by this bird and again sang the poem. When she finished the poem, she asked questions about this bird and asked the children to write the answers in their copies.

Then she switched over to animals, the horse, the rat etc. She asked children how a particular animal walked and the children acted it out for her. When a poem (the same poem on *tota*, but *tota* was now replaced by another bird) was finished, she asked the children to take the poem further, by replacing 'tota' with animals and birds of their choice. Thus, seven children wrote a poem each and recited it.

The pedagogical strength of the teaching methodology used above, points to the following:

- To prepare the children mentally for the subject matter/teaching points.
- To make the teaching-learning process interactive.
- To provide children with opportunities for creative impression.
- To make learning an enjoyable experience.

In the other three schools the teaching-learning process was largely book-based.

more of a monologue than a dialogue. There was emphasis on rote learning. However, corporal punishment was common to all four schools.

In two schools relations between the teachers were not cordial. The research teams observed that most teachers in all four schools did not take their work seriously. They would instruct the students to read a particular lesson and then go outside or gossip with other teachers within the class.

### School Management

Government schools in Madhya Pradesh, are managed by a three-tier structure. At the grassroots level there is the VEC. At the middle level, the AC and Cluster-in-Charge provide academic and non-academic support to the schools. In the block office, the BRC and BDO deal with administrative aspects pertaining to government schools.

The VEC was found to be operational in all the villages under study and played an important role in the development and management of the schools. Its members motivated parents to send their children to school and helped in creating an pro-education environment in the village.

The VEC members not only gave monetary support in the form of cash prizes during festivals and school competitions but also took the initiative to repair the school building, when needed. At the cluster level, the *Sankul Prabhari* (Cluster-in-Charge) is responsible for administrative issues of the government primary schools.

The second level of support provided to government schools at the cluster level was from the Cluster Academic Coordinator (CAC). With eight to 11 schools under

their supervision, they manager to visit each school once a month. During the visit they check registers/records and extend full academic support to the teachers. At the Block level, the BRC and BEO look after administrative matters like salaries, clearance of bills, dealing with complaints, appointment and supervision.

During discussion with a level administrative official, it was expressed that the intervention of Rajiv Gandhi Prathamik Shiksha Mission had helped in terms of increasing the (availability of) "resources and the construction of school building."

Despite the intervention of Rajiv Gandhi Prathamik Shiksha Mission the efficiency of schools however, has not improved, the reasons being:

- Lack of facilities for teachers to stay in the village resulting in irregularity.
- Lack of space to display materials prepared under the *Sikhna Sikhana* package resulting in their ineffective utilization.

The arguments advanced by the officials for improving school functioning were:

- The teachers should be drawn from the concerned Gram Panchayat.
- There should be a proper decentralisation of functions among educational officials to ensure better monitoring.
- Increased community involvement is a must to ensure better school functioning.
- Steps need to be taken to ensure political non-interference in the running of these schools and in the transfer of teachers.

### Teacher, School and Community

The community, in all four villages appeared to believe that it was the duty of the Government to fulfil the basic needs

of the primary school such as the construction of more rooms, a boundary wall, provision of drinking water etc. However, the villagers did help with small repairs as in Asta Harakpur, and undertook work that did not involve high costs. In Palakmati (Semrikalan) they even collected money and put up a hand-pump in the school.

It was found that government teachers interacted with the community on social issues, if invited. They also approached parents when matters pertaining to the children needed to be discussed. The villagers, in turn, approached the teachers when they needed help in filling out applications or forms.

According to villagers in Bangrer, Asta Harakpur and Palakmati (Semrikalan) the teachers interacted politely and helpfully with them. They were also happy that the schools opened on time and that the teachers taught well. However, many of the villagers were unaware of the school timings and had never set foot inside the school.

In Bangrer, a few villagers said that the regular teacher, as opposed to the Shiksha Karmi, was irregular.

In Bavari, however, the majority of the community members said that their children, who had been in school for a year, had not learnt a thing. "*Panchvi pass kar jate hain bachche phir bhi padhna likhna nahin aata!*" (they all pass Class V without even learning how to read or write!). Parents also observed that the teachers invited only 'special' people on functions held on Republic Day or Independence Day. They also said that the teacher never visited them. Overall the teachers' relations with the community appeared to be formal and task-oriented.

### Image of the government teacher

In Asta Harakpur and Palakmati (Semrikalan), most members of the community had a good opinion of government teachers. However, in Bangrer and Bavari the community felt otherwise. In Bangrer, according to some community members, the government teacher was irregular in attendance while the Shiksha Karmi, teaching in the same school, was not. The main charge against the teacher in Bavari was that she did not teach well.

## Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS), Madhya Pradesh

### The Setting

As mentioned earlier only four schools selected in the sample as given below are the basis of this analysis:

Table 2.21 School location

Sr. No.	Village	Block	District
1.	Kunjra Khodra	Nalcha	Dhar
2.	Kari Talai	Obedullaganj	Raisen
3.	Majra Pahari Khurd	Tikamgarh	Tikamgarh
4.	Bhimshila	Manora	Raigarh

Two of the schools were located in remote areas and the other two were close to the highway or metalled road. Thus, EGS schools seem to serve populations of both remote and not-remote areas, where children are unable to access an educational facility within the radius of one kilometre. All the four villages excepting one, which is relatively developed in economic terms, are underdeveloped.

The population of these villages varies from 150 to 500 and comprises of mainly Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes



## **Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS)**

### **Madhya Pradesh**

- EGS schools provide children of poor and deprived sections access to education in habitations which do not have a formal school. Many of the children enrolled in EGS schools had been to school for the first time.
- Of the four schools studied, one had a teacher who was a matriculate, one had completed higher secondary, one was a graduate and one was a post-graduate. The teachers got a monthly remuneration of Rs. 500/-. All the teachers expressed concern for the education of children. The teachers had undergone short duration training programmes after being appointed.
- The space for teaching is provided by the community. Most of these places were dark and unclean and not suitable for teaching-learning activity.
- School timings and holidays were decided by the local community and the school functioned for four to six hours. The community expressed satisfaction with the teachers, who had good relationship with the parents and other community members. One female teacher was sensitive to the needs of each child and did not use corporal punishment. However, in other schools the teaching process was one sided—only the teacher spoke. Corporal punishment was common.
- The VEC and Village Panchayat play an important role in the functioning of EGS. The Cluster Coordinator under DPEP is responsible for academic and administrative support.
- The opinion of the officials about EGS schools was varied.

Table 2.22 **Caste-wise break-up of each village**

Sr. No.	Village	Population	Scheduled Castes	OBC	Scheduled Tribes
1.	Kunjra Khodra	150	-	-	150
2.	Kari Talai	254	8	62	184
3.	Majra Pahari Khurd	250	-	250	-
4.	Bhimshila	479	35	182	262
<b>Total &amp; Percentage</b>		<b>1133</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>596</b>
		<b>(100)</b>	<b>(3.79)</b>	<b>(43.60)</b>	<b>(52.60)</b>

and Other Backward Castes. The above table points to the fact that EGS schools provide the children of poor and deprived sections of the society access to education.

Besides, most children who have access to EGS schools belong to the first generation of learners as the following table reflects:

Table 2.23 **Literacy rate**

Sr. No.	Village	Population	Literate	Percentage of literate
1.	Kunjra Khodra	150	1	0.66
2.	Kari Talai	254	28	11
3.	Majra Pahari Khurd	250	11	4.4
4.	Bhimshila	479	Not-known	Not-known
<b>Total</b>		<b>1133</b>		

The main occupations of these people are agriculture, animal husbandry and agricultural and casual labour.

### The Children

Since the major occupation of all the four villages is agriculture supplemented by animal husbandry, almost all the children were engaged in work related to these occupations and/or some household chores. In Kunjra Khodra, children worked as agricultural labourers and helped their parents brew country liquor. Though their childhood is burdened with work, they did

find time to play games including *kho-kho* and *kabaddi*, etc. When asked what they disliked most, a large majority of children said cattle grazing, handling cowdung and doing household chores. What they most liked was studying and playing.

Prior to the opening of the EGS schools, a few of these children were attending the nearest government primary school but others helped parents at home. EGS schools, thus not only provided access to education to these children, but also helped them recover a major part of their childhood—they now had opportunities to play, sing and partake in group activities with children of their age.

Interestingly, there were children in all four villages who wanted to become teachers, but in Bhimshila—a tribal area in the hills—all of them wanted to become teachers. The others wanted to sell milk, become shopkeepers (Kari Talai) or drivers of police jeeps (Majra Pahari Khurd). These aspirations correspond to their life situation and the exposure they have had. Most of these children were in the age group of six to nine years.

Parents' aspirations in all four villages, in the case of the boys, was confined to their "getting some job, so that they have a bright future, *aur duniya ki samajh aa jayegi*." (they must become worldly wise).

It is important to note that they saw a bright future ahead for their children since they were getting them educated. They also had observed some changes in the children since they started going to the EGS School: The children could now articulate better, count, tell stories, sing songs and had become aware about cleanliness. Even though illiterate, most parents were concerned about the education of their wards.

As far as their daughters went, most parents did not consider education important, since she would be married off between 15 and 18 years of age. Boys were married off between 18-20 years.

### Teacher Profile

EGS schools have been running for almost two years with children being admitted to Class I (according to scheme no higher classes were allowed to be opened in EGS schools). All the four schools were single teacher schools, with three men and one woman teacher. All the teachers were between 22-30 years old and belonged to the underprivileged and backward castes excepting one who was a Brahmin. They all spoke the local language and Hindi and their qualifications were varied. One was a Matriculate, one had completed Higher Secondary, one was a graduate and one a post-graduate. Three of the four teachers came from educated families and were of the view that a small family (consisting of husband, wife and two children) needed at least Rs. 2000/- 2500/- to eke out a simple living.

It may be noted that EGS teachers get a remuneration of Rs. 500/ per month. The daily routine of the teachers indicated that they (at least two) spent some time in studying and watching TV. Two of the four teachers prepared school lessons.

The aspiration level of these teachers was high. All of them wanted to better their future prospects by studying further or appearing in competitive examinations. Three of the four showed considerable clarity in their perception of the educational scenario and social problems.

All the four teachers kept in touch with the parents of their students; one teacher even collected children from their homes, thus all reflected concern for the education of these children.

### Academic Inputs

All four teachers had attended short-duration training programmes varying from four to twelve days after being appointed. Two of the teachers had undergone more than four training programmes and the other two had attended two such training programmes. All these were aimed at improving the teaching methodology evaluation of learners and innovative use of TLM and activities. All four teachers were of the view that these programmes had helped them become better teachers.

### The School

Under the EGS, the space for teaching children is provided by the community, which sought an EGS School for itself. However, in Majra Pahari Khurd (Tikamgarh) it was found that the EGS School had a concrete building constructed by the Rajeev Gandhi Prathamik Shiksha Mission. In Kari Talai (Raisen), too, such a building was under construction. In Kunjra Khodra (Dhar) and Bhimshila (Raigarh) the schools were run from a verandah and a *kuccha* room that belonged a villager, respectively. In Kari Talai, also, the school was run from an enclosed verandah provided by a member of the community. These places were not suitable for the teaching-learning activity because they

were dark, lacked cleanliness and were noisy. The dates these schools were opened and the teacher-student ratio of each is given below:

Table 2.24 **Teacher-student ratio**

Sr. No.	School/ Village	Date of opening	Teacher-student ratio
1.	Kunjra Khodra	March, 1997	1:32
2.	Kari Talai	January, 1998	1:38
3.	Majra Pahari Khurd	November, 1997	1:46
4.	Bhimshila	April, 1997	1:32

All the teachers said that the teaching-learning material, provided in the scheme, fell short of their needs. Except for one teacher, the other three were not satisfied with its quality. The supply of TLM was irregular in one school, which received TLM from the Block Resource Coordination Centre (BRCC). Other three schools purchased the TLM locally, with a sum of Rs. 2000/- provided for the purpose, annually. An additional sum of Rs. 500/- per teacher was provided for the preparation of innovative TLM.

All the four EGS schools ran for four to six hours. As laid down by the scheme, school timings and the school calendar are decided locally by the community, keeping in mind that the school must run for at least 200 days in a year.

However, the teacher in Majra Pahari Khurd did not know this. In Kunjra Khodra, the teacher consulted the BRCC to inquire about upcoming holidays so that the children could be informed. In Bhimshila, the EGS School followed the government primary school timings and calendar, and the teacher did not know whether the calendar could be changed and, if so, by whom. The teacher in Kari

Talai informed the research team that school timings were decided in consultation with the villagers. It appeared that there was a communication gap between the authorities and the community resulting in confusion in this matter.

With the exception of the school in Kari Talai which was cleaned by the landlord, either the teacher alone, or the teacher and the students, cleaned the school premises. In the latter case, the sharing of labour could help teach the children about the dignity of labour and also help to build a closer bond with the teacher.

### Classroom Processes

Since EGS schools are single teacher schools and the teacher-student ratio ranges from 1:32 to 1:46 (as per EGS norm, a school must have a minimum of 40 children in non-tribal areas and 25 children in tribal areas) multigrade/multilevel teaching becomes essential. It also means that teachers must make daily lesson plans so as to cater to the needs of groups of children with different levels of learning. In none of the schools, except in Kunjra Khodra—where the teacher said she made a daily teaching plan—were daily, weekly or monthly teaching plans are made. A teacher in Kari Talai claimed to make such plans but said that he did this in his mind only and didn't put it down on paper.

The children's learning level is assessed orally twice a year and parents are informed informally in Kunjra Khodra. In Bhimshila and Majra Pahari Khurd, weekly evaluation is conducted and in Kari Talai a MLL-based evaluation is done once in three months (Kari Talai). It was found that there was no uniform system of evaluation in use.

Only in Class II were children given homework which included writing tables.

copying passages from textbooks, memorising poems, etc.

### Classroom culture and pedagogy

The children interviewed by the research team stated that in Kunjra Khodra the female teacher did not use corporal punishment at all though she did reprimand them. In Kari Talai and Bhimshila corporal punishment was sparingly used whereas in Majra Pahari Khurd it was frequently used.

This is an improvement of great pedagogical significance especially when it is hard to find a school where corporal punishment is not practised thanks to a conviction that children will not learn if they are not afraid of the teacher.

The research teams observed the classroom processes for two to five hours in each school. There was a great difference in their pedagogical understanding. For example, the teacher in Majra Pahari Khurd seemed unaware of improved methods of teaching which one teacher in Kunjra Khodra was successfully using. In Majra Pahari Khurd the research team observed that the teacher:

- Made boys and girls sit separately.
- Did not pay attention to the different learning levels of children.
- Followed the principles of rote learning.
- Did not explain the concept of numbers by using items such as the mud balls in bags lying beside him near the blackboard.
- Did not pay attention to all the children. Some were bored and were yawning and others were playing within the class.
- Children were not interested in what was going on in the class.
- Most of the time, the children were

not involved in the teaching-learning process.

- Most of the time, it was the teacher who spoke in class and gave instructions. The research team observed that he instructed the children to copy consonants from the blackboard and himself sat on a chair, reading a book.
- Immediately after he left the classroom, the children started making noise but as soon as he entered there was pin-drop silence.
- When a child started crying he made him sit elsewhere but did not try to stop him crying.
- He did not have any teaching plan.

Interestingly this was the school where all the children said that the teacher beat them with his hands and with a stick.

On the other hand, in Kunjra Khodra, the research team observed that the teacher (female) was sensitive to the moods of the children, she tried to pay attention to each child, and the children took an interest in the teaching-learning processes. When they were bored they told her so and requested her to sing a song or allow them to play. Besides, she also demonstrated the innovative use of TLM. In this school, not a single child said that the teacher beat him/her. This is not to say that there were no shortcomings in the classroom culture here. Constraints were many. Children came with younger siblings who at times cried; there was only one verandah where both Classes I and II were simultaneously taught by a single teacher. The quality of learning-teaching processes in Kari Talai and Bhimshila fall between the above two, but stay on the lower side.

### School Management

There is a three-tier management structure for the EGS schools. At the

grassroots level there is the VEC and the Village Panchayat. At the middle level, the cluster office looks into the academic and administrative problems. The academic coordinator is responsible for extending academic support to the teachers. The BDO/CEO and BRCC manage the EGS schools at the block level.

In Kunjra Khodra, VEC had yet to be formed when the research team visited, whereas the other three villages had functioning VECs. The Sarpanch of the Village Panchayat had an important role to play as money was channelled from the block office through her/him.

The opinion of block officials about the EGS teachers differed from block to block. The BEO responsible for Kari Talai, was of the opinion that 90 per cent of the EGS teachers were functioning properly whereas the CEO and BRCC responsible for Kunjra Khodra were of the view that "the teachers are not able to fulfil their responsibilities. They don't open the schools regularly and don't teach using the methods of teaching taught in the training. Further, they are rarely able to work with the VEC and get its support." The CEO attributed the halfhearted performance of the teachers to their lack of devotion (probably due to the meagre salary they are given). In both the blocks, these officials strongly favoured increasing the EGS teachers' salaries.

The expectations of EGS teachers, from these officials, included—timely payment of salaries, resolving local problems, clearance of bills without delay, receiving textbooks and teaching-learning material on time and getting the respect they deserve.

The CEO and BRC of Nalcha block (village Kunjra Khodra) stated that they received

complaints about the teachers from the Sarpanch, the community, the supervisor and other teachers. These were generally related to the school not functioning regularly, teachers not coming on time or not teaching well. The CEO and the BRC felt that half the time these complaints were politically motivated.

### **Teacher, School and Community**

In all the four villages, the Sarpanch and the community had raised the demand for an EGS school, and made a list of children of school-going age, selected the location for the school, helped in the construction of a new building for the school (as in Kari Talai) or provided accommodation for the school. According to the teachers, these schools ran on time and regularly.

The teacher in Kunjra Khodra lived three kilometres away, and teacher in Kari Talai, nine kilometres away from the school. In Kunjra Khodra, school timings set by the BRC did not suit the community which wanted the school to start at 7 a.m. instead of 11 a.m. Community members visited the school occasionally and on 26 January and 15 August. In all four schools the community was satisfied with the work of the teachers who had good relationship with them.

### **Image of para teachers**

All the teachers of the four schools had a good image in the community. The teachers also felt that they received due respect from them. However, the block officials in Nalcha (Kunjra Khodra) and Obedullaganj (Kari Talai), felt that EGS teachers didn't get the respect they deserved because of their poor qualifications compared to government teachers, but believed that teachers who worked well received help and appreciation at every level (village, block or district).

## Government Primary Schools (*Shaskiya Prathamik Vidyalayas*)

### The Setting

Government primary schools (GPS) cater largely to the ST, OBC and SC population; however, there is a marked presence of the more privileged castes who belong to the general category. The population of these villages varies from 270 in Sunora Khiriya to 645 in Khongha.

The exact number of literate people is not known in any of villages under study. Only one village had a middle school which indicates that children of this school may not belong to the first generation of learners. The schools, except Khongha, are also not located in remote areas. Apart from Khongha, the other three have electricity or even telephones. The main occupations in all four villages are agriculture, casual labour and animal husbandry.

### The Children

The children who were interviewed in EGS

schools were in the age group of six to nine years, as the scheme came into operation with effect from 1.1.99 and the schools were started with Class I (and no higher classes) only. In GPS Schools, children of Class V were interviewed, who were in the age group of nine-years plus. Therefore, the nature of work they did at home and in the fields differed slightly. But these children also were equally burdened with household chores, agriculture and work related to animal husbandry. Two children in Jirapura were found to work as wage labour during the soyabean picking season.

Children of these schools also liked playing, studying and watching TV (as in Sunora Khiriya). Others said they enjoyed driving a bullock cart, visiting a fair and going out. What they disliked most was doing household chores, cattle grazing and pounding paddy.

Most parents seemed concerned about the education of their children and tried to ensure that their child went to school

Table 2.25 Government primary schools selected for the study

Sr. No.	Village where school is located	Nearest EGS school	Distance in kilometres	Block	District
1	Jirapura	Kunjra Khodra	2	Nalcha	Dhar
2	Basgahan	Kari Talai	4	Obedullaganj	Raisen
3	Sunora Khiriya	Majra Pahari	2	Tikamgarh	Tikamgarh
4	Khongha	Bhimshila	4	Manora	Raigarh

Table 2.26 Caste-wise break-up of the population

Sr. No.	Village	Population	Scheduled Castes	Other Backward Castes	Scheduled Tribes	General
1	Jirapura	540	30	-	510	-
2	Basgahan	300	-	-	230	70
3	Sunora Khiriya	270	-	262	-	8
4	Khongha	645	-	-	570	75
<b>Total &amp; Percentage</b>		<b>1755</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>1310</b>	<b>153</b>
		(100)	(17.09)	(14.29)	(74.64)	(8.71)

## Government Primary Schools

### Madhya Pradesh

- The children were overburdened with work at home and in the fields.
- Out of the seven teachers in the four schools, four of were matriculates, five had studied upto higher secondary and two were graduates.
- Corporal punishment was commonly used by them. All the teachers complained about their involvement in a large number of non-official work, like assisting with surveys, campaigns, etc.
- Appropriate multigrade and multilevel teaching practices were required in all four schools. However, the teachers were neither aware nor equipped for this. Except for one teacher, who used innovative approaches, none of the others prepared any lesson plans before going to the class.
- As a result of the groundwork of DPER, VECs were found to be operational and active in all the villages. VEC members were active in motivating parents to send children to school, help to repair the school building and organise school events etc.
- The Cluster Academic Coordinator helps to provide academic support to the teachers. The administrative aspects are looked after by the block level officials viz., BRC and BEO. The support mechanism of BRC and CRC have been created under DPER.



regularly. They would also talk to the teacher about their child's progress. Where the parents were illiterate, they observed the child when s/he was studying at home and concluded that s/he was making some progress. Parents said they did find a difference in their child ever since s/he had started going to school—they could now read, kept herself/himself clean, had developed some manners and could articulate better. But there were other parents who also felt that they saw no change whatsoever in their child since s/he had begun going to school.

When asked what they would like to do after receiving education, most children said "teach". Some others mentioned "any job" or professions like doctor, shop-keeper and going into agriculture.

Most parents saw in the education of boys a possibility of their getting a job, but in case of girls they felt that education would get them a "better home in marriage". Children were found to be more concrete about their aspirations than their parents. Girls were married off between 15-18 years and boys between 15-20 years. The exposure of children was confined to visits to a *mela*, a *haat*, or a visit to relatives.

### Teacher Profile

The average age of the teachers was 40 years, varying from 32 to 54 years. The longest teaching experience a teacher had was 25 years and the shortest, five years. Only two of the seven teachers belonged to privileged castes and the others to STs, SCs and OBCs. The educational qualification of five teachers was Higher Secondary and two were MAs in Sunora Khiriya. All of these teachers had a family income, besides their own pay, varying from Rs. 2000/- to 5000/-. Out of seven teachers, four had access to TV.

### Academic Inputs

DIETs are responsible for conducting in-service training of GPS teachers, under the DPEP programme. All the seven teachers of the four schools had undergone two or more of the training programmes, described in the table 2.27.

Despite these training programmes, corporal punishment continued to be an essential characteristic of the teaching-learning process in all the four schools. As one teacher in Sunora Khiriya put it: "it is only through beating that you can inculcate in them a sense of fear which forces them to learn."

### The School

The oldest of the four schools started functioning in December 1948 in Khonga. This was followed by the one in Bansgahan in 1960, Jirapura in 1977 and Sunora Khiriya in 1987. The schools in Bansgahan and Sunora Khiriya had buildings that were in relatively good shape but the school in Khongha was in a dilapidated condition, and in Jirapura it leaked during the rains. None of the four schools had adequate space to meet teaching-learning requirements. (See table 2.28).

Drinking water was available only in Bansgahan, whereas elsewhere the children had to walk to a hand-pump or well, 30 to 50 metres away.

Cleaning of the school premises was done by the staff or the children, or both. The school timings are from 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., with a recess for half an hour in between. There is no school calendar. The holidays are decided periodically by the administration and the school is informed accordingly. The local festivals and needs are not taken into account when these holidays are decided.

Table 2.27 DIET teacher-training programme

	Training's nomenclature	Objective	Training curriculum fixed, or need-based	Duration	When is the training held	Compulsory Yes/No	Method of evaluation	Is the trainee informed about her/his performance
Phase I	Seekhna-Sikhana Package at least once a year or maximum twice a year	Teach children in an entertaining manner and make teaching 'saral aur sugam'	Fixed but room for flexibility; can be changed according to need	12 days	Summer Vacations	Yes	By asking trainees orally and/or written	No
Phase II	-do-	-do-	-do-	6 days	October/ November	-do-	-do-	-do-
	Science and Mathematics	Solving subject based problems	-do-	6 days	Between July and September	No	-do-	-do-

Teachers in Jirapura and Sunora Khiriya mentioned that they were satisfied with the quantity and quality of TLM. If they needed anything more, they could purchase it from the contingency fund. But in Bangsahan and Khongha, the teachers found the quantity of TLM inadequate and the quality unsatisfactory.

There were no library books in two schools, while the two other schools had 50-60 books in the library. But it appeared to the research team that children seldom made use of these books.

### Classroom Processes

Teachers in Jirapura, Bangsahan and Sunora Khiriya were not aware of an appropriate sitting arrangement, which is necessary for effective multigrade teaching, nor did they care to create a proper environment for

learning, let alone take care of the other basics needed for multigrade teaching. As a result, when a teacher was taking two or three classes at a time, and in the same room, the whole learning situation looked and sounded chaotic.

The teachers mentioned that the children were given some work to do at home each day, usually regarding what was taught in class that day. The assignment was written on the blackboard or explained to the children verbally.

Homework usually included *path nakal* (copying from the lesson), writing numbers in serial order and answering questions given at the end of a lesson. The research team observed that a teacher ticked '✓' without even glancing at the copy. Another teacher, while checking a

Table 2.25 Availability of space in schools

Item	Jirapura	Bangsahan	Sunora Khiriya	Khongha
Teacher-Student Ratio	2:80	2:89	2:50	5:45
Space Available	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient

little girl's copy pulled her hair and hit her while pointing out a mistake.

The assessment of the academic levels of the children is done twice a year through semiannual and annual examinations. The question papers are prepared at the cluster level and the children have to give written answers.

In Sunora Khiriya the semiannual examinations of Class V were being conducted, when the research team observed to their dismay, that not only did the teachers help the children with the answers but also asked bright students to fill up the answer papers of those who could not answer. On the first day of observation, the children were allowed to take the answer papers home in order to complete them.

Only in Jirapura were parents informed, through progress reports, about the performance of their wards studying in Classes III to V. In the other three schools they were either not informed or informed informally.

#### Classroom culture and pedagogy

The following excerpts from the observation reports of the research teams throws some light on the classroom culture and pedagogical aspects involved in the teaching-learning processes in Sunora Khiriya and Khonga.

##### Excerpt, Khonga

"As soon as the teacher entered, he showed picture cards of birds and animals to the students and asked them to segregate these, adding, 'if you find a tree, separate it also.' Children did this quickly. The teacher now collected the cards and showed the children one card and asked, 'What is this?' A child answered 'Murga' (Cock). The teacher continued this

exercise for some time asking some more questions such as 'Where does it live? What does it eat?', etc.

"Next he told the children that '*aaj hum mar ke bare mein padhenge*' (today we will learn about the peacock) and then asked the children, '*mor kis mausam mein nachta hain?*' (in which season does the peacock dance?) The children could not reply to this question. He then asked them, 'Will you dance? I will show you how a peacock dances'. He hung a picture card showing a peacock on the wall and asked 'What is written on this card?' The children replied 'Mor' (peacock).

(It was observed that the children were listening with rapt attention and were deeply involved in the activity along with the teacher.)

"Next, he said '*mor ek kavita hai, gana hai*' (we are going to recite a poem on the peacock). He called the children, who collected around his table. He began reciting the poem and the children repeated it after him. He told them '*hum apko bolna aur nachana sikhayenge*' (I will teach you to recite and dance). On the blackboard is written, Lesson 4, difficult word—*pankh, gagan, nabh*, etc. The children were now reading the poem from the book and the teacher was particular about the pronunciation of difficult words. He asked the children to individually recite the poem, which other children repeated after the child who was reading aloud.

"Next, he told the children to close their books and recited the poem with actions. Children followed suit. (He hasn't yet explained the meaning of the poem.) Dancing and singing the poem was repeated once more. Now they stopped and sat in their places. The teacher now began to

explain the meaning of the poem. Next, after some questions, he switched over to the meaning of difficult words which he first asks children to attempt and then himself explained the meaning providing a context.”

(From the classroom observations of Research Team, Raigarh)

*Excerpt, Sunora Khiriya*

(Observation time: 11:10 a.m. to 1:05 p.m.)

On the board is written:

Date 10.11.98, class 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Subject = ‘Paryavaran’

Class = 3 ‘Disha’

Class = 5, ‘Bharat Ki Jalwayu’

Children Present = Total 27 Students

“Now teacher writes on the blackboard:

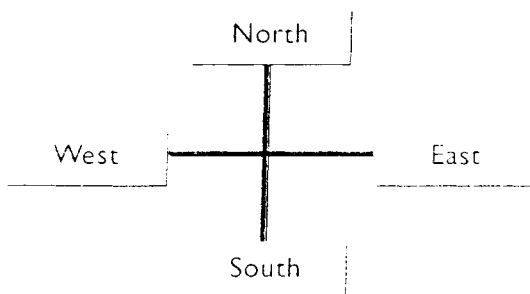
(There are a total of 30 children present. 15 in Classes I and II, eight in Class III and seven in Classes IV and V).

Teacher: *Jahan se sooraj nikle wo purub, peecche pashchim, baanye uttar, daayen dakshin hoti hai”*

(Where the sun rises from is the east, the west is behind that, to the left is the north and to the right is the south).

Teacher : Children of Class III write ‘disha’ (the word ‘direction’)

Teacher: (Addresses Class V students) You didn’t buy the books? I had told you to.



“Class V students are looking at Lesson 8 at the chart depicting India’s climate.

“Three villagers come into the class and start talking to the teacher. They stay there for one-and-a-half hours then go out taking the teacher with them. The villagers and the teacher return at 1 p.m. The teacher asks the students, ‘have you seen the granite factory Tikamgarh wali (at Tiakmgarh)?’ and then speaks a sentence or two about the factory.

“Three girls and two boys are talking to each other. Ten to 12 children are already out of the classroom. The teacher is relaxing. Six children are talking behind him. At this point, a man in a loin cloth comes into the class room after having a bath at the hand-pump, and starts talking to the teacher in a low voice. After a little while, the teacher tells the students to go for lunch and the children leave.

The above two excerpts reflect a sharp qualitative difference in the teaching-learning processes/activities conducted in the four Government primary schools (GPS) of the sample. While no generalisations are possible, it can be safely said that teachers in these schools largely reflect the following characteristics in classroom transactions.

- Corporal punishment was freely used as an instrument to discipline and force children to learn.
- Corporal punishment increased in proportion to a high teacher-student ratio.
- The teaching-learning process was largely book-based.
- Children’s knowledge base was, by and large, not taken into account while transacting the curriculum.

- Teachers' did not feel the necessity of preparing any teaching plan before classroom transactions.
- Classroom transactions were generally more of a monologue than a participatory dialogue with children.
- There was an emphasis on rote learning.
- There was no conscious attempt to promote peer learning.
- Teachers' interaction with children was confined to classroom transactions only.
- Often teachers did not care to know what, and how much children understood of a lesson.

### School Management

GPS management is a three tier structure. At the grassroots level there is the VEC and the Village Panchayat. The primary schools are divided into sector clusters and at the cluster level there is a *Sankul Prabhari* and a *Shaikshik Samanvayak*, (academic coordinator). They look after the administrative and academic aspects of the school, respectively. At the block level, the Janpad office deals with the administrative aspect.

The VEC members are selected on the basis of awareness and active interest in educational activities. The VEC looks into the issues and problems of the school. The members have been instrumental in motivating the villagers to send their children to school and in creating awareness about education in the village. They have also carried out repair and construction activities in the school. The VEC not only gave monetary support, but also contributed labour in the construction and repair of the school.

The teachers often elicited the help of the VEC during national campaigns such as the

census and while conducting surveys. The Cluster-Academic Coordinator (CAC) helped to manage the school, but support was only related to providing academic support to the teachers. The Block Resource Coordinator (BRC) helped in the management of the school. The administrative officials met the teachers during cluster level and monthly meetings, during field visits every month or whenever the need arose. In addition, the officials met them when the teachers came to collect their salary.

### Teacher, School and Community

The community members in all the villages didn't exactly know the school timings but had a general idea of when the school opened and closed. They said that the teachers came to school regularly and stayed for most of the time. They also felt that "school main padhai acchi hoti hai" (the teaching at the school is good). Most teachers also participated in the socio-cultural functions of the community.

Community members of the school visited the school occasionally, but on national festivals they came in large numbers and contributed in distributing sweets and prizes to children. Members of the community were also aware of the school's problems such as leaking roofs, shortage of space, no boundary walls, lack of a playground, etc.

### Image of government teacher

The community in all four villages had, by and large, a good opinion of GPS teachers. The teachers also felt that they received due respect from the community, but there were a few who believed that the respect they got was due to their personal behaviour and relations with the community, and not in their capacity as a teacher.

## Shiksha Karmi Yojna

### The Setting

The following Government primary schools, where Shiksha Karmis are working, were selected and the present analysis is based on the data collected about them:

Table 2.29 **School location**

Sr. No.	Village/School	Block	District
1.	Neelgarh	Obedullaganj	Raisen
2.	Harpura	Tikamgarh	Tikamgarh
3.	Siloda Khurd	Nalcha	Dhar
4.	Sogda	Manora	Raigarh

The school in Neelgarh is located in a remote place, those in Harpura and Sogda in relatively remote areas, while the one in Siloda Khurd is just 2.5 kilometres from the metalled road. This village is also more developed than the other three in terms of having electricity, development works and a health facility.

More importantly, there is a huge industrial complex in Pritampura at a distance of 25 kilometres from it. In the other three villages, excepting Harpura, one or more of the following schemes were implemented—Indra Awas Yojna, Jawahar Rojgar Yojna and the Jeevan Dhara Yojna. The population of these villages varies from 145 in Neelgarh to 981 in Sogda.

As table 2.30 shows, these schools also provide access to education to the children of deprived sections of the society, as do the EGS and Alternative Schools. This is due to the fact that these schools are also located in blocks and areas where the population has a similar social composition.

In Siloda, there is a distinct caste divide between the Brahmins (24) and Patels (235, who belong to OBC) on the one side and Harijans (SC) and Adivasis (ST) on the other. The following table suggests that not all children belong to the first generation of learners in these villages:

Table 2.31 **Literacy rate**

Sr. No.	Village	Population	Literate	Percentage of Literates
1.	Neelgarh	145	57	39.31
2.	Harpura	276	30	10.86
3.	Siloda Khurd	421	60	14.25
4.	Sogda	981	Not known	-

The major occupations in Neelgarh, Harpura and Sogda are agriculture and *majdoori* (wage labour) and also animal husbandry in Siloda Khurd. The languages spoken in these villages are Hindi and the local dialect—Gondi in Neelgarh, Bundelkhandi in Harpur, Malawi in Siloda Khurd and Sadri and Uraon in Sogda.

Table 2.30 **Caste-wise break up of each village**

Sr. No.	Village/School	Population	SC	ST	OBC	General	Muslims
1.	Neelgarh	145	-	137	6	2	
2.	Harpura	276	-	100	176	-	
3.	Siloda Khurd	421	126	36	235	24	
4.	Sogda	981	-	966	9	6	
Total & Percentage		1823	126	1239	426	32	
		(100)	(6.91)	(67.96)	(23.36)	(1.75)	

## **Shiksha Karmi Yojna Madhya Pradesh**

- The schools selected catered to children of deprived sections, like the EGS and Alternative Schools.
- Of the six Shiksha Karmis included in the sample, three were higher secondary pass, two were graduates and one a postgraduate. The Shiksha Karmis were getting monthly salaries between Rs. 800/- and Rs. 2300/-. There were only two regular teachers in these four schools.
- The Shiksha Karmi who belonged to the same village in which the school was located, demonstrated greater concern for the children's education.
- The Shiksha Karmis had received an initial training for 12 days followed by one or more in-service training programmes of 6-12 days.
- The classroom transaction methods used by Shiksha Karmis and regular teachers were similar—the instruction was teacher-centered and book-based with emphasis on rote learning. The teachers did not prepare daily, weekly or monthly teaching plans. Corporal punishment was used in all schools. However, one or two teachers had greater initiative and understanding of an interactive classroom culture.
- The VECs were found to be active in all the four villages and involved in the functioning of the schools.
- The community had a positive image of both Shiksha Karmis and regular teachers. However, the officials rated the performance of Shiksha Karmis higher than regular teachers.

## The Children

The life of children in these villages is overburdened with agricultural work, household chores and work related to animal husbandry. Some children in Neelgarh were also engaged in seasonal *majdoori* which affected their schooling.

Children in all four villages found time to play games such as *kho-kho*, *kabaddi*, football, etc. Besides games and studying, some students also liked watching TV, especially the programme *Jai Hanuman*, dancing and bathing in the dam (Sogda); what they disliked most was handling cow-dung, cattle grazing, fetching water from a considerable distance, washing dishes, etc. One child said that he did not like to work as a wages labourer in the fields of others.

Children's aspirations varied according to their exposure and the developmental stage of the village. For example, in Siloda Khurd, children wanted to become doctors or teachers; in Sogda, one child wanted to become a police inspector so that he could arrest thieves and dacoits, but in the other villages most children aspired to become teachers. In Neelgarh and Harpura, the children's aspiration level was low and limited to farming, shopkeeping or doing some job, although a few children did mention that they wanted to become teachers also.

Again, parents' aspirations for children in Siloda Khurd were precise and higher than in the other villages. They wanted to educate their children, some even up to B.A. or M.A. level. However, daughters were sought to be educated up to Class X or XII at best, after which they were to be married off. Parents in the other three villages wanted to educate their children

in the hope of their getting a job. They didn't seem particularly concerned about the education of girls—"jahan tak padhegi, padhayenge, phir shadi kar denge." (We will allow her to study till she wants to, then we will get her married off). Girls were married off between 10-18 years and boys between 12-22 years, depending upon the social group the child belonged to.

In all the four villages, parents showed concern for schooling of their wards to varying degrees.

In Siloda Khurd, the majority of parents were keenly concerned about the education of their children whereas in the other three villages, the concern of most parents was limited to sending their child to school. Some detained the child at home if there was some pressing work to be done. Many, being illiterate, rarely bothered to find out how their child was progressing at school.

The exposure of children in all four villages was limited to visits to the *haat*, a *mela* (fair) or a visit to a nearby town/city. However, TV in a few homes did provide a wider exposure but to what effect is a matter of study.

## Teacher Profile: Shiksha Karmis

Out of the six Shiksha Karmis selected for the study, four were male and two female. Both female Shiksha Karmis were 28 years old—one a graduate and the other in the second year of her B.A.. The male Shiksha Karmis varied from 25 to 34 years in age, and their qualifications were up to Class X or XII, but for one who had done his M.A. and was a Brahmin. All the other Shiksha Karmis belonged to the SCs, STs or OBCs as the table above, shows.



Table 2.32 Teacher profile-Shiksha Karmi schools

Sr. No.	Village	Teacher	M/F	Age	Qualification	Castes
1.	Neelgarh	T-I	M	29	Hr.Secondary	ST
		T-II	-	-	-	-
2.	Harpura	T-I	M	32	M.A.	General
		T-II	M	25	Hr.Secondary	OBC
3.	Siloda Khurd	T-I	F	28	B.A. (IInd Year)	SC
		T-II	-	-	-	-
4.	Sogda	T-I	F	28	B.A.	ST
		T-II	M	34	Hr.Secondary	SC

Only one Shiksha Karmi belonged to the village in which he taught (Neelgarh). All the others had to cover a distance that ranged from two to six kilometres to reach school. Of the six Shiksha Karmis, only the one from Neelgarh belonged to the first generation of learners, and his family, as well as that of the Shiksha Karmi in Harpura, fell below the poverty line.

According to the Shiksha Karmis a small family (husband, wife and two children) would need Rs. 1000/- (Neelgarh) to Rs. 4000/- (Siloda Khurd) to eke out a simple living. As mentioned earlier, Siloda Khurd is a relatively developed village and accordingly the expectations of the Shiksha Karmis here were high.

The Shiksha Karmi of Neelgarh came from a modest family (ST) and seemed content with Rs. 1000/-. These Shiksha Karmis were getting a salary between Rs. 800/- (Sogda) and Rs. 2300/- (Neelgarh, Harpur and Siloda Khurd). Thus, excepting Sogda, their salaries were within the range of their expectations as there were also other sources of income such as agriculture.

Excepting the two female Shiksha Karmis, who were busy before and after school, in household chores and looking after their children, the male Shiksha Karmis, with the

exception of the one in Sogda, spent most of their time (when not at school) doing agricultural work. In such a situation it is very likely that the 'Shiksha Karm' (the job of teaching) of the Shiksha Karmi may not get the attention it deserves.

Out of the six teachers, only one in Siloda Khurd mentioned that she prepared a lesson plan and spent some time on 'self study'. She also had access to TV.

As far as aspirations were concerned, three of the six Shiksha Karmis wanted to become regular government teachers, two wanted "some good job" which they did not specify, and one did not reply. The views on education of the Shiksha Karmis from Harpura, Siloda Khurd and Sogda were narrowly focused, but all the six Shiksha Karmis were keenly aware of the social problems and their worldview reflected logical consistency.

The Shiksha Karmi in Neelgarh demonstrated concern for the children's education, as he met the parents regularly and definitely when a child failed to come to school. This is probably due to the fact that he belonged to the same village. This concern was not visible among the other Shiksha Karmis.

### **Academic Inputs**

Of the six Shiksha Karmis, the one in Sogda is a BTI (this is a two-year training for primary school teachers); the two in Neelgarh and Siloda Khurd had received only one initial training session of 10-12 days immediately after appointment; and the other four Shiksha Karmis received one or more (up to a maximum of three) in-service training programmes that lasted from six to 12 days each.

The objectives of these were to train teachers in activity-based learning (*Seekhna Sikhana* Package), preparing model lessons and also the TLM required for it, child psychology, child-centred teaching and evaluation of children. Shiksha Karmis and regular teachers undergo the same in-service training.

### **Teacher Profile: Regular Teacher**

There were only two regular teachers in the sample—one male teacher in Siloda Khurd and one female teacher in Sogda—belonging to OBCs and STs, respectively. Both were post-graduates. The male teacher was 35 years old and the female teacher 25 years old.

The teacher in Siloda Khurd and the teacher in Sogda had to cover a distance of three and seven kilometres, respectively, to reach the school.

The teacher in Siloda Khurd was also engaged in the following money earning activities—he ran a flour mill, engaged in agriculture, sold milk, and gave a tractor on hire. According to him a small family (husband, wife and two children) would need Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 6000/- to live a simple life.

The teacher in Sogda estimated this

amount between Rs. 4000/- and Rs. 5000/-. Both the teachers get a salary between Rs. 4500/- and Rs. 5500/-.

The teacher in Siloda Khurd also showed more concern than the other teacher, for the education of the students, probably due to the fact that the latter lived in a village seven kilometres away, which left little time for her to interact with parents and the community. However, the teacher claimed that she got worried when a child absented herself/himself for a week or so and then immediately sent a message to the parents.

The teacher in Siloda Khurd aspired to the post of a lecturer but the teacher in Sogda only wanted a pay hike. There was clarity in their views on educational issues but their understanding of social problems lacked a perspective.

### **Academic Inputs**

DIETs are responsible for the training of regular primary school teachers. Both the teachers, in Siloda Khurd and Sogda, had received training twice or thrice including the *Seekhna Sikhana* Package. Detail of the DIET training programmes is given on the facing page.

### **The School**

The GPS in Sogda was opened in 1963 followed by Siloda Khurd (1973), Harpura (1995) and Neelgarh (1996). Three of the four schools had concrete buildings with two rooms and one office-cum-store. The school in Siloda Khurd had one big hall and a store room.

All the buildings had one verandah, excepting Sogda which had two verandahs. All the schools had drinking water facility within the school or very close to it.

Table 2.33 Teacher training plan

Training nomenclature	Objectives	Training curriculum fixed or need-based	Duration	Training schedule	Compulsory Yes/No	Evaluation process	Is trainee informed of evaluation?
Approach based training (1995-96)	Teaching methodology	Conducted by Eklavya (discontinued)	7 days	-	Yes	Informal and through questionnaire	No
Competency based training (1996-97)	How to teach children keeping in view the competency goals	Fixed	10 days	After one year	yes	-	No
'Seekhna Sikhana' Package class I and II (1997-98)	Interaction: Child to Child, Child to Teachers; T/L aids	Fixed	12 days	After one year	yes	Informal	No
I to IV (1998-99)	Multigrade teaching	Fixed (refer "Disha")	12 days	After one year	yes	"Informal evaluation is meaningless without analysis" -DIET DHAR	No

Space for holding classes and the number of teachers (including Shiksha Karmis) were not sufficient to teach each class separately as table 2.34 shows.

Table 2.34 Availability of classrooms and teacher-student ratio

Item	Neelgarh	Harpura	Siloda Khurd	Sogda
Teacher-Student Ratio	2:46	2:66	2:72	3:161
Availability of Classrooms	2	2	1	7
Number of Shiksha Karmis	2	2	1	2
Number of Regular Teachers	-	-	1	1

The teachers in Neelgarh and Harpura found the prescribed TLM adequate and were satisfied with its quality. They, however, felt that some games should also be provided. They pointed out that if they

needed items like *tat-patti* (Neelgarh), they purchased them from the fund available for the purpose. The schools in Siloda Khurd and Sogda were neither satisfied with the items prescribed—for these were insufficient—nor with their quality. A teacher in Sogda complained that items were not supplied even when they demanded them. But, as another teacher pointed out, each school received Rs. 2000/- and each teacher Rs. 500/- (for preparing innovative TLM) which could be used for buying required materials.

All government schools run for six-and-a-half hours with a recess of 30-45 minutes in between. The school calendar is decided by the Education Department. In Harpura, Sogda and Siloda Khurd the school timetable was prepared in consultation with all the teachers. However, in Neelgarh the timetable was decided on daily basis.

Table 2.35 **A comparative look at the qualifications of Shiksha Karmis and regular/ government school teachers**

Sr. Village No.	Teacher	Shiksha Karmis					Regular/ Govt. Teachers					
		M/F	Age	Caste	Qualification	Year of joining	M/F	Age	Caste	Qualification	Year of joining	
1. Neelgarh	T-I	M	29	ST	XII	1996	-	-	-	-	-	
	T-II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2. Harpura	T-I	M	32	Brahmin	M.A.	July 1998	-	-	-	-	-	
	T-II	M	25	OBC	Hr.Sec.	Aug. 1996	-	-	-	-	-	
3. Siloda Khurd	T-I	F	28	SC	B.A. IInd Year	Aug. 1998	M	35	OBC	M.Com.	July 1993	
	T-II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
4. Sogda	T-I	F	28	ST	B.A.	Nov. 1997	F	25	ST	M.A.	October 1997	
	T-II	M	34	SC	Hr.Sec.	Feb. 1997	-	-	-	-	-	

In Neelgarh, Siloda Khurd and Sogda there was a library with 20-40 books which were not used by the children. One teacher in Neelgarh said that she used these books for reciting poems to children or reading a story to them.

In Siloda Khurd and Sogda the cleaning of the school premises was done by the children alone.

### Classroom Processes

In all the four schools all teachers (excepting one in Sogda who taught all subjects to Class V only) had to take more than one class at a time. This required a thorough knowledge and skills of multigrade teaching which these teachers didn't seem to possess as we shall see in the next section on classroom culture and pedagogy.

No teacher in these schools—whether Shiksha Karmi or regular—prepared a daily, weekly or monthly lesson or teaching plan. The progress of children was also not recorded daily, weekly or monthly. However, a teacher in Sogda stated that they had just received a book which told them which lessons to teach in which month.

However, if this plan was followed, there would be an inbuilt pressure on the teacher to achieve this target irrespective of the level of learning achieved by the students.

In all the four schools homework was given to students of Class III and above, by all teachers including Shiksha Karmis. However, homework was not checked regularly by them with the exception of a teacher or two (e.g. Neelgarh and possibly Harpura). Nor were the students told individually what their mistakes were and how these could be corrected. There were a few exceptions to this, though.

Learning achievement was assessed in all four schools quarterly, half-yearly and annually. In Neelgarh, Siloda Khurd and Sogda, monthly tests were also given. Parents were informed about their child's progress in an informal manner in Neelgarh and Harpura; and elsewhere, by sending a report card or the marked test paper to the parents which they were supposed to sign and return. Interestingly, there was a period of 40 minutes in the timetable reserved for attending to the

problems of weaker students in Harpura School.

### Classroom culture and pedagogy *Shiksha Karmis*

The research team observed a Shiksha Karmi teacher, who taught Mathematics and Science to the children of Class V in Siloda Khurd, for five hours.

After recess at 2:30, the bell rang five times. The class was held in a small verandah at the back of the school building. (Even though a building built by DPEP, within the campus, was lying vacant. It was being used as an office of CHT or for holding meetings which were not too frequent).

The students came and sat down—girls and boys in separate rows. There was hardly any space for movement. The children could not move or turn freely, without touching the child in front or at the back or sideways. Only one girl child who was sitting (big for her age) had stretched out her legs and spread her books. There was a blackboard which was absolutely unusable as anything written on it looked illegible.

“Teacher walks into the class with a register in her hand. Children get up to wish her. She responds and asks them to sit down. Now she stands behind the desk. Teacher: *‘ganit ki kitab nikala’* (take out your mathematics books). Then all of a sudden she asks the children, *‘kya padhana chahate ho?’* (what do you want to study?). Without waiting for a reply she takes a book from a child sitting in the front and writes *‘path 8’* (Lesson 8) on the blackboard which is absolutely illegible.

“Looking at the book the teacher speaks one word and the children repeat after

her. Teacher then asks, *‘Rani ke mamaji kahan rahte hain?’* (Where does Rani’s uncle live?). (In fact, lesson 8 is titled *‘Rani ke mamaji’*; Rani’s Uncle). The children do not answer.

“The teacher continues, *‘Panchmarhi. Panchmarhi kahan hai, Rani ke mamaji sena mein hain.* (Where is Panchmarhi? Rani’s uncle is in the armed forces). Teacher, *‘mamaji sab jante ho?’* (Do you all know who a *mamaji* (uncle) is?)’ children: *‘han’* (Yes). Teacher asks few questions from the text. Only one girl who is fairly big (and has repeated the class twice) answers. The teacher does not stop her.

“Now the teacher writes some words and their meanings on the board. Some children quickly take out their copies and start writing. But the teacher stops them from writing and asks them to look at the blackboard. She explains the meaning of each of these words but some children are distracted by the noise coming from Class V. The teaching of Class V overpowers the teaching of Class III, and vice-versa.

“The teacher now reads one sentence and then asks questions on the basis of that sentence. She also tells the children, *‘ungli rakho’* (Place your finger—this was probably to help students read each word as they went along). After a pause she also asks the children whether they have written a letter—“Imagine Rani is writing a letter from Sogda—what will you write at the beginning of the letter? *Ungli rakhti jana, Saraswati* (name of a child).” No one can reply to what the teacher asks except the older girl child (who has repeated the class twice).

“The teacher continues to take the lesson in a monotonous tone, sometimes looking up from the book to look at the children.

teacher asked the students to memorise the lesson at home. Children are distracted and sitting idle—some play, some talk and some look at the teacher.

“In the Social Studies period for Class V, she is repeating the previous lesson. She revised the lesson by asking questions from the students. She has words of encouragement for children who give the right answer. One girl child replies in Sadri (the local language) and the teacher points out ‘*Hindi mein bolo*’ (Speak in Hindi). After the question-answer session, she continues reading from the text. She goes out and comes back after 20 minutes. Peer interaction is observed during this period. A sense of responsibility and self-initiative is seen among two children who take out their books and quietly read the text. Copying as an activity is also observed— one girl copies the homework from another girl. Two children talk to each other in low voices and one looks out of the class.

“The teacher explains the various elements present in food—protein, fat, vitamins and carbohydrates. She is able to link these elements to the children’s daily lives by informing which vegetable and lentils have the above-mentioned food elements. Before finishing the lesson the teacher asks the students ‘*samjhe?*’ (have you understood?). There is no response from the children and it was observed that most children did not follow the lesson. Before leaving the class the teacher asks the students to memorise the food elements as she is going to ask questions in class the next day.”

*Excerpt, Siloda Khurd*

“The teacher begins the class by checking the homework of all the classes. Then he gives some work to each class. He tells

Class II ‘*naya wala path padho,*’ (read the new lesson) to Class III students he says ‘*Teen Vichitra*’ wala path pado’ (read the lesson: *Teen Vichitra*’. Then he goes over to Class I students, and helps them to write certain words and alphabets. He also uses some picture cards with their names printed on the back, and asks them questions. He then asks them to copy the words (written on the picture card) on the slate. He then goes to Class II and begins the discussions based on the knowledge-base of the child. The questions he asks are- ‘*nav main baithe ho? dar lagta hai?*’ (Have you ever sat on a boat, were you scared?) etc.

“He then recites a poem on the topic and also demonstrates to the children how to make a paper boat. He links the discussion to a variety of topics—what do we call a man who rows a boat, who rides an elephant or a horse, etc. He then picked some *sanyuktakshar* and asks the children to say similar sounding words (*ullu, lallu,* etc.). He asks the children why a boat floats and then explains the principle to them. He then asks children to collect small objects and to make the list of the objects, dividing them into those that float and those that don’t. He gives the same exercise for homework.

“Then he moves on to Class III where he reads the lesson and explains passages and tough words. He waits for their answer and uses words of appreciation when they get it right. He links up the discussion with children’s experiences at the end of the chapter, which provokes them to think. However, during the class he pays attention to some children who are academically bright and from the dominant community. The children from the Scheduled Castes do not get as much attention and soon lose interest.

“In Mathematics, the teacher uses the board to draw geometrical shapes and gives their mathematical names. He asks the children to copy from the board onto their copies. He explains the circle, triangle, square and rectangle to them. The class is interrupted by the *Sankul Prabhari* who comes in and calls the teacher and starts scolding the teacher loudly in the presence of the children. After he leaves, the teacher comes back, but does not continue with the lesson. He seems visibly upset and asks the children read their Hindi books.

“In class, the children sit in-groups of two to four at a low table in the classroom. They face the board whenever the teacher teaches. Class III sits closest to the board. Behind them sit Classes II and I respectively. The teacher moves in between the tables while teaching. He even sits down at the table to teach or explain something to the children. The teacher does not raise his voice much and a look is enough to quieten the children.”

There is a marked difference between the above two government teachers in their pedagogical understanding, including the use of TLM and the creation of an appropriate classroom culture.

The teacher in Siloda Khurd was taking three Classes—I, II, III—yet was able to keep the children busy. His method of teaching was activity-based and interactive. It involved children in the teaching-learning process. What was disconcerting was his apathy to the children of the Scheduled Castes.

The teacher in Sogda, seemed yet to develop a good teaching methodology and concern for classroom culture, even given the limitations she taught under. The following features emerge from

classroom observations:

- There was a lack of interaction and absence of pedagogical dialogue between the teacher and student.
- In most instances the teacher asked questions which only some children, chose to or, were able to, answer.
- Rote learning was emphasised.
- Children did not get an opportunity to think imaginatively or creatively.
- Children did not ask questions.
- The teacher did not check her/his lesson.
- Hardly any peer interaction was visible in the lady teacher's class.
- Questions asked were mostly text-based.

### School Management

There is a three-tier structure for the management of the Government primary schools. At the village level there is the VEC and the Village Panchayat. At the cluster level, there is a *Sankul Prabhari* and an Academic Coordinator (*Shaikshik Samanvayak*). At the block level are Block Resource Coordinator (BRC), and Block Education Officer. The Janpad Office deals with administrative problems at the block level.

In all the four villages, VECs were conscious of their role and were actively engaged in improving the functioning of the school. They carried out minor repairs to the school building, fencing of boundaries and levelling the school ground.

Members of the VEC, in all four villages, helped in enrolment and retention of children in the school. Besides, they also participated in raising money for the distribution of prizes and sweets on occasions such as Republic Day and Independence Day. The VECs and the community made some important

suggestions to the research team. For example, in Siloda Khurd, they said that “*Shikshak se doosre kam na karvaye* (don’t get non-teaching work done by the teachers—work related to national programmes like Pulse Polio immunisation or various surveys); there should be more teachers in the school; teachers must live in the village.” In Sogda and Neelgarh they demanded that the school be upgraded to Class VIII so that their children, especially girls don’t miss out on education. In Harpura they asked for a water tank and a boundary wall for the school.

In view of the above, it can safely be said that the VECs and community members were concerned and actively involved in the affairs of the school.

The research teams were able to interview at least two officials—one Deputy Director of Education (or the Assistant Project Officer of Rajiv Gandhi Prathamik Shiksha Mission), Tikamgarh and the BDO (holding additional charge of BEO and CEO) who threw some light on the nature and problems of management.

In Tikamgarh the official believed that 75 per cent of Shiksha Karmis and 50 per cent of the regular teachers were working well. However, to improve the functioning of these schools he suggested the following: (i) Outside teachers should be provided with accommodation in the villages where they teach, to ensure their punctuality and regularity; (ii) Husband and wife should be posted in the same village; (iii) There are space problems in schools which need to be addressed; (iv) Teachers should be spared from duties in national surveys, elections etc.

He said that the complaints he received against the teachers referred to

unpunctuality, irregularity and their not taking teaching seriously but he added that these complaints generally were politically motivated. Asked what teachers expected from him, he said, the early clearance of T.A., GPF, arrears and bills. He was however, not in favour of increasing the present salary of the Shiksha Karmis “as they are already getting enough.”

The BDO of Nalcha block (mentioned above) said that he met teachers in monthly meetings and during his visits to schools. He felt that 90 per cent of teachers were working well. About the complaints he received against teachers, he said these referred to “not taking interest in teaching”, “doesn’t teach”, “*bacchon ka star theek nahin*” (The standard of the children is not okay), and “problems of adjustment between teachers and the community”. However, he also added that 50 per cent of these complaints were politically motivated.

### **Teacher, School and Community**

As mentioned earlier, in the section on School Management, VECs and community members were actively involved in the affairs of the school in all four villages. The nature of interaction of the community with the school and the teachers varied from school to school. In Sogda, most teachers, most of the time, didn’t contact the parents directly but sent messages through children.

However, since the Centre Head Teacher (CHT) of this school belonged to the village, he remained in touch with the parents and the community. In other three schools, community members either occasionally dropped in to the school on way to fields or purposely went there to talk to the teacher about some problems, private or otherwise, or to



enquire about the progress of the child. The community members of all four villages were aware of the working of the schools and felt the school functioned regularly and opened for full duration. However, a female teacher in Siloda Khurd was said to leave for home before closing time. In three villages, the community expressed satisfaction: “*padhai theek hoti hai*” or “*padhai acchi hoti hai*”. (The teaching is good).

#### Image of Shiksha Karmis and regular teachers

The community members didn't make any distinction between a Shiksha Karmi and a regular teacher. For them a teacher was a teacher. Both Shiksha Karmis and regular teachers had a positive image in the community and both Shiksha Karmis and regular teachers also felt that they received due respect from the community. However, the officials rated Shiksha Karmis higher than the regular teachers as far as performance was concerned.

### Volunteer Teacher Scheme, Himachal Pradesh

#### The Setting

The analysis of the Volunteer Teacher Scheme in Himachal Pradesh is based on the data collected from villages Lani Borar, Shillai-I, Bihalli-I and Sarog (Kihar). Village profiles, in terms of population, social composition and literacy, are given in tables 2.37 and 2.38 respectively.

Table 2.36 **School location**

Sr. No.	Village	Block	District
1.	Lani Borar	Shillai	Sirmour
2.	Shillai-I	Shillai	Sirmour
3.	Bihalli-I	Tissa	Chamba
4.	Sarog (Kihar)	Salooni	Chamba

The villages under scrutiny lie in Districts of Sirmour (South West) and Chamba (North) of Himachal Pradesh. Lani Borar is 170 kilometres and Shillai-I 120 kilometres from Sirmour respectively, whereas Bihalli-I is 110 kilometres and Sarog (Kihar), 100 kilometres from Chamba.

Harsh topographical and meteorological conditions characterise these villages. Overall, the terrain is rocky with frequent outcrops of huge boulders. Steep mountain slopes enhance susceptibility to landslides. The hilly nature of the terrain and poorly developed roads (Lani Borar and Bihalli-I) make communication particularly difficult.

Of the three villages, Lani Borar, Sarog (Kihar) and Bihalli-I were located in remote corners of the block. The research team was informed that Sarog (Kihar) was prone to frequent attacks from terrorists/militants of Kashmir. Shillai-I was situated one kilometre from the block headquarters, Shillai-I.

The villages of Shillai-I and Bihalli-I (one, and half a kilometre walk) are connected to the main road by mud paths. A steep climb of four to five kilometres connects Lani Borar to the main road. The fourth, Sarog (Kihar) has a tar/metalled road in front of the village. Shillai-I and Sarog (Kihar) have a regular bus service at the entrance of the village. As such, communication within the village is a problem during the rainy season.

Two villages, Shillai-I and Kihar (Sarog) were found to be relatively developed. In Lani Borar and Bihalli-I some minimal developmental activities have been carried out under the Jawahar Rozgar Yojna and the Indira Gandhi Kutir Yojna. Electricity is available to all households. In the villages

## Volunteer Teacher Scheme Himachal Pradesh

- Under this scheme additional teachers are appointed in single teacher primary schools especially those in remote areas.
- The children in the four villages studied were involved in heavy work at home and in the fields. The burden of work was much greater for girls. However, all of them enjoyed going to school.
- The DIETs conduct a 90-day condensed training programme for volunteer teachers who are promoted as regular teachers.
- Three of the four volunteer teachers were matriculates, while one was a graduate. They received training, after many years of recruitment, only when the DPEP launched its in-service training programme for teachers. The training programmes were, however, not effective.
- Most of the schools had a shortage of staff and classrooms. Library books and TLM were not being used.
- The classroom processes followed by the volunteer teachers and regular teachers were similar. The instruction was almost entirely book-based. There was very little participation by children who were mostly kept engaged in mechanical tasks like copying, memorising etc. Corporal punishment was used frequently.
- The VECs were not found to be very active in these villages.

Table 2.37 Social composition and caste-wise break-up of each village

Sr. No.	Village	Population	Scheduled Caste	Other Backward Caste	Muslims	General
1.	Lani Borar	532	154	378	-	-
2.	Shillai-I	*	*	*	*	*
3.	Bihalli-I	587	399	-	7	168
4.	Sarog (Kihar)	694	133	-	231	287

All \*(stars) in the text indicate that the information was unavailable during the research team's field visit.

under study, streams, waterfalls and underground tap water provide water to households. Individual households have differential access to water depending on the distance of the residence from the source water. Felling of trees and declining forestland have led to receding sources of fuel. Women were seen traversing long distances in search of fuel and fodder.

The population in three villages is above 500. A large number of Muslims reside in Sarog (Kihar). In Lani Borar the majority of the population belongs to either Scheduled Castes or Other Backward Castes. In Bihalli-I there is a predominance of Scheduled Castes.

Agriculture and animal husbandry are the two major occupations of the people in these villages. Livestock (goats, cows and buffaloes) are reared in most households. Women in all the villages were primarily engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry and household-related activities. Salaried and professional workers were few in Bihalli-I and in large numbers in Sarog (Kihar) where it was mentioned that

"every house has a person in a government job." Wage labour serves as a secondary occupation for the majority of the male population in the four villages. The 'head of household' worked as seasonal labourers in nearby major towns, cities and at construction sites. The collection and sale from apple orchards is another important economic activity in all households.

The villages themselves varied with reference to the basic amenities to which the population had access. Kihar (Sarog) and Shillai-I were best placed with some minimum medical and phone facilities. And while all the villages had primary schools the only Senior Secondary School was located in Kihar (Sarog).

Literacy rates vary sharply in the four villages. A distinction was not made in the study between those who were merely literate and those who had few years of schooling. The rate of literacy is low in Bihalli-I. As the following table indicates children in village Bihalli-I belong to the first generation of learners.

Table 2.38 Literacy rates

Sr. No.	Village	Population	No. of literates	Percentage of literates
1.	Lani Borar	532	*	*NA
2.	Shillai-I	*	*	*
3.	Bihalli-I	587	85	14.48
4.	Sarog (Kihar)	694	314	45.24

In Kihar (Sarog) about 50 per cent of the population was found to be literate. This could be due to the school facilities available in the village.

### The Children

To understand the lives and work that children do, the research team interviewed the children, parents, community members and teachers.

The children in all four villages were involved in a number of survival tasks which included common household chores like fetching water, sweeping the floor, cooking, child care, and work related to animal husbandry—which is a time consuming activity. The girls on the other hand were found to follow a much more hectic schedule than the boys. It needs to be mentioned that the proportion of work done at home depended significantly on the occupation of the parents and the presence of elder brothers and sisters at home.

Despite their hectic schedule at home and in the fields, they found time and opportunity to play with other children. Games which children played at home and at school were *kho-kho*, *kabaddi*, *gilli-danda*, spoon race, volleyball, *rassi-kud* etc. Children of Lani Borar and Shillai-I mentioned taking an active part in school tournaments.

The research team came across few children who were involved in any wage earning labour. Two children (Shillai-I and Kihar-Sarog) said that they were seasonally involved in agricultural work and “*patthar torne ka kaam*” (breaking stones) for which they were paid a paltry sum. The money earned from such work was handed over to their parents, mostly the father. Most children’s exposure in all the

four villages was limited to visiting relatives or nearby towns. Some children in Bihalli-I mentioned that they had never sat in a bus. Others mentioned “*jab bimar hote hain tab gaon se bahar jate hain.*” (We go out of the village whenever we are ill).

Children in all four villages were articulate in mentioning the activities they disliked most. High on the list were, animal husbandry and household chores such as “*gobar thapna, roti banana, per par charna accha nahin lagta kiyun ki niche gir jate hain, makki katna, chote bachhe ko khilana bhi acchha nahin lagta*”. (We don’t like making cow-dung cakes, rotis and climbing trees because we fall. We also don’t like harvesting corn and baby-sitting younger kids). However, the research team came across some children who enjoyed household responsibilities besides wanting to study and play.

Even though corporal punishment (*peeth aur haath par danda se marte hain*) was a regular feature in the four schools, children enjoyed coming to school (they claimed that their being beaten by the teachers was necessary in order that they learn better). School provided them with a space to interact with their peers and be part of their own world—a sense of regaining their childhood. When asked what they did in school, the answers ranged from meeting friends to singing songs and playing games. In class they studied, drew pictures, read stories and recited poems.

Given the life situation of the children in the four villages, their aspiration level however, was fairly high. When asked what they would become after receiving education most wanted to become teachers—probably the only role model they saw in their daily lives. Children in Bihalli-I and Kihar (Sarog) wanted to join the police

force as men from these villages were employed in the army and police. Some children mentioned other trades/professions such as doctor, *tehsildar*, mechanic and *kheti* (farming).

The aspiration level of the parents was equally high. With the exception of a few, almost all parents emphasised the value of education for their children. Even though marriage was seen as the ultimate destiny for girls, parents in Shillai-I, Bihalli-I and Lani Borar mentioned "*larki jahan tak parhna chahti hai, tab tak parhayenge.*" (We'll let our daughter study as far as she chooses to). They wanted their daughters to become nurses or government teachers. The age of marriage for girls varied from 18-24 and for boys from 20-26.

Parents took an active part in preparing their children to go to school by informing them about the time, getting their food ready or even taking them to school.

Refusal to attend school, led to beating or chiding by the parents. On the other hand if the child performed well in school, the parents encouraged them (*sabash*), bought sweets or clothes. Since the children have started going to school, the parents have seen distinct changes in their children—*saaf safai* (cleanliness), respect for elders, better articulation and improvement in interaction with others.

To find out what the child is learning at school the parents in the study villages often ask him/her to recite poems or songs. Others go to school and ask the teacher about the child's progress. Some children on their initiative sit down to study or complete their homework. Placing a great value on education, parents in Shillai-I have provided the children with tutors. However, some parents (Lani Borar and Bihalli-I) did state that their

being non-literate did prove to be an impediment.

Besides illness, the degree of involvement in household activity influenced the pattern of enrolment and regularity of attendance in school. Poverty, household chores, disinterest of parents, peak agricultural season were other reasons cited for poor enrolment and irregular attendance.

#### **Teacher Profile: Volunteer Teacher**

The Volunteer Teacher Scheme was introduced in Himachal Pradesh in 1984 for providing additional teachers for the single teacher primary schools. The scheme was then subsequently revised in 1992. However, no appointments have taken place since March 1992.

Four Volunteer Teachers (two males in Lani Borar and Sarog/Kihar and two females in Shillai-I and Bihalli-I) were identified and with whom in-depth interviews were conducted to study their educational and social backgrounds, the impact of training on their teaching methodology and to seek their world view.

All the four teachers belonged primarily to the privileged upper caste. The teacher in Bihalli-I was a Brahmin (Bhardwaj) and the teacher in Sarog (Kihar) a Vaishya (Gupta). However, during our discussions they informed the research team that they were Rajputs. (In Himachal Pradesh castes such as Bhardwaj and Gupta call themselves Rajputs, though these caste categories in other states indicate Brahmin and Vaishya).

The educational qualifications of teachers in Lani Borar, Bihalli-I and Sarog (Kihar) were the same. Shillai-I, however, had a trained graduate teacher who came from a highly influential and educated family which

Table 2.39 Teacher profile-VTS

Sr. No.	Village	M/F	Age	Qualifications	Caste	Year of joining
1.	Lani Borar	M	31	Matric	Rajput	1992
2.	Shillai-I	F	31	B.A. (B.Ed)	Rajput	1992
3.	Bihalli-I	F	29	Matric	Rajput	1992
4.	Sarog (Kihar)	M	35	Matric	Rajput	1990

had encouraged her to study further. All the teachers were in their late twenties and early thirties. The table above provides this information at a glance.

All the teachers were married and lived with their extended family members. However, the teacher in Shillai-I lived with her parents, as the school was located in her native village. With the exception of the teacher in Lani Borar (three kilometres) all the teachers resided within a radius of half to one kilometre from the school, the nearest being the teacher in Shillai-I who lived just next to the school.

Other than their salary (Rs. 1500/-) the family income of the teachers varied from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 15,000/- (Shillai-I). Of the three only one teacher in Lani Borar mentioned that Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 7000/- was needed to maintain a small family, a sum which did not match the ground realities in the village. Most of the teachers had access to newspaper, and TV and belonged to relatively prosperous families.

All the teachers aspired to improve their future prospects either by studying further or getting a permanent job as a teacher. With the exception of one, all the teachers were able to articulate their views on educational and social issues.

Due to casteism still being strongly rooted in these villages, as well as teachers belonging to the privileged upper castes, teachers in Shillai-I and Bihalli-I demonstrated limited concern for the schooling of children of the less privileged lower castes. They kept in touch with privileged upper caste parents to ensure regularity of the child's attendance in school.

The research team was informed by one teacher that, "*ham log harijan ke baccho ke ghar ke andar nahin jathe ... chai pani nahin pite, bahar se aa jate hain ya raste me mil jate jhain ... magar un se kaam kara lete hain ... akhir to gaon mein rahana parta hai.*" (we don't go inside the houses of Harijan students, we don't eat or drink with them, we come away from outside their homes, or we meet them on the road. But we get work done from them, after all we have to live in the village).

Table 2.40 Training programmes attended

Sr. No.	Village	Year of joining	Year of first training	No. of programmes attended	No. of days
1.	Lani Borar	1992	1996	2	7 days
2.	Shillai-I	1992	1997	3	7 days
3.	Bihalli-I	1992	1998	2	10 and 7 days
4.	Sarog (Kihar)	1990	1998	1	7 days

Under the Volunteer Teacher Scheme only those candidates whose names were registered in Employment Exchange were eligible to apply. The applications were sent to the District Primary Education office for scrutiny. Interviews were held after two to three months. At the time of recruitment

all the teachers were untrained. Later, after five to eight years of service they were deputed for training organised by the DPEP programme.

With the exception of the teacher in Shillai-I, the other three found the training useful since they were exposed to new ways and changes in teaching methodology and could learn to improve their teaching competencies. More importantly "*baccho ko darakar nahin padhana . . . pyar se padhana*" (sic). (It is important not to teach children through intimidation and fear but with love). However, teacher in Shillai-I was very candid in her opinion on the training held by DPEP—"I was never satisfied with the training. Resource persons never arrived on time nor did they come prepared. Teachers who had been teaching for so many years, their knowledge or experience was never taken into account nor were they able to create/develop an interest among the teachers. The worst people to suffer were the children, as school had to be closed during those days. We have never used the new methods that they tried to introduce in the training programmes."

### Teacher Profile: Government Teacher

Of the four teachers, two are Rajputs and the rest Muslims. The average age of the government teacher is 35 and varies from 31 to 55. The only female teacher in Shillai-I is 30 years old. It needs to be mentioned that this teacher, though appointed as a Volunteer Teacher (VT) in 1985 was made

permanent as a Junior Basic Teacher (JBT) in 1997. All the teachers were married and lived with their families.

The distance covered by them to reach school varied from one to six kilometres (Bihalli-I). Three teachers (Lani Borar, Bihalli-I and Sarog/Kihar) were first generation learners. Most of the teachers had access to newspaper and TV. Besides their salary, all the male teachers had additional income from their agricultural fields and apple orchards.

With the exception of one teacher in Lani Borar (who is a trained post-graduate teacher) all the rest were Matriculates. However, the teachers in Bihalli-I and Sarog (Kihar) had undergone two years of training at the Basic Teacher School prior to being selected. Since 1997, all the teachers have undergone numerous in-service training programmes conducted by DIET and DPEP. With the exception of one teacher, all the others have expressed satisfaction with the training programmes held thus far. The teacher in Sarog (Kihar) felt that "I have not used what was taught during training."

As prescribed in the Volunteer Teacher Scheme, the teacher in Shillai-I before her appointment as a JBT in 1997, underwent a 90-day condensed course training at the DIET, Nahan. Three other teachers underwent their first in-service training after almost 20 years (Bihalli-I), 12 years (Lani Borar) and nine years (Sarog/Kihar) of

Table 2.41 Teacher profile-Government teachers

Sr. No.	Village	M/F	Age	Qualification	Caste	Year of joining
1.	Lani Borar	M	37	M.A. (B.ed)	Rajput	1984
2.	Shillai-I	F	30	Matric	Rajput	1985
3.	Bihalli-I	M	53	Matric	Muslim	1964
4.	Sarog (Kihar)	M	31	Matric	Muslim	1989

Table 2.42 Training programmes attended

Sr. No.	Village	Year of joining	Year of first training	No. of programme attended	No. of days
1.	Lani Borar	1984	1997	3	10 and 7 days
2.	Shillai-I	1985	1997	3	90-day condensed, 10 and 2 days
3.	Bihalli-I	1964	1998	1	10 days
4.	Sarog (Kihar)	1989	1997	3	10 and 7 days

service. The table above indicates the year of first and number of in-service training programmes attended by the government teachers.

The research team was informed that teachers not only maintained contact with the parents of children but in Lani Borar a teacher showed his concern by "*baccho ko ghar se lana parta hain mithai de kar.*" (I have to bribe the children with sweets and fetch them from home).

The aspiration level of one teacher (Lani Borar) was fairly high who wanted to take the competitive examinations for lectureship. Two teachers, Bihalli-I and Sarog (Kihar), expressed satisfaction with their present position.

### Academic Inputs

District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) in Districts Sirmour and Chamba, with assistance from DPEP, are entrusted with the responsibility of providing in-service training to the Government primary school teachers.

The research team was provided with a list of impressive in-service training programmes/workshops—Work Experience,

Curriculum Material Development, Education Technology, In-service Programmes, Field Interaction and Innovation Coordination. However, since 1997, the most important compulsory in-service training programme for both government and Volunteer Teacher, conducted in collaboration between DIET and DPEP is the 'Teacher Orientation for School Readiness'—a 10-day module.

The objectives of these training programmes are:

- Concept of primary education—policy and perspective
- Knowing the child
- Nature of learning process
- Teaching of language, Mathematics, EVS, Value Education
- Evaluation and Measurements
- Management

As one official from DIET Nahan pointed out, the training also prepared the teachers for participation in community affairs, sensitising them on social issues; VEC training and conducting population census, motivating parents, community interaction and to elicit support for schooling activities. Another 10-day refresher training was held in the subsequent year. A seven-day training, on the preparation and use of TLM is also conducted by DPEP. Feedback from the participants is taken, by asking trainees to evaluate the training orally or sometimes in written proformas.

An official at the district level, commenting on the usefulness of such training, for teachers below 40, said "*shikna bhi chahte hain. . . . 40-45 years ke bich 50 per cent shikh pate hain, magar 50 sal se upar stubborn ho jate hain. Unke liye koi gunjaish nahin hai.*" (Those below 40 want to learn, 50 per cent between 40 and 45 are able to learn but above 50 they become absolutely



stubborn, there is no scope left to teach them anything).

DIET is also responsible for the training of Volunteer Teachers who were made permanent or promoted to Junior Basic Teacher (JBT) after completion of 10 years of service. Only two training sessions have been conducted so far. A 90-day condensed course training was started in 1997 and the last training was held in September 1998. The VTs are regularised only after attending these training programmes. DIET officials informed the research team that the third training session was to commence on November 3, 1998.

The training is compulsory and residential with about 50 trainees (40 males and 10 females) and nine subject experts. The objective of this condensed course is to provide "a minimum training of 450 hours . . . to each untrained teacher to (upgrade) academic qualification and professional achievement."

The ineffectiveness of this condensed course was pointed out by a training official at the DIET in Saru (Chamba), who felt that "Three months is too short a time to finish the course . . . to train untrained teachers. Women coming for training are normally very shy and do not ask many questions. There is a lack of seriousness in such training." Evaluation is a one-way process, as VTs undergoing training do not evaluate the course. A DIET training official felt that examination was by itself an evaluation "we do not feel it is necessary for the VTs to evaluate the training".

A qualifying examination was conducted by DIET. However, the teachers (VTs) demanded the removal of qualifying examinations as part of the condensed

course but the Department of Education did not adhere to their demands. The results were withheld due to agitation in some districts and a passing of writ by the court.

### **The School**

GPS, Sarog (Kihar) is the oldest (1941) among all the four schools. Schools in Shillai-I and Bihalli-I were opened in 1961 and Lani Borar in 1967.

All the four schools had concrete buildings. Of the four, two schools (Bihalli-I and Sarog/Kihar) are housed in buildings which are badly constructed. Leaking roofs, uneven floors and broken doors and windows are the norm. The Sarog (Kihar) primary school is located next to the Senior Secondary School. A mud pathway (throughway) runs across the centre of the school. The research team was informed that one part of the building belonged to the local Public Works Department (PWD), another part belonged to the Panchayat (as the building is incomplete, the school has yet to take over); another part, which was used as an office-cum-store and staff room, as well as for meeting visitors had been newly constructed by the DPEP's civil works department.

Most of the classes were held in the verandah or in the open. Constant noise of children playing and villagers passing by, throughout the entire day, often distracted the students and disturbed the teaching learning process.

In Bihalli-I, the school building was located in one corner of the village, surrounded by apple trees. On the day of the observation, the research team found classes being held in the open space just outside the school building. The rooms in this school too had broken doors and uneven floors.

The classrooms are used only during the rainy season or the winter months. For the rest of the year they are used to store broken pieces of furniture, wooden tables, four to five red plastic chairs, trunks for keeping official records, TLM and mobile blackboards. The teacher informed the team that during the monsoon "*kamre me itna pani bhar jata hain ki pani ko balti se nikalna parta hain.*" (The water in the classrooms has to be emptied out with buckets). Eighty children are then adjusted in two rooms.

Although the school in Shillai-I had three classrooms, one huge room was reserved for official work, cluster level meetings-cum-store. Due to shortage of space, classes were held in the verandah. The village pathway ran in front of the school. The teacher said that often "dead bodies" were carried by mourners across the front of the school, leaving the younger children feeling very disturbed.

None of the schools had adequate space for five primary school classes. With the exception of Bihalli-I teaching in the verandah was a common feature in all the three schools. Extreme shortage of space creates severe constraints for the teaching-learning situation.

Table 2.43 Availability of classrooms and teacher-student ratio

Sr. No	Village	Date of opening	Teacher-student ratio	No. of classrooms
1.	Lani Borar	1967	4:177	2
2.	Shillai-I	1962	5:184	3
3.	Bihalli-I	1962	4:80	3
4.	Sarog (Kihar)	1941	5:220	3

As the above table indicates that with the exception of the school in Bihalli-I the

staffing pattern in all four schools was highly inadequate. Although the primary schools had more than three teachers, schools in Lani Borar, Shillai-I and Sarog (Kihar) had an adverse teacher-pupil ratio. However, even though the teacher-pupil ratio was favourable in Bihalli-I, the research team observed that due to an acute shortage of teachers in district Chamba, two teachers from Bihalli-I were sent for a short period of deputation to nearby single teacher schools. Frequent short period deputation (15-20 days) seriously disturbs the school routine and teaching-learning process. Moreover, the crucial question is how can these schools in the study villages manage to provide 'quality education' in the context of shortage of space and staff and increasing pressure on enrolment.

In the study villages the block officials informed the research team that 100 per cent enrolment had been attained with DPEP initiatives. However, the team members were unable to confirm this information from other sources.

With the exception of Bihalli-I and Sarog (Kihar) the enrolment of girls in the other two schools was higher than that of boys. As mentioned earlier the parents attached a great value to girl's education in these villages.

Table 2.44 Enrolment rates

Sr. No	Village	Total enrolment	Boys	Girls
1.	Lani Borar	177	80	97
2.	Shillai-I	184	87	97
3.	Bihalli-I	80	46	34
4.	Sarog (Kihar)	220	119	101

The average attendance of the children was over 80 per cent. Inquiring into the

reasons, the teachers in almost all the schools candidly explained that the entitlement of three kilograms of grain (wheat or rice) per month has helped to improve and increase the attendance and enrolment of children in these schools. However, in Lani Borar teachers reported that they have not received the grains for over two months. Since children with 80 per cent attendance were entitled to three kilograms of grain the research team felt that attendance records in schools might have been inflated to make the grain available to the children.

“From the grant provided to the teachers (Rs. 500/-) the teachers have made a lot of material for classroom teaching. The walls of the rooms have been decorated to attract the children” (as reported by officials in Districts Sirmour and Chamba). Despite having undergone numerous workshops on creation of teaching learning aids and how to make the classrooms look attractive, the research team did not come across any classroom where TLM materials were displayed. At best, in some classes pictures of national leaders, historical buildings, maps, charts of fruits, animals or birds bought from the local market were hung on the walls. Classrooms were not places where children could let loose their creativity and soar on a flight of imagination.

Although blackboards were available in all schools, much could be done to improve their quality especially in Sarog (Kihar). In Bihalli-I there was one mobile blackboard for 80 students. Children in Sarog (Kihar) and Bihalli-I sat on *durries*, which, seemed quite worn out while children in Shillai-I and Lani Borar sat on wooden planks.

All the schools had a library, with books ranging from 200 in Lani Borar to 800 in

Sarog (Kihar). Books were kept safely under lock and key in steel trunks or in an almirah. Children were not allowed to take the books home. Teachers in all the schools claimed (except Sarog/Kihar where the library was used on Saturday) that the children made use of the library every Thursday for an hour after lunch. The research team saw children only in Shillai-I using the library.

Basic conveniences like toilets and drinking water were unavailable in the three schools. Children had to drink water from nearby taps. Only the school in Sarog (Kihar) had a toilet but no separate toilet for girls. Children, especially girls and women teachers (Shillai-I and Bihalli-I), had to walk some distance to relieve themselves. The length of absence of the teacher and students from the classroom disturbed the classroom routine. In three schools (Lani Borar, Bihalli-I and Sarog (Kihar) cleaning of the classrooms and school premises was undertaken by the peons or water carriers. In Shillai-I this task had been entrusted to the children.

The teachers in Bihalli-I and Shillai-I mentioned that the supply of TLM was irregular and inadequate. In addition each teacher was also given Rs. 500/- to buy or develop TLM. The research team found that most of the materials were bought from the local market. Some TLM in Bihalli-I was battery-operated and kept safely under lock and key. However, one teacher in Lani Borar had developed aids for teaching Mathematics. But the aids (triangle, square and rectangle) were unevenly cut and the shapes nowhere resembled their original shapes. In Sarog (Kihar) the teacher mentioned (which the research team also saw) that the termites had eaten away TLM—world/India maps and animal charts.

Of the four schools, only Shillai-I is a summer school, The other three were winter schools. The school timings of the school are from 10.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. with a lunch break from 1 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. The schools follow the calendar prepared centrally by the Education department.

Only in Shillai-I it was mentioned that the school calendar was not appropriate for the community as October and November (onset of winter) are grass-cutting and peak agriculture season. There are periods of long absenteeism, as additional help is needed in the households.

When a teacher wants to go on leave s/he had to inform the Senior/CHT. If the senior teacher had to go on leave s/he had to inform the BPEO office. The research team observed that in all the four schools records – enrolment, attendance, children receiving IRPD or below poverty line, assistance or scholarships were well maintained. The water carrier in Bihalli-I who had been with the school for a great length of time was found to be aware of all school records.

All the schools actively participate in *bal melas* (children's fairs), cultural activities or games tournaments. The research team had the occasion to witness one such *bal mela* in Shillai-I. The team found that the *melas* lacked creativity and imagination. Besides the usual games and essay competitions, children were made to sit in rows and listen to a lecture on "Cleanliness—*man and tan ki safai*" (of the body and mind) which the children were unable to relate to.

### Classroom Processes

None of the teachers in the four schools felt the necessity of making either a daily, weekly or monthly teaching plan. The teachers in all the four schools mentioned

that homework was given to the children on a regular basis. The evidence of this statement was corroborated in Shillai-I, where the research team saw the children putting homework copies on the teacher's desk before the day's lesson began.

Homework was based on what had been taught during the day and included questions at the end of the chapter. Rote learning of poems, learning difficult words, lesson copying (*path nakal*) and *sulekh* were part of the homework. In Shillai-I a Volunteer Teacher said that homework (only mathematics) given to the children was checked regularly. Copies of other subjects were checked once in two days. In Bihalli-I, in case a child failed to complete his/her homework then the teacher "makes the child complete it in class." It needs to be understood that burden of work at home often prevents children from completing their homework.

In Sarog (Kihar) with reference to the government teacher, too, the research team observed that copies were checked on a fairly regular basis. However, in these three schools a circle or a cross was marked on wrong answers but no further explanations were given. In Lani Borar and Bihalli-I (both Volunteer Teachers and government teachers) except for a signature and date at the bottom of the page did not write anything else.

In Lani Borar the research team found some incorrect answers/words marked with a tick, in the English copies of students. Teachers did not mention that they maintained a record of the children's daily progress.

Besides being tested orally every day, class tests in Bihalli-I and Sarog (Kihar) are held once in three months. All children in the

four schools take half-yearly and yearly tests. In Shillai-I parents come to inquire about their child's progress. In Bihalli-I the test papers are sent home for signature.

### Classroom culture and pedagogy

In order to understand classroom processes and children's responses to pedagogy the research team undertook intensive classroom observations of the subjects taught by the Volunteer and Government teacher. Below are some excerpts of classroom observations. Attempts to understand classroom culture and pedagogy are on the basis of excerpts mentioned below and other observations.

*Volunteer teacher: Excerpts from various classroom observations*

#### Lani Borar

- The floor of this classroom is broken (*ukhra hua hai*). Small pieces of paper are littered all over the place. The plaster from the walls is peeling off. Children have drawn lines on the walls. Broken pieces of furniture are kept in one corner of the room. Two windows of the class are broken.
- This room is 16x15 feet long, concrete and airy and well lit. At the side there is an open space where class III is in progress and the noise of that class disturbs the other class. Children are sitting in rows, girls in one row and boys in another row.
- The teacher enters the class and takes a book from the child. Teacher asks 'kaun sa path?' Two children reply Lesson 8. One child gets up and reads the name of the chapter—Means of Transportation. Teacher turns the pages for few minutes and inquires from the children—do you know what are the means of transportation. No child replies and the teacher gives the answer.

The teacher starts reading the lesson at a fast speed. One child is yawning. Another child is folding the pages of the book. One child is looking outside. . . Teacher takes out a railway map and inquires from children 'Shimla is the capital of which state?' The children are unable to answer, so the teacher provides the answer. Teacher continues to read and in between pauses to ask 'Do you understand?' But he does not wait for the children's reply and continues reading . . .

He informs the children that '*jajahjon mein hathi bhi jathe hain, tumne hathi dekha nahin hoga. Is kamra ke barabar hota ha*' (Elephant travels on a ship. Have you seen an elephant? Elephant is as big as this room). No child reacts. The teacher bends over a child's slate and finds that the answer is incorrect. He slaps him very hard. Then he explains the right answer. After explaining he gives him a box on the ear. He slaps another child on the head before explaining the process and the right answer . . . He pulls the ear of another child while explaining the right answer. Barring few, all children were subjected to beatings.

#### Sarog (Kihar)

- The children are sitting in half of the room and the other half is full of tin shades, pieces of wood, broken doors and a jute bag full of waste items.

#### Shillai-I

- The class is being held in the verandah. Children are sitting in four rows, two rows of both boys and girls and two only of boys. Teacher's table and chair is kept at a distance.
- Teacher responds with a *sabash* for children who give the right answers. One child who was hesitant in his

reply is encouraged by the teacher to complete the answer. The teacher uses the local dialect to explain the meaning of difficult words. A district map is hung and with a pointer Shillai-I is located on the map.

### **Bihalli-I**

- In the English period, the teacher asks spellings from the children. Those who were unable to answer are asked to remain standing. Then he picks at two older girls and says *tum to dono bari bai larkiyani ho. Tumhe to sharam ani chahiye. Itni bari bari ho tumhe marte hue bhi mujhe sharam aati hain. Agar kal yaad nahin hua to dande par jayenge, soch lena* (you two are big girls. You should be ashamed of yourself. I feel ashamed to hit you. I shall hit you with a stick if you do not learn by tomorrow).

—Some of the major characteristics of the teaching-learning process observed in the schools are given below:

- The physical infrastructure and classroom environment of the village schools was not conducive for the teaching-learning process.
- Communication of school knowledge in all the four schools was by and large 'text-book' based. Questions asked in the class too were related to only the lesson being taught and from the text-book.
- Except in one school (Shillai-I) the blackboard was the main teaching aid used by the teachers. Charts and flash cards and other innovative aids developed during TLM training, were hardly made use of.
- During training the negative impact of corporal punishment on the children had been pointed out to the teachers. But corporal punishment was

frequently used, not only to discipline but also to develop fear of the teacher among the children. The teacher used threats and reprimands to maintain order. Thus, physical punishment was seen as a legitimised method of teaching.

- Except in one case (Shillai-I), no attempt was made by the teacher to make use of the knowledge that children brought with them into class.
- All teachers in the four schools did not feel the need to prepare daily, weekly and monthly lesson plans.
- There was an emphasis on rote-learning in most of the teaching-learning activities.
- Teacher's interaction with the children was limited to asking questions or listening to what the children read aloud.
- Teachers were observed paying attention and asking questions to intelligent students in the class.
- Teachers did not know what and how much the children had understood the lesson. No attention was paid by the teachers to slow learners.
- The teachers in the four schools did not attempt to promote peer learning in the class.

*Government teacher: Excerpts from various classroom observations*

### **Loni Barar**

- Teacher enters the class with a bag. He asks the children to identify various colours—red, white and yellow . . . He then takes out colour bottles from the bag and asks the children to identify the colours.
- The teacher goes outside the class. One child points out a mistake made by another child. Yet another child gets up and checks the copies of other children.

### Sarog (Kihar)

- One child goes to the blackboard and asks the teacher to explain the meaning of a difficult word.
- The class is taking place in the verandah, as the class where it was meant to be held is damp and dark. Lack of space forces the children to sit in awkward postures. A Maths class is in progress. The teacher writes a figure on the blackboard and asks the children to write it in words in their copies. Children write and one by one they show it to the teacher. This exercise continues for some time. The middle school bell has rung, boys are making a lot of noise. Children and teacher are disturbed. The teacher not only corrects the mistakes and in a gentle tone explains where the child has gone wrong but also writes the correct answer in the child's copy. The child who has got the correct answer shows his copy to another child. When most of the children has finished the teacher writes the correct answer and explains.

The teaching-learning processes of government teachers reveal characteristically almost the same features as described in the above section of the analysis. The following are some significant points of pedagogy practices observed during classroom transaction:

- Teachers use the textbooks as the sole source of knowledge and learning.
- Except in Sarog (Kihar) children quietly listen without asking for clarification. Even if clarifications are sought it is only related to the instructions given by the teachers.
- Near total absence of interaction or creative dialogue between the teachers

and students except when the teacher checks copies. Children answer only when they are asked questions.

- No independent learning activity was given to the children. Learning is mechanical as children copy from the blackboard and repeat after the teacher.
- Children's learning is based on memorising, answering questions asked by the teacher.
- Some minimal (not innovative) teaching-learning aids are used by the teachers.
- The teachers used words of encouragement (*sabash*) if children gave the right answer.
- The gap between the teacher and student is visible when teachers sit on the chair and children sit on the floor thus reinforcing the belief that teacher is guru (not a friend), an authority to be feared.
- A sense of competition was not seen to exist among students in any of the classes.

### School Management

A structure has been developed to provide support in the management of the school. The structure extends from the village to the block and district level. At the grassroots there is the VEC. At the cluster level the Cluster Academic Coordinator (CRC) provides academic support. The Block Programme Education Officer (BPEO) and Block Resource Coordinator (BRC) monitor and manage the schools at the block level. The District Project Coordinator (DPC) provides overall guidance to this management structure.

All the four schools under study mentioned the existence of VEC. In Bihalli-I, however, the VEC was formed only in 1998. In Lani Borar, a VEC member who

has been on the committee for the past one year, was unaware of its year of inception. One official at the district level mentioned that a pamphlet explaining the aims and objectives of VEC has been distributed to all the members. Training of VEC members has taken place. Each VEC has been asked to hold a meeting at least once in two months. The school grant of Rs. 2000/- per annum is being spent through the VEC.

The process of selection of VEC members varied in the study villages. In Shillai-I a meeting was called and members selected. In Lani Borar, one VEC member informed the research team that she was unaware of the selection process and another member mentioned that it was at the instance of Block Resource Coordinator that a meeting of parents was called, and from among whom the VEC members were selected. In Bihalli-I the school Head Master played a crucial role in this process.

In Bihalli-I no date was fixed for VEC meetings, but only two have been held so far. In Shillai-I, where, "*jab Block Resource Coordinator kahate hai tab hota hain*" (we have a meeting when the BRC says so), only three meetings have been held thus far. Only in Lani Borar it appeared that meetings were held regularly, once a month. Members attending the VEC meeting varied from eight to nine in Bihalli-I, to four to five in Shillai-I and Lani Borar.

Issues such as the construction of school building/toilets, repair of old buildings, cleanliness, inquiring about teaching practices (Shillai-I) were addressed at these meetings. But as one of the VEC members informed, "*sirf baat chit hoti hai, koi action nahin lete hain*." (There is a lot of chit-chat but no action is taken).

VEC members are supposed to take active part in "motivating and helping in enrolment and retention." But no such mention was made of this crucial role either by VEC members or the teachers. As one teacher in Shillai-I pointed out, "VEC members were not selected properly. Therefore, none of the members take active part, nobody comes even after we call them." Unlike in other schools, the VEC does not participate in "school functions" or encourage the children by distributing prizes or sweets (*sirf apne vichar aur bhashan de kar chale jate hai*) (They only give us the benefit of their opinions, deliver speeches and go away).

Identifying the ineffectiveness or lack of proper functioning of VEC in the study villages a block level official in Bihalli-I pointed out that "the structure of VEC is not proper. Elected people's representative should not be part of VEC as they tend to politicise the committee. Therefore no decisions are often taken. Only those people interested in education should be part of the committee. In 1996 there was no clear direction regarding the formation of VEC—one VEC for over 1000 population. Members were nominated so they never came for meetings.

"Soon we had to reorganise the VEC. According to new orders from the district there should be a VEC in every village. In spite of this, the VEC is active only in civil works but does not take interest in school functioning." The research team, however, was informed that VEC for each school/village was yet to be formed.

At the cluster level the Cluster Resource Coordinator (CRC) in Lani Borar, Shillai-I and Bihalli-I provides academic support to the government schools. (It needs to be mentioned that such a structure came into



existence with the inception of the DPEP in Sirmour and Chamba).

The research did not inquire into the management structure of schools before DPEP). With 50 schools under their supervision they can only visit (mostly on foot) five to ten schools per month. During their visit they give model lessons, demonstrate the use of TLM, organise *Bal melas*, and tournaments, check the activities of the VEC, grant register, look into the school education environment and the method of teaching various subjects. However, as the CRC of Bihalli-I pointed out, "with so many schools under my supervision it is not possible to give effective academic support to all schools."

When inquired from the VEC/ Community whether any supervisors visited the school a forthright answer was provided, "*koi nahin ata, sirf aap (research team) hi aye hain.*" (Nobody ever comes, only you have come).

On inquiring into the nature of problems faced by the school and teachers, the CRCs (Lani Borar, and Bihalli-I) pointed out the lack of water facilities, toilet, playground and shortage of space. Moreover, the acute shortage of staff has prevented the teachers from adopting new methods. With regard to the use of TLM there was "no clear cut direction or training which TLM to use for which class. Often teachers do not using TLM at all." The quality of TLM available to the schools also needed improvement.

At the block level Block Resource Coordinator (BRC) and Block Programme Education officer (BPEO) look into administrative matters like salary, clearance of bills, dealing with complaints, appointment and supervision.

Inquiring into the problems encountered by the schools both BRC and BPEO also mentioned the acute shortage of staff in the schools (especially in Chamba) and frequent deputation of teachers (to single teacher schools) for short periods, preventing effective teaching in the schools. They were not able to finish the syllabi due to lack of time. They further pointed out that teachers did not take training seriously, nor made any attempt to increase their knowledge base. In spite of workshops the teachers were unable to use TLM creatively in their classes.

According to officials in Sarog (Kihar), complaints were often received from the *pradhan* and community members about the frequent and untimely closure of schools, beating of children and teachers not teaching even though present in school. Also it was mentioned that often lack of coordination between teachers and community created problems for the administrative officials.

However, another one block level official opined that the teachers have started functioning effectively since, "*aab unhe dar rahata hai ki koi check karne aa jayaega.*" (They are now afraid that someone can come to check their progress). To enable them to work efficiently it was suggested that libraries be established, that they maintain regular contact with the community and that political interference or transfers be prevented for three years.

The views of two district level officials in Chamba and Sirmour were also sought on teacher's role, performance and problems related to management. The views of these officials are given below:

- One official opined "that only 20 per cent of the teachers do their duty

efficiently but need constant motivation— if there is motivation and government will then the percentage may go up to 50 per cent. The rest of them are too old to change.”

- There is constant tension and lack of coordination between the VEC and teachers who feel that the “tasks of the VEC have been dumped on us,” and feel contacting the community is not part of their work.
- Teachers ‘shirk’ from using TLM in actual classroom situations. No effective demonstration has been provided to the teachers on how to use them in class.
- Teachers are ‘pressurised’ to participate in training, thus absenting them from school. But when the syllabus is not over, the community “gets after them and the teachers get angry.”
- There is a “lukewarm response from ~~DPEO to DPEP~~, not able to see that DPEP is a sister concern and not a parallel structure. This confusion filters to the block levels too. Unless DPEP has the power for supervision and checking, the quality of education cannot be improved.”

### Teacher, School and Community

In the four schools under study, the community’s involvement was somewhat limited. In Lani Borar, parents on one occasion donated voluntary labour to repair the school building.

In Sarog (Kihar) too, the road in front of the school was repaired with help from the parents. But they did not provide any financial support. Some parents came to school to find out about IRDP scholarships, food grains, and inquire about the child’s progress. In Shillai-I, parents and some community members provided *dhol* (drum), dresses, musical instruments

during *bal melas* and tournaments. In Shillai-I, parents keep a check on whether the school opened at the right time.

In Bihalli-I, parents came to school only during admissions. Other members of the community never visited the school.

Almost all the teachers mentioned that they participated in community functions like marriages, as well as in illness and births and contacted parents to inquire reasons about child’s absenteeism.

From discussions with the community members it appears that they were aware of school timings. In Lani Borar the members mentioned that the school is open only till 3 p.m. and not the stipulated 4 p.m. They suggested that school timings be changed during peak agriculture season.

The community members in Lani Borar and Shillai-I were unaware of the existence of a VEC in their schools. They further said that the CRC or BRC never visited the school. In both these villages, the teachers’ lack of interaction with the community was pointed out, along with the fact that the “teachers only interact with higher caste parents.”

In Lani Borar too members stated “*ghar par nahin aate par raste mein mil jate hain.*” (They don’t come home, just meet us by accident on the road) In Bihalli-I - “*jinka ghar pas me hain wahi aate hain.*” (Only those teachers, whose houses are close by, visit us).

### Image of volunteer and government teachers

The opinion of the community members regarding Volunteer and Government teachers were divided “*thik hai bechare ki naukri lagi hai roti kama raha hai.*” (The

poor thing has a job and is earning). In Shillai-I one member opined that the role of the teacher was only limited to school. "But we expect them to take an active interest in village affairs which they do not do, nor is their equation with the community very good."

However, the officials in the programme had a high opinion of the Volunteer Teachers. But they too felt the community did not give them enough respect. They were in favour of making their posts permanent and increasing their salary — "*barabar kaam*

*karte hain to barabar vetan hana chahiye.*"— commensurate with the labour they put in.

In the view of another official, Volunteer Teachers were not considered "complete" teacher. People viewed them in an inferior light.

But as one district level official pointed out "teachers in general do not get enough respect from society and are always referred as *bichara adhyapak* or poor teacher."



## Analysis and Interpretation

To process, analyse and interpret the collected data, it is necessary that we keep in view the central question of our study which revolves around (i) the nature and quality of the para teacher's role; (ii) the efficacy of para teachers in the universalisation of primary education; and (iii) the desirability and viability of the concept of para teachers in the social context in which it is operationalised.

To begin with, we will consider that portion of data, which, to a certain extent, defines and directly or indirectly influences the nature and quality of the para teacher's role. Next, we will look at that data which throws light on the efficacy of the para teachers, which will be analysed in the process of universalisation of education and finally, we will analyse the social context in which a para teacher operates. Thus, three areas of analysis emerge, which subsume the entire content of the research design: the para teacher, the school and the community.

### Method of Analysis

Under these three heads—para teacher, community and school—data/information related to each will be arranged and analysed.

The analysis will include (i) the assumptions underlying a particular idea/phenom-

enon; (ii) reality as manifested in the case studies; and (iii) conclusions followed by recommendations emerging out of the dichotomy between assumption and reality.

### The Para Teacher

Minimum educational qualifications and other conditions of eligibility for the position of para teacher are given below.

#### Educational Qualifications

In four of the five programmes under study, the minimum qualification required for a para teacher was Matriculation (Alternative School Programme, Madhya Pradesh and Volunteer Teacher Scheme, Himachal Pradesh), or Higher Secondary (Education Guarantee Scheme and Shiksha Karmi Yojna, Madhya Pradesh); and the successful completion of Class VIII in the Shiksha Karmi Programme (SKP), Rajasthan.

*Assumption:* That a person who is a Matriculate or has passed her/his Higher Secondary possesses the academic competence to teach primary classes. This surmise, incidentally, is shared by para teacher programmes in many other states.

■ *There is no difference in the prescribed minimum qualification between para teachers and regular teachers except in SKP, Rajasthan. There was no qualitative difference with regard to classroom transaction, which were unsatisfactory in all schools. However, para teachers with higher qualifications had a distinct edge over those who had completed Class VIII only in SKP.*

However, the assumption inherent in Shiksha Karmi Programme, Rajasthan, is that even a person who has passed Class VIII can be taught/trained to become a competent primary school teacher over four or five years, by providing her/him inputs through regular training and workshops as well as facilitating self-improvement. During the pre-service training s/he will be prepared to teach Classes I and II.

In terms of minimum prescribed qualifications, there is no difference between a para teacher and a regular teacher except

in the case of Shiksha Karmis in Rajasthan. However, a regular teacher has to have a Teachers Training Certificate before appointment.

*Reality:* The quality of transaction of the curriculum content improves with higher levels of qualification. It was observed that para teachers who have successfully completed their Higher Secondary have a distinct edge over those para

teachers who have completed Class VIII only. By and large, however, the transaction of academic content was poor in all cases, but more so with para teachers with lower qualifications. It is also true that there was no qualitative difference between a para teacher and a regular teacher with regard to classroom transaction.

*Conclusion:* It is necessary for a para teacher to be academically competent in order to teach primary classes; the level of the para teachers education is important.

### Localism

In four of the five programmes, the exception being Shiksha Karmi Yojna (SKY), Madhya Pradesh, the para teacher has to

be a local resident. For instance, in the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative School Programme (ASP), the para teacher must belong to the village/community, and if this is not possible, then under the ASP s/he may be chosen from the concerned panchayat area. In Himachal Pradesh, the voluntary teacher must live within a radius of five kilometres from the school, while in Rajasthan the Shiksha Karmi must belong to the school village.

*Assumption:* There are distinct advantages in the para teacher being a local person, as stressed in the document of SKP, Rajasthan. Interaction with the community; the teacher's punctuality; and regularity of the school are better ensured if the teacher is a local resident. Hence, the stress on localism, or having the teacher live at least in peripheral proximity to the village, in most of the para teacher programmes (with the exception of SKY, Madhya Pradesh). However, the rationale behind localism has been clearly defined in Rajasthan only.

*Reality:* (i) In all the four programmes where a para teacher has to be a local resident, most of the para teachers under the sample belonged to the same or nearby village and community; (ii) all the para teacher schools were functioning with regularity in almost all the villages, including remote areas; (iii) community members approved of the para teachers; (iv) para teacher, being a local resident, functioned as a strong link between the school and the community, involving it in school-related matters, at varying degrees, in most places; (v) community members felt that since the para teacher spoke their language, s/he would be able to explain things to children in their own language—which would not be the case were the teacher an outsider; and (vi) in a couple of places

■ *Most para teachers belonged to the same or nearby village and spoke the local language. Their schools functioned regularly even in remote areas, thus earning community approval and its involvement in school-related matters.*

(VTS, Himachal Pradesh and SKP, Rajasthan) it was reported by the Centre Head Teacher and block level officials that the para teacher, a local resident, tended to neglect school work in favour of personal work in the family and/or on family farms, especially in the peak agricultural seasons. It was also observed that a greater use of local language in the classrooms hinders the child's learning of Hindi. This is evident from the Class III Hindi tests.

*Conclusion:* The advantages that accrue from the para teacher being a local resident speak for themselves. A teacher from outside would be working in an alien social environment with children of a different community, which may not be conducive to achieving UPE and an effective educational process.

Where para teachers are recruited from the same community where the school is located—and as most of the communities, where para teacher schools are functioning, belong to the marginalised sections of the population—the para teacher and the school occupies a distinct position symbolic of both the progress and upliftment of the community itself.

### Voluntarism

Para teachers are addressed by different names, like Guruji by EGS (Madhya Pradesh), 'Shiksha Karmi' by SKP (Rajasthan) and SKY (Madhya Pradesh). In Himachal Pradesh the scheme itself is called the Volunteer Teacher Scheme and the teacher is called the Volunteer Teacher (VT). 'Guruji' refers to the teacher of the 'gurukul' system in which a teacher functioned as a volunteer. The SKP, Rajasthan, explicitly says, "the teacher in the Shiksha Karmi Programme is a voluntary worker. S/he is not employed in any job and belongs to the project village." S/he is treated as an

'agent of change.' Other para teacher programmes may or may not have 'voluntarism' as a basic feature in the conception of the programme, but SKP, Rajasthan definitely has it.

*Assumption:* The assumption of SKP, Rajasthan, is that the para teacher, a local youth from the same community, is emotionally attached to it, and can work hard with devotion and dedication if s/he is fired with the spirit of voluntarism and 'Sewa Bhava.'

*Reality:* Of the 11 para teachers in the sample, not a single para teacher was aware that s/he was doing voluntary work. Their voluntarism was limited to filling up forms, writing applications for villagers or giving advice whenever required, which they would have done in any case, as members of the community. All of them spoke of a salary, and not an honorarium; many complained that it was not commensurate with the work they did; and hoped that eventually their post would become permanent and they would be absorbed as regular teachers. It may be mentioned here that there is a provision of absorption, after 8-10 years of service in SKP (Rajasthan).

*Conclusion:* The para teachers of SKP, Rajasthan, do not possess the spirit of voluntarism as conceived in the programme.

### Honorarium

In the five programmes under study, the honorarium of para teachers ranges from Rs.1000/- (EGS, Madhya Pradesh) to Rs.1800/- (SKP, Rajasthan).

■ *Most para teachers evinced no spirit of voluntarism as conceived in some of the programmes. The low honorarium, was felt to be non-commensurate with the work they did and may prove a constraint in the long-term sustainability of these programmes.*

*Assumption:* The 'low' honorarium of para teachers, as compared to regular teachers, reduces the cost of UPE and the local, educated but unemployed youth finds gainful employment.

*Reality:* Before joining as para teachers, most of those in the sample, were unemployed and did odd jobs, (working as casual wage labourers) or working on their own farm. They were young and keen to utilise their educational skills/competencies; para teacher programmes provided them with this opportunity. However, the expectation

that they would remain satisfied with the meagre salary has proved wrong. All the para teachers under study felt that the honorarium was far from sufficient, that they would become permanent and be absorbed as regular teachers.

■ *Since the community was involved in all the necessary steps to set up a school, there existed a sense of belonging with the school.*

The three old programmes—SKP of Rajasthan, VTS of Himachal Pradesh and SKY of Madhya Pradesh—have already witnessed litigation moved by the para teachers of these programmes on various grounds of equality and social justice. These programmes are reported to have succeeded in overcoming the problems arising out of litigation.

*Conclusion:* The low honorarium, however, does not seem to be conducive to the long term sustainability of these programmes.

### **Recruitment Procedure**

In three of the five programmes, the ASP, EGS and SKP, the process of recruiting para teachers starts from the village level, with the community identifying deserving candidates, who are then screened and/or given a test to examine the level of their educational achievements. Other factors such as her/his outlook towards caste,

religion, gender, etc., and above all, that s/he is accepted by the community are considered. They are then appointed by the Zila Panchayat/Gram Panchayat (Madhya Pradesh) as the case may be, or any other body (e.g. Shiksha Karmi Board in Rajasthan) responsible for it.

In Madhya Pradesh, a Selection Committee consisting of the representatives of the Janpad Panchayat, Zila Panchayat, the Education Department and experts nominated by the Standing Committee on education select the Shiksha Karmis. Volunteer Teachers in Himachal Pradesh are selected by the officials of the Education Department.

*Assumption:* (i) Involving the community in the selection procedure will ensure the community's increasing role in the smooth functioning of school later; and (ii) since government primary schools and the Education Department do not seem to be very concerned about the community participation in the running of the school, the selection of para teachers in these schools (VTS, HP and SKY, Madhya Pradesh) is done by the committees constituted for this purpose and represented by officials of the Education Department, and representatives of the block and Zila Panchayats, as the case may be.

*Reality:* After excluding the Volunteer Teachers (four) of Himachal Pradesh and Shiksha Karmis (six) of Madhya Pradesh, the remaining 22 para teachers were selected according to the established procedure. In two or three cases, in Madhya Pradesh, selection was reportedly influenced by political heavyweights.

*Conclusion:* Involving the community in all the necessary steps in setting up a school, inculcates in its members a sense of



belonging to the school, the first step in realising the concept of community ownership of the school.

### Social Background and Outlook

The social background includes age, caste, sex and status of her/his family in the village and her/his outlook towards educational, social and gender issues.

*Assumption:* It is assumed that the para teacher's social background and outlook greatly influence her/his attitude towards children, her/his capacity to empathise and understand their problems, her/his relationship with colleagues, and the quality of her/his relationship with children's parents.

*Reality:* (i) Para teachers who believe in casteism were seen to discriminate against children in school when a situation arises; (ii) ~~where the para teacher and students~~ shared the same social background, a sense of belonging existed between them; (iii) undertones of gender discrimination were noticed in some classes where the para teachers were male; (iv) where there were both male and female teachers, the male teachers dominated (in one school even made fun of them); (v) in one village where people of one particular religion predominated, the secular character of the school was consequently blemished; and (vi) in spite of being aware and speaking eloquently on educational and social issues, it appeared that the para teachers neither believed in nor practised the same.

*Conclusion:* A para teacher, being a local resident, is likely to be more constrained in practising progressive values and ideas because of the closed nature of the community in which s/he lives and the control that the immediate members of the community exercise over her/him. This

fact is borne out by many studies on the nature of closed and open societies.

### Professional Preparation and Continuing Professional Support

In two programmes, SKY (Madhya Pradesh) and VTS (Himachal Pradesh), there was no provision of professional preparation or continuing professional support until the DPEP stepped in and started its programme of school improvement among others, through training, workshops and academic support in the field.

In the remaining three programmes there is a provision of professional preparation (pre-service/initial teacher training) of varying duration: 37/50 days (SKP, Rajasthan), 18 days (EGS, Madhya Pradesh) and 21 days (ASP, Madhya Pradesh). Continuing professional support (in-service training, workshops etc.) is available, as well. Shiksha Karmi Sahayogis are responsible for a unit of 15 schools. They solve the academic problems of para teachers when they make their monthly visit, and also in a two-day monthly meeting at the block or cluster level. Besides, workshops and meetings are held each year for the same. Gurujis of EGS schools receive academic support from the visiting cluster academic coordinators.

Para teachers of ASP are provided academic support by 'Paryavekshaks' or Supervisors, each responsible for 10 schools, in a one-day meeting held each month. Apart from this, ASP and EGS para teachers are also provided with academic inputs in workshops/training every year, the duration of which is ten-twelve days. (Table I in Annexure II, provides a

*A para teacher, being a local resident is likely to be more constrained in practising progressive values and ideas because of the closed nature of the community in which s/he lives.*

not send their children to school when there is pressure of agricultural work or other money earning activities, which they usually consider more important than education. Those in abject poverty see no meaning in educating their children. Their aspirations do not go beyond “*padh likh lega to kai naukri mil jayegi*” (Once he learns to read and write he will be able to get a job). Most of these people treat girls as ‘*paraya dhan*’ (the property of another, i.e., the future husband and his family) and her destiny is marriage upon reaching puberty. A girl’s education ends with “*chithi patri likhna seekh jayegi.*” (she will be able to

read and write letters). The degree of awareness about the importance of education for boys, and especially girls, was found to rise in proportion to the increase in the economic status of the family.

Most children work hard at home, and on the family farm. Some also work as casual labourers. Most children like attending school and dislike household chores, animal grazing, work related to animal husbandry, etc. Despite the hard work thrust upon them, they find time to play local games. Interestingly, their aspirations are concrete and higher than their parents. Most children wanted to become teachers. Others wanted to become doctors, *thanedars*, shopkeepers, ministers, etc.

*Conclusion:* (i) Poor people tend to withdraw their wards from school when there is acute economic pressure on the family to make both ends meet. As the child grows and develops muscles which can earn money, no matter how paltry, poor families drop education in favour of available money-earning activities. For example, with the beginning of the potato cultivating season, poor families in border areas of

Barmer withdraw their children from school, and migrate to Gujarat to work in the potato fields. Young children help their parents in uprooting plants and gathering potatoes, earning about Rs.20/- per day. Even when there is no migration, poor families withdraw their children from school as and when an opportunity provides itself for earning money. It is therefore, very likely that most of these children may never complete a full cycle of five years of primary education; and (ii) the education offered by these programmes is not geared to match the socio-cultural and physical environment of the child. The curriculum content is alien to the child’s environment, s/he does not understand it and therefore finds teaching-learning uninteresting. This has been stated by teachers of many para teacher and government schools. The teacher’s role also leaves much to be desired as we will see in the following discourse on ‘The School’.

### **Community Participation in School Affairs**

Since the para teacher belongs to the same village, where the school is located, or a nearby village, s/he has an in-depth understanding of the local beliefs, social and cultural ethos of the community, which a teacher from a different socio-cultural milieu cannot have. Besides, villagers know about his/her nature, weaknesses and strengths. ‘Organically’ s/he is an integral part of the social history of the community. This fact places the para teacher in a strategic position to elicit community participation in school affairs and management.

*Assumption:* With the community’s ‘ownership’ of the school, the former will ensure the improved functioning of the latter, leading to conditions necessary for effective learning.

■ *The curriculum content is alien to the child’s environment, s/he does not understand it and therefore finds teaching-learning uninteresting.*

**Reality:** The participation of the community in school affairs is not as vigorous as it should be in any of the 21 para teacher schools under study. Their participation is limited to dealing with minor problems, like repairing the school building, providing free labour (*shramdan*) or attending school functions on Independence Day and Republic Day, and contributing money for sweets and prizes which are distributed to the children. The reasons for low involvement of the community, amongst others, are (i) *pariyavekshaks* or supervisors do not interact with the community when they visit the school; and (ii) neither do officials—both at block and district levels—interact with them during their visits to school.

**Conclusion:** The community's participation in school affairs is low and neither is it broad-based. If para teachers, who belong to the same village, fail to mobilise the community, it is indicative of a poor rapport between the para teacher and the community. The reasons for it need to be looked into and necessary steps taken.

## The School

### School Infrastructure and other Facilities

In two programmes, ASP and EGS in Madhya Pradesh, school accommodation is either school is provided by the community or is conducted in the open under a tree (shifting to the para teacher's residence during inclement weather), in the premises of a temple/masjid or Panchayat Bhavan, etc., while in the other three programmes (SKP, Rajasthan, SKY, Madhya Pradesh and VTS, Himachal Pradesh) school buildings have been provided by the Education Department, which is normally a *pucca* building.

**Assumption:** It is assumed that if the community provides school accommodation, it will also get involved in school matters and strengthen its concern for the education of its children, as well.

**Reality:** Out of the eight schools in two programmes (ASP and EGS, Madhya Pradesh), two were held under a tree (and in the para teacher's residence in inclement weather), four in a verandah or a room provided by the community, and two in *pucca* buildings constructed under the programme, for which the community contributed (at one place, at least). Excepting the two schools which were running in *pucca* buildings, the remaining six were held at places most unsuitable for teaching-learning activity—poorly lit, noisy and dirty/unhygienic.

In most of the *pucca* buildings provided by the Education Department, the space was inadequate and some of the buildings were in a dilapidated state. Most of these buildings had two large rooms, one small room and a verandah. The number of blackboards and *dari pattis* were inadequate, and in some schools these items were only partially usable.

### Classroom Processes/Classroom Culture

Classroom processes and/or classroom culture include teaching-learning environment in the class, sitting arrangement, interaction and discourse between the teacher and pupils, teaching method, use of TLM, peer/group learning and other aspects that might constitute a classroom culture. Learning achievements, are in fact, the end-products of classroom processes and culture.

*Though the para teacher is in a strategic position to elicit community participation in school affairs, in many cases community participation is low and not as vigorous and broad based as it could be.*

*Assumption:* Classroom processes and culture provide a stimulating environment which promotes teaching and learning. Therefore, the manner in which classroom culture is created is critical.

*Reality:* In most of the 21 para teacher schools, classroom culture failed to provide a stimulating environment which would have ensured interesting and effective teaching-learning. This is evident from the characteristic features prevalent in these schools: (i) an appropriate sitting arrangement contributes tremendously to

the quality of teaching-learning processes: most para teachers were unaware of this, with the exception of two teachers in Mia Ka Padla (Rajasthan) and Kunjra Khodra (Madhya Pradesh); (ii) corporal punishment was used in all the 21 para teacher schools and by all para teachers, excepting one or two; (iii) the teaching-learning process was largely textbook based, other activities or materials were seldom used; (iv) very few

teachers felt the necessity of drawing upon the information or knowledge brought in to class by the children. The rest were not conscious of it even when an opportunity presented itself; (v) The teacher spoke most of the time in the class: children spoke only when asked questions and neither did they make any queries to the teacher—the entire transaction was like a monologue; (vi) emphasis on rote learning was clearly visible in most of the teaching-learning activities; (vii) generally, no independent learning activity was offered to children except in copying from the blackboard; (viii) some teachers were found giving more attention to bright students than to weaker students; (ix) there was no attempt on the part of

teachers to promote peer learning in the class; (x) teachers were often unaware of the children's (lack of) depth of understanding of a lesson; (xi) generally, no attempt was made to make the classrooms attractive with displays, charts and such other things.

[Note: Notwithstanding the fact, that in most para teacher schools under study, there is a shortage of classrooms and teachers, while the teacher-pupil ratio is very high in some schools; some measures to create a stimulating classroom culture could have been attempted by the para teachers. However, they were either not aware of the need of a sound classroom culture or were indifferent to it.]

(xii) given the fact that many para teacher schools have a high teacher-pupil ratio, with inadequate space for separate classes, multigrade teaching becomes a necessity. With the exception of a few para teachers, most were unable to effectively practise this because they did not possess this technique; (xiii) it is essential to plan lessons and teaching strategies in advance, to create an interesting and effective teaching-learning environment. In SKP, Rajasthan, the teaching plan is centrally prepared at a two-day monthly workshop, for the next month, for each class and subject. It was observed that there was a tendency to push through the scheduled teaching plan without paying attention to whether the content was properly understood, and by how many students. With the exception of five para teachers, other teachers of the five programmes, came to the class unprepared, without a lesson plan. (xiv) Records of a child's progress are not maintained, for evaluating her/him continually on a daily or weekly basis; and (xv) some programmes allowed for the provision of children's library (SKY, Madhya

■ *The teaching-learning situation was by and large unsatisfactory. Para teachers could not create a classroom culture of effective learning until and unless they are educated and trained in the basics of classroom processes and are willing to use them.*

Pradesh, SKP, Rajasthan and VTS, Himachal Pradesh) but children were unable to make use of it (SKP, Rajasthan) due to lack of access, whereas in other places they were able to use the library.

*Conclusion:* The teaching-learning situation was unsatisfactory. Para teachers cannot create a classroom culture of effective learning until and unless they are educated and trained in the basics of classroom processes and were willing to use them.

In most government primary schools, teachers seemed to know some of the basics of quality teaching but wouldn't use them. Their teaching-learning processes also suffered from the drawbacks mentioned above. Although corporal punishment was a regular feature in almost all the schools, it appeared that it was used more frequently in government schools than in para teacher schools.

### School Organisation

A school needs to be organised in such a manner that school timings suit both children and community. The timetable is so planned that it makes the best use of time, materials and resources, and the school calendar suits the cultural and occupational requirements of the community. (For example, at the time of sowing or harvesting the crops, children are withdrawn from school to work on family farms).

*Assumption:* It is assumed that if a school is well organised, the teaching-learning activities in the school are greatly facilitated in the achievement of their objectives.

*Reality:* (i) In the Government primary schools, where para teachers are also working (SKP, Rajasthan, SKY, Madhya Pradesh and VTS, Himachal Pradesh), school timings are decided and the school calendar

prepared by the Education Department, which gives, if at all, very little freedom to satisfy the various communities and cultures. School timings and the calendar are generally uniform for all parts of the state. However, in the two other programmes, ASP and EGS, Madhya Pradesh, school timings and calendar schedule may be decided by the community, though this is rarely done. In most places the teachers and/or the Sarpanch decide.

However, an EGS teacher informed the research team that he followed the Government primary school timings so that people would consider his school on par with the government school. This may be the case in other places also; (ii) In most para teacher schools under study, no written timetable was available. A loose, mutually agreed timetable, among teachers, was followed; and (iii) the periodicity of the assessment of learning levels of children was fixed weekly, monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annually in some schools.

However, in these schools it was observed that weekly and monthly evaluations were not strictly followed. In Government primary schools (SKY, Madhya Pradesh and VTS, Himachal Pradesh) pupils were evaluated quarterly, half-yearly and annually as fixed by the Education Department. In most schools, parents were informed orally about the evaluation results. Progress report cards were rarely used.

*Conclusion:* At many places, parents complained that both the school timings and school calendar did not suit them, especially when there was pressure of agricultural work. Thus, children had to miss school to work on family farms.

■ *The teaching-learning process in regular schools was equally unsatisfactory. Corporal punishment was used more frequently in regular schools than in para teacher school.*

## School Management

In the para teacher programmes, great emphasis has been placed on the formation of local level committees for creating an environment for schooling and school management at the village level. At the block level, the school is managed by the BEO, BDO, BRC and the Panchayat Samiti and at district level by the DEO, DPO, DPEP and DEO.

*Assumption:* The formation of the VEC will ensure an increase in community participation in various school activities.

*Reality:* A Village Education Committee has been formed/constituted in all the schools under study. This was also confirmed by the records (register indicating the names of VEC members and the meetings) available in the school, as well as discussions with community members and para teachers. However, in all the schools, the VECs were constituted after the inception of the five programmes under study.

In all the schools it was either the para teacher or the Sarpanch who identified the members of the VEC. The members of the VEC varied from 11 to 14. All the VECs had an adequate representation of different castes, and women. The procedure followed for the constitution of the VEC was, however, not in conformity with democratic norms and, therefore, such VECs often had members who were not necessarily interested in education.

Although the VEC members were expected to meet once a month, no single pattern was observed in the frequency of VEC meetings. In some places it was

mentioned that VEC meetings were organised when the need arose. The study clearly indicated that the participation of women in VEC meetings was a mere formality; they did not attend or participate in the meeting, and they did not have any role in decision making. Some of them who did attend the meetings did not participate actively.

The role of VEC was limited to providing infrastructural facilities, addressing issues of enrolment and drop-out and retention of children and participation in national festivals. In some places, however, such participation was not forthcoming. VEC members were not involved in either assessing the teacher's performance or the educational levels and performance of the children. Most VEC members did not undergo any training. Those members who participated in training often saw it as a mere formality and lacked clarity on their role and responsibilities as VEC members.

*Conclusion:* The study indicates that even though VECs have been formed in most villages, they have yet to play an active role in school management and teaching-learning process. There is evidence to suggest that the programme and district level officials have not visualised the full potential of the VEC's role and responsibilities nor the steps that would make full use of it.

## Teachers Image in the Community

Para teachers were generally held in esteem by the community. Their regularity and rapport with the community was appreciated. The image of the regular teacher too, was good, though opinion differed with regard to her/his regularity and commitment to their profession. Generally speaking, the image in both cases was dependent on their interaction with

At many places, parents complained that both the school timings and the school calendar did not suit them, especially when there was pressure of agricultural work—children had to miss school to work on the farm. The infrastructure arrangements were quite inadequate in some para teacher programmes.

the community and the extent to which they were committed to their responsibilities. The factor of localism also played a critical role.

### Learning Achievement

To assess the learning achievement levels of students in various para teacher/ government schools, this research study adopted various qualitative and quantitative techniques like classroom observations, interaction and discussions with teachers, students and parents and written and oral tests in Hindi and Maths for the pupils of Classes III and V. It was decided to take a random stratified cross-section of students (inclusive of girls) for the tests in Hindi and Maths from Classes III and V.

Test questions were designed keeping in view the skills and competencies that students who have completed Class II and ~~Class IV~~ would have acquired. In Hindi, skills and competencies like listening, speaking, reading, writing and comprehension were evaluated. For Mathematics, competencies in number sequencing, place value, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and application of Maths were tested.

*Findings:* The rationale and utility of para

teachers, as also their prospects, largely depend on their performance in classrooms, which are reflected in the learner's achievements. The learner's achievements, barring a few exceptions, were far below the expected norms in all schools. The following findings in these issues speak for themselves:

- The overall performance of students in all four para teacher projects, Shiksha Karmi Programme, Rajasthan, Alternative Schooling Programme, Madhya Pradesh, Volunteer Teacher Scheme, Himachal Pradesh and Shiksha Karmi Yojna, Madhya Pradesh (where para teachers are working along with regular teachers) and also that of the government schools is a matter of concern, as their performance is far from satisfactory. ■
- Generally speaking, there was nothing markedly distinguishable in the learning achievements of para teacher schools and Government primary schools, some variations of degree notwithstanding.

*The overall performance of students in all five para teacher projects and also that of the government schools is a matter of concern, as their performance is far from satisfactory.*

The class-wise, subject-wise analysis is indicative of the following broad points (Refer to Table 3.1 below).

Table 3.1 Learning Achievements

S. No.	Programme/State	Percentage of Students Scoring Below 50% Marks							
		Total No of Students Assessed	Class III Hindi	Total No of Students Assessed	Class V Hindi	Total No of Students Assessed	Class III Maths	Total No of Students Assessed	Class V Maths
1	Shiksha Karmi Programme, Rajasthan	27	74%	26	77%	27	52%	26	84%
2	Alternative Schooling Programme, Madhya Pradesh	19	37%	6	16.5%	19	26%	6	83.5%
3	Shiksha Karmi Yojna, Madhya Pradesh	22	68%	14	71.5%	22	64%	9	78%
4	Volunteer Teacher Scheme, Himachal Pradesh	24	66.5%	24	33.5%	24	58.5%	24	95.5%
5	Rajkiya Prathamik Vidyalaya, Rajasthan	22	45.5%	16	62.5%	21	43%	16	75%
6	Shaskiya Prathamik Vidyalaya, Madhya Pradesh	23	74%	22	77.5%	23	65%	24	83.5%

A detailed analysis of learning achievement levels may be seen in Annexure III).

- The performance of para teacher schools, as reflected in learning achievements—both class- and subject-wise—is poor. Few exceptions here and there do not make a qualitative difference in the pattern.
- Schools with both para- and regular teachers (SKP, Madhya Pradesh and VTS, Himachal Pradesh) have not done better than the exclusive para teacher schools (SKP, Rajasthan and ASP, Madhya Pradesh).
- Learning achievements in Maths are much lower in class V than in class III—a phenomenon that requires serious introspection.



# Epilogue

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The issues and concerns which emerged from the present study and which we believe require the attention of the planners and policy-makers have necessitated this epilogue.

The phenomenon of para teacher programmes has really grown in some states. It includes alternative or community schools, in remote or inaccessible areas, where formal schools cannot be opened or have become dysfunctional. Many such ~~para-teacher~~ based alternatives have also been established under various programmes-even in villages which have formal schools, for children who have not been enrolled in the regular school or are drop-outs. In some states, para teacher programmes have developed as a parallel system of primary education for the children of deprived sections of society e.g. EGS and ASP of Madhya Pradesh, community schools and Mabedi schools of Andhra Pradesh, multigrade schools of Kerala and many other strategies under the Alternative Schooling Programme of DPEP. The study underlines the relevance of these para teacher programmes.

Another major strand of para teacher programmes is the recruitment of para teachers in lieu of government teachers in formal schools. This is happening extensively in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and is now

proposed to be started in Uttar Pradesh.

These programmes are attractive because of their low overhead costs and the accountability of the para teachers by virtue of the fact that they, in most of these programmes, are local persons often from the same village. This factor of 'localism' has however been diluted in some of the para teachers programmes viz. Shiksha Karmi Yojna of Madhya Pradesh, Vidya Sahayak Yojna of Gujarat etc which is likely to adversely affect the accountability of such teachers.

The following discussion is an attempt to look at these programmes beyond the 'early gains', in terms of their desirability and sustainability.

## Low Investment

### Salary

A Para teacher gets 20-25 per cent of the salary a government teacher in the formal system would get as a starter. Thus, there is definitely a substantial saving on this account. On the down side, however, experience has shown that this factor combined with the insecure nature of their job has also been the largest source of discontent among the para teachers in many older programmes. There exists a very deep sense of resentment among para teachers on these issues. They look

forward to being absorbed one day as a regular government teacher. In many states they have sought legal intervention for the redressal of their grievances, demanding equal pay for equal work and job security. Due to judicial verdicts many earlier para teacher programmes have been modified. Provisions have been made to absorb them after few years of satisfactory service and the fulfillment of certain basic requirements. Such a provision already exists in some para teacher programmes, according to which, after putting in a few years of service they are entitled to become regular teachers. Once this happens, (and it has already begun in some programmes), not only the will programme cease to be economical, but it will have also have less competent teachers. This means that proper attention must be not paid towards the professional development of para teachers and they must be placed on a salary at par with the regular government teachers.

Another repercussion that would follow is that the para teacher would become one of the members of an existing teacher corps whose work culture has deteriorated to a culture of 'little or no work'. It may not be far-fetched to assume that the para teacher's present performance is probably greatly influenced by the fear of losing her/his job. They know that if they do not perform, they run the risk of being sacked any time. Once that fear ceases to exist and in the absence of any other driving force, the positive aspects of the para teacher programme will also cease to exist. This too can be remedied by providing proper professional training inputs of a sufficient duration.

### **Teacher Training**

The duration of initial/pre-service teacher training in various para teacher pro-

grammes varies from 18 days to 37 days. There appears to be an assumption that training for between 18 to 37 days is sufficient to professionally prepare a person for teaching primary classes. The duration of training and its content has not received due attention in various para teacher programmes. The training programmes have not been effective in addressing the real needs of para teachers, as evidenced by the analysis of the classroom environment and processes. Most programmes have not given much thought to continuing professional preparation and the need to outline a comprehensive career advancement plan for para teachers.

On the other hand, a regular government teacher is normally trained for two years before appointment. Clearly, therefore, a regular teacher is likely to be more competent academically and is equipped to provide a better learning situation in school. The poor learning achievements in formal schools, as evidenced in this and other studies, indicates that most regular teachers have been indifferent to their work and have not utilised the academic preparation they were given. On the other hand, we feel that the poor quality of teaching in para teacher schools is due more to their (in some cases) lower qualifications and inadequate training and preparation.

### **Infrastructural Facilities**

Most para teacher schools run under a tree, in a veranda, or a room provided by the community, or in a public place such as a temple etc. With a few exceptions, all these places are unfit for carrying out teaching-learning work effectively. These places are called schools, but remain so in name only. For, schooling is just not possible there. Sure, there is no cost involved but should it not be ensured that a place

called a 'school' fulfils at least those minimal conditions that ensure that organized teaching-learning takes place? This again, highlights the fact that adequate attention has not been paid to the quality of education imparted by the para teacher programme.

### **Equitable Education**

It follows from the above that education being provided under the para teacher programmes, for a large number of disadvantaged and poor children, will remain deficient in quality and equity unless the following lacunae are taken care of:

(i) proper provision for professional development and career advancement of para teachers, and (ii) basic minimum physical infrastructure for schools, to be able to organise teaching learning processes effectively. Both quality and equity

are inherent in the concept of universalisation of primary education. These need to be ensured to avoid widening the already existing social divide. This issue has far reaching consequences and therefore seriously require the attention of policy makers.

### **Summing Up**

As is widely known, the formal education system has deteriorated into a non-performing and unaccountable institution. Once para teachers are absorbed into the formal system, para teacher schools would also most likely, acquire the characteristics of the formal system. Therefore, to evolve and sustain effective and efficient para teacher schools, it will be necessary to simultaneously intensify the efforts to revamp the formal system.



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## Abbreviations and Glossary

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ANM	Auxiliary Nurse-Midwife
<i>Bai Meia</i>	Children's fair
<i>Bhajan/Kirtan</i>	Devotional songs
<i>Bigha</i>	Measurement of land
<i>Chikni Mitti</i>	Clay
CL	Casual leave
<i>Haat</i>	Weekly bazaar
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
<i>Jaharphook/Jadutona</i>	Witchcraft
<i>Jatha</i>	Mobile cultural troupe
<i>Aangan</i>	Front portion of the house
<i>Adhyapak/Mat-Sahib/Guruji</i>	Teacher
AP	<i>Angan Pathshala</i>
ASP	Alternative Schooling Programme
BDO	Block Development Officer
BEO	Block Education Officer
CAC	Cluster Academic Coordinator
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
<i>Dari pattis</i>	Cotton mats used to sit on the floor
DEO	District Education Officer
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DPO	District Project Officer
DS	Day School
EEO	Education Extension Officer
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

Panchayat Samiti	Block Level Local Government
Panchayat	Local Government
PP	<i>Prahar Pathshala</i>
<i>Pradhan</i>	Elected Chief of Panchayat Samiti
PT	Para teacher
SANDHAN	An NGO in Jaipur
Sarpanch	Head of Village Council
SED	State Education Department
<i>Shramdan</i>	Community labour/Voluntarily working together
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
SIERT	State Institute Of Educational Research and Training, Udaipur
SK	Shiksha Karmi
SKB	Shiksha Karmi Board
SKP	Shiksha Karmi Programme
SKS	Shiksha Karmi Sahayogi
SKY	Shiksha Karmi Yojna
STC	Short Teaching Certificate
SWRC	Social Work and Research Centre
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
TWD	Tribal Welfare Department
VEC	Village Education Committee
UEE	Universalisation of Education
VM	Vichar Manch
VTS	Volunteer Teacher Scheme

## Annexure I

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### I Background Information

This has been dealt with in the programme profiles, and is entitled *Reaching Out Further*, for which material was provided by the research team at Bodh.

### II Programme Profile<sup>1</sup>

- Origin
  - Rationale
  - Concept and philosophy
  - Planned size of the programme
  - Status of the programme
  - Structure of the programme
  - Nature of school employing para teachers
  - Qualifications and selection procedure for para teachers
  - School curriculum
  - Teaching-learning materials (TLM)
  - Teacher training and academic support system for teachers
  - Monitoring and evaluation
  - School management
  - Community participation
  - Sources of funding
  - Annual budget
- Examining the need for a multiplicity of programmes for the same objective
  - Para teachers vis-à-vis regular teachers
  - Comparing their programme with those running in other states
  - Some programmes have master trainers (for para teachers) drawn from among regular teachers who have by and large been considered dysfunctional. How does the state perceive this anomaly?
  - Gauging the programme's success
  - Problems experienced in the implementation of the programme
  - To check whether the goal of ownership of the school by the community is being realised in the programme
  - The programme's standing in the context of universalisation of primary education

### IV Village Location: The Setting

- Whether accessible and linked by road. The distance from the nearest urban centre
- The population, its social composition and ratio of literates versus illiterates
- Major occupation of people in the area
- The availability of educational and other facilities, and the state of development

### III State's Perception of the Programme

- The rationale of the programme

## V Number of Children in the Village

### a) A broad understanding of school-age child population is to be developed.

This includes the following information:

- Name, sex, age group, caste
- Students of which class/level
- Nature of work done at home and in the fields
- Educated members in the family
- Occupation of father and mother
- Parents' concern for child's education
- Marriageable age of boys/girls
- Child's exposure to the outside world
- Child's ambitions, aspirations, dreams

### b) More details, with respect to students sampled for the achievement tests (in addition to the above). These are:

- Since when is s/he studying here?
- Where was s/he studying earlier? Reason for leaving if relevant
- Average attendance in the past months
- Mother tongue of the child

## VI School Inventory

### a) Location and environment

Accessibility

- Maximum distance a child has to travel
- Problems faced during travel to school

Location

- Suitability in terms of teaching/learning activity

Conditions

- Light, ventilation, cleanliness, safe from heat, cold and rain

- Space to sit, work, play
- Drinking water facility
- Availability of toilets
- Storage space for TLM, other materials

### b) Statistics

- Date of the school's opening
- Enrolment last year/ at present (at the time of field visit)
- Number of teachers and since when they have been teaching in this school
- Number of drop-outs and reasons thereof
- Student attendance

### c) Organisation

School timings

- Who decides?
- Its suitability for both children and parents

School timetable

- Who designs it? Factors taken into consideration while designing it
- Who can make changes to it?
- Whether it is adhered to? If not, reasons

School calendar

- Who prepares it?
- Who can make changes?
- Is it suitable for both children and parents?

Materials

- Availability
- What more is needed?
- Procedure for procurement

Leave

- Procedure for teachers to take leave

## VII Assessments/Evaluations

- The nature and frequency



- Recording
- Whether parents are informed and if so, how?
- Follow-up actions, if any

#### a) Decision-making

How are decisions taken about the following within the school:

- School cleanliness
- Arranging for drinking water
- Bringing children to school

### VIII Teacher Profile

#### a) Socio-economic background and educational qualifications

- Age, sex, caste, marital status, mother tongue
- Educational qualifications and previous experience
- Whether native of village
- Number of educated people in the family
- Other wage earning occupations
- Total earnings
- Distance of residence from school; the time taken in reaching school

#### b) Recruitment

- How did s/he become a para teacher (PT)
- Required qualification for the PT
- Recruitment and selection procedure
- Level of satisfaction with the procedure

#### c) Professional preparation and continuing professional support

- When did teacher receive training after appointment?
- Nature of training: how long, whether residential, whether paid a stipend, etc.

- What was taught?
- Usefulness of training
- Any other training after initial training?
- Nature of in-service training: how long, whether residential, whether stipend paid, etc.
- Nature of academic support

#### d) Role perception

- Responsibilities apart from teaching
- Does s/he like the teaching job? What does s/he like about it?
- What difficulties does s/he experience?
- Any pleasant surprises (areas of satisfaction)
- Any disillusionment (areas of dissatisfaction)

#### e) Status

- Regular receipt of remuneration
- Additional benefits
- Nature of relationship with the community
- Nature of relationship with colleagues
- Nature of relationship with block and district level officials
- Whether s/he receives the respect they deserve as a teacher

#### f) Ambition and aspirations

- Ambition before becoming a para teacher
- Present ambitions
- Efforts being made by her/him to achieve these
- Support received, if any and from whom

#### g) Perspective on education

#### h) Worldview

## **IX Programme Organiser's (BEO, CEO, DPO) Perception of Para teacher**

- What are the responsibilities of a para teacher in the programme (teaching and non-teaching)?
- Is the para teacher able to fulfill her/his role/responsibilities?
- Is the organiser/s satisfied with the para teacher's performance?
- What is the status of para teacher in the eyes of the BEO, CEO or DPO?
- What teacher-related problems are faced by these officials?
- In their opinion, what is the community's perception of the para teacher?
- How do the other programme personnel perceive the para teacher?
- Do para teachers get the respect they deserve?

## **X Recruitment/Selection Procedure of Para teacher**

- Minimum qualifications required for the post of para teacher (academic and non academic)
- The selection procedure
- Total time taken in the appointment process
- Who are the members of the selection committee?
- Is any TA/DA given to the candidates?
- Is any Reservation Policy followed?

## **XI Professional Preparation and Continuing Professional Support**

### **a) Professional support**

#### *Organisation of training*

- Size of training groups
- Duration and nature (residential/ non-residential)
- Incentives

- Cost of training (per para teacher)

#### **The training**

- What other roles apart from teaching are the trainees prepared for?
- What is the methodology used in training?
- Daily schedule/ plan of the training
- Assessment of trainees

#### **Content of training**

- The training module, who prepared this and when?
- Changes in the training module, if any
- Flexibility in its use
- Does the training provide the teacher adequate wherewithal for the roles s/he has to play?

#### **Evaluation of training**

- Training evaluation procedure
- Follow up, if any

#### **Trainers and master-trainers**

- Who are the trainers i.e., their background
- Their qualifications and specialization, and who trained them

### **b) Continuing professional support**

- In-service training, if any, and its nature
- Duration and periodicity of in-service training
- Incentives for the trainees
- Is the content of the training need-based?
- Who are the trainers?
- Is the training useful for the teacher?
- Besides in-service training, what are the other ways of providing continuous professional/academic support?

### c) Academic support system besides in-service training

## XII Classroom Processes/Classroom Culture

### Physical features

#### Sitting arrangement

- Light, blackboard, space for teacher to move around, access to TLM, suitable for activity/subject etc.

### Children

- Number of children present
- Classroom discipline, whether corporal punishment used
- Girl-boy ratio
- Mix of older and younger children
- Peer/group learning
- Multigrade/ multilevel teaching
- Freedom of pace of learning/ independent learning
- Special attention to weaker students
- Quality of teacher-children interaction/ relationship
- Planning/ recording/ preparation of lesson plan
- Use of TLM/ innovative ways of teaching adopted/ activities besides text books
- Discrimination by teacher (based on gender/caste etc.)
- Homework—how it is managed
- Level of involvement of children/ teacher in classroom transaction
- Other points of pedagogical significance

## XIII Community Participation

- Is there a functional Village Education Committee (VEC), or some similar organisation?
- Parents/ community's involvement in school/ children's activities
- Community's concern for the school
- Community's perception of each para teacher
- Each para teacher's perception of the community

## XIV School Management

- The nature of management structure
- Involvement of the community
- Involvement of teachers
- Systems of monitoring

## XV Learning Achievement

- Tests prepared by experts to assess the level of learning achievement are to be administered to students who have successfully passed Class-II exams and who are now in Class III, as well as to students who have cleared Class IV exams and are now in Class V.

## XVI Litigation

## XVII Budget

## Annexure II

Table I

## Professional Preparation and Continuing Professional Support System for Para teachers

Items	Shiksha Karmi Programme (Rajasthan)	Alternative Schooling Programme (Madhya Pradesh)	Education Guarantee Scheme (Madhya Pradesh)	Shiksha Karmi Yojna (Madhya Pradesh)	Volunteer Teacher Scheme (Himachal Pradesh)
1. Minimum educational qualification required	8th pass for male teachers and 5th pass for female teachers	10th pass	Higher Secondary pass		Matric pass
2. Provision and duration of pre-service/initial training	37 or 50 days initial training is imparted by NGOs of whom Sandhan Jaipur is the most prominent	21-days initial training imparted by DIET and district resource persons	18-days initial training arranged by the Education Department with assistance from the Tribal Welfare Department	12-days initial training imparted by DIET	No provision of initial training
3. In-service or continuing professional support system	1. 30 days refresher training in the first year 2. Similar courses of 40 days and 30 days duration in the second and subsequent years 3. 20-days remedial training for weak teachers each year. 4. A 2-day monthly meeting 5. Shiksha Karmi Sahayogis (Supervisors) each responsible for a unit of 15 schools, provide help in monthly meetings and in the field.	1. A 10-day refresher training programme every year 2. One day Review and Planning Meeting every month 3. <i>Paryavekshakas</i> (Supervisors) each responsible for 10 Alternative Schools provide help in monthly meetings and in the field.	1. Subsequent training of 12-15 days each year 2. Cluster Resource Centre provides academic support to a group of 8-10 schools. 3. Cluster Academic Coordinator visits EGS Schools and provides on the spot academic support to the <i>Gurujis</i> .	Subsequent training as for regular government teachers	As for regular government teachers started under DPEP programme

**Table 2**  
**Professional Preparation and Continuing Professional Support System for**  
**Regular Government teachers**

Items	Madhya Pradesh	Rajasthan	Himachal Pradesh
1. Minimum educational qualification required	Higher Secondary	Higher Secondary	High school
2. Provision and duration of pre-service/initial training	Must have received a teacher training of one-year duration or more (BTI, B. Ed. etc.)	STC of one-year duration.	2. JBT (Junior Basic Teacher) of two years duration.
3. In-service or continuing professional support system	Training is imparted by DIET and other agencies when a new initiative in education is launched such as:  1. Operation black board (10 days) 2. Shiksha Samakhya (6 days) 3. MLL (10 days) 4. Literacy (2 days) 5. Teaching methods for class I to V (10 days)	3. Professional support system provided by DIET and Lok Jumbish in the areas of  (a) Curriculum, development (b) Development of low cost TLM (c) MLL  <del>Duration of all this training</del> is about one week each	3. Professional support system introduced under DPEP. Trainings are imparted by DIET and support structures at Block and Cluster levels; new initiative taken such as:  (a) Teacher orientation for school readiness. (b) Refresher training for 10 days (c) Preparation and use of TLM for 7 days.

**Table 3**  
**Academic Inputs Received by Regular Government Teachers**

Teacher	Year of joining	Year of first training	Duration of first training	No. of in-service training taken so far	No. of Days
<b>1. Dhar</b>					
RT – (AS)	1994	1997	2	1	12
RT – (SKY)	1994	1994	10	4	10, 10, 12, 12
RT – (EGS)	1972	1975	10	4	12, 12, 12, 12
RT – (EGS)	1984	1994	8	4	12, 12, 12, 12
RT – (AS)	1986	1997	12	1	12
<b>2. Raigarh</b>					
RT – (SKY)	1993	1997	7	2	12, 12
RT – (EGS)	1986	-	-	-	Received training every year after DPEP came into existence.
RT – (EGS)	1986	-	-	-	Information is not available
RT – (AS)	1960	-	-	8	12 days duration each
RT – (AS)	1983	1986	30	6	10, 12, 10, 12, 10, 12
<b>3. Tikamgarh</b>					
RT – (EGS)	1988	1992	10	4	6, 10, 2, 10
RT – (EGS)	1982	1992	10	3	6, 10, 10
RT – (AS)	1987	1996	-	10	1, 1, 7, 7, 10, 10, 12, 12, 3, 3
RT – (AS)	1996	1996	6	10	<u>Information not available</u>
<b>4. Raisen</b>					
RT – (AS)	1958	1978	30	2	12, 12
RT – (AS)	1983	-	7	5	7, 7, 7, 12, 12
<b>5. Ajmer</b>					
RT – (SKY)	1986	1988	10	9	6, 7, 7, 7, 7, 7, 7, 7, 7 (by Lok Jumbish)
RT – (SKY)	1993	1993	5	6	5 to 10 days each (Lok Jumbish).
<b>6. Banswara</b>					
RT – (SKY)	1989	-	-	-	5 (for Guru Mitra)
RT – (SKY)	1989	1993	7	-	-
<b>7. Bharatpur</b>					
RT – (SKY)	1987	-	7	3	12, 10, 8
RT – (SKY)	1975	1994	10	3	10, 10, 10 (Lok Jumbish)
<b>8. Barmer</b>					
RT – (SKY)	1996	-	-	-	-

RT = Regular Teachers

\* In parenthesis is given the name of the programme to which the para teacher school, with which the government school was paired in which the RTs worked belonged.

Note: There were 27 regular government teachers in the sample. Information on four teachers could not be obtained.

**Table 4**  
**Academic Inputs Received by ParaTeachers**

Teacher	Year of joining	Year of first training	Duration of first training	No. of in-service training taken so far	No. of Days
<b>Shiksha Karmi Programme, Rajasthan</b>					
<b>Karauli</b>					
T-I	1990	1990	1 month	15	30, 30, 20, 20, 20, 20, 20, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 7
T-II	1994	1994	37 days	8	30, 30, 30, 20, 10, 10, 10, 10
<b>Banswara</b>					
T-I	1993	1993	37 days	11	30, 30, 20, 20, 20, 20, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10
T-II	1993	1993	37 days	9	30, 30, 20, 20, 20, 10, 10, 10, 10
<b>Bharatpur</b>					
T-I	1994	1994	37 days	6	30, 30, 20, 20, 10, 6
T-II	1994	1994	37 days	6	30, 30, 20, 20, 10, 7
<b>Barmer</b>					
T-I	1993	1993	37 days	7	30, 30, 20, 20, 20, 10, 7
T-II	1997	1997	30 days	3	30, 27, 17
<b>Ajmer</b>					
T-I	1988	1988	37 days	20	30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10
T-II	1997	1997	37 days	2	30, 30
T-III	1988	1988	20 days	19	30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 20, 20, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10
<b>Alternative Schooling Programme, Madhya Pradesh</b>					
<b>Tikamgarh</b>					
T-I	1995	1995	21	2	17, 10
T-II	1995	1995	21	3	17, 12, 10
<b>Dhar</b>					
T-I	1996	1996	21	1	17
<b>Raigarh</b>					
T-I	1995	1995	21	1	10
T-II	1995	1995	21	1	10
<b>Raisen</b>					
T-I	1996	1996	21	2	17, 12
T-II	1995	1995	21	4	12, 10, 17, 2

### Academic Inputs Received by Para Teachers (contd.)

Teacher	Year of joining	Year of first training	Duration of first training	No. of in-service training taken so far	No. of Days
<b>Education Guarantee Scheme, Madhya Pradesh</b>					
<b>Dhar</b>					
T-I	1997	1997	10	2	12, 12
<b>Tikamgarh</b>					
T-I	1997	1997	4	2	12, 12
<b>Raigarh</b>					
T-I	1997	1997	12	3	12, 12, 4
<b>Raisen</b>					
T-I	1997	-	-	2	4, 12
<b>Shiksha Karmi Yojna, Madhya Pradesh</b>					
<b>Dhar</b>					
T-I	1997	1997	10	-	-
<b>Raigarh</b>					
T-I	1997	(BIT) 1993	-	-	-
T-II	1995	1995	10	2	10, 12
<b>Raisen</b>					
T-I	1996	1996	12	-	-
<b>Tikamgarh</b>					
T-I	1995	1996	12	3	12, 12, 12
T-II	1996	1996	10	1	12
<b>Volunteer Teacher Scheme, Himachal Pradesh</b>					
<b>Sirmour</b>					
T-I	1992	1996	7	1	7
T-II	1992	1997	7	2	7, 7
<b>Chamba</b>					
T-I	1992	1998	10	1	7
T-II	1990	1998	7	-	-



## Analysis of Learning Achievements

Learning achievements of children of both para teacher and Government Primary Schools do reflect on the pedagogical understanding and academic competencies of the teachers. But, before taking up an analysis of the learning achievements in the four para teacher programmes (under study) it is necessary to keep in view the varying nature of para teacher schools.

First, among the four para teacher programmes, two (SKY in MP and VTS, Himachal Pradesh) were not exclusive para teacher schools, since para teachers as well as regular teachers worked side by side. The other two programmes (SKP, Rajasthan and ASP, MP) were exclusively run by para teachers. Hence, the learning achievements of children in these four programmes should be viewed in these varying contextual situations.

Secondly, while para teacher schools under all four programmes were selected taking their remoteness and socio-cultural variations and other such criteria into consideration, the Government primary schools were chosen only on the basis of proximity to the para teacher schools. It is also important, at this point, to remember that para teacher schools were set up principally in those areas where the government-school system was mostly dysfunctional or did not exist. Thus, there were three sets of schools (i) those exclusively run by para teachers; (ii) those

where both para teachers and regular teachers worked; and (iii) government schools closest in proximity to para teacher schools.

Hence, comparing the learning achievements of children studying in these schools needs not only caution but also, in some cases, may be inappropriate due to the greatly varying conditions under which these are functioning.

### The Analysis

The analysis gives quite a dismal picture of learning achievements across the board, inclusive of both para teacher and government schools (see Tables no. 1 and 2). The performance is woefully bad with few exceptions (in a negligible number of cases). Programme-wise and in terms of class and subject, there are of course variations but these do not qualitatively disturb the general pattern.

While taking up the class and subject-wise analysis of learning achievements, 50 per cent and above marks obtained by children have been regarded as average, whereas the number of children exceeding 50 per cent of the total number under a programme, getting less than 50 per cent marks has been taken as reflective of a poor level of learning achievements. Taking these criteria for testing the quality of learning achievements, a class and subject

wise analysis has been attempted as under:

### **Class III, Hindi**

The learners performance was disappointing because in all programmes (except the Alternative Schooling Programme, MP) more than 50 per cent children scored less than 50 per cent marks. Under the SKP, Rajasthan, the percentage of children in this category was as high as 74 per cent, while in SKY (MP) it was 68 per cent followed by 66.5 per cent in VTS (Himachal Pradesh). Above average performance of Alternative Schools (only 37 per cent children scoring less than 50 per cent marks) was primarily due to one particular school, and the situation in other schools under this programme was no different from those of other para teacher programmes.

### **Class V, Hindi**

It was disheartening to note that, as compared to Class III-Hindi, the children's performance here showed a downward trend. With the exception of ASP (MP) and VTS (Himachal Pradesh), the percentage of children scoring less than 50 per cent in the other two programmes (SKP, Rajasthan and SKY, Madhya Pradesh) had risen to 77 per cent and 71.5 per cent respectively. It may be noted that VTS schools have regular teachers working with para teachers, and the former probably handle Class V subjects. This may explain the reason why the percentage of children, scoring less than 50 per cent marks fell from 66.5 per cent to 33.5 per cent. As for the ASP (MP), the Hindi test for Class V was conducted in one particular school only, the performance of which was better than other alternate schools.

### **Class III, Mathematics**

With the exception of schools under the ASP, Class III students in the other three

programmes did not perform well. More than 50 per cent of the children scored less than 50 per cent marks in all these three programmes, though SKY (Madhya Pradesh) performed the worst, with 64 per cent children scoring less than 50 per cent marks.

### **Class V, Mathematics**

It was indeed shocking to find a steep fall in the performance of children in Class V across all five programmes. In this case, even schools under the ASP were no exception, with the percentage of children scoring less than 50 per cent going up to 83.5 per cent from 26 per cent in Class III. The worst were the VTS schools in HP, where the percentage of children scoring less than 50 per cent marks rose from 58 per cent to 95.5 per cent. Even the presence of regular government teachers in these schools could not stop this downslide.

## **Government Primary Schools**

The government primary schools, geographically closest to the para teacher schools, have their own specific features. They are inherently weak in institutional, infrastructural and administrative terms, which in turn has an adverse effect on academic performance. As compared to para teacher schools, these schools are indeed a neglected lot. The learner's achievements of these schools have to be viewed in this light.

The learning achievements of the selected government primary schools in Madhya Pradesh were woefully poor. Seventy-four per cent and 65 per cent of the children in Class III, Hindi and Maths, respectively, scored less than 50 per cent. This compares well with the learning achievements of para teacher schools (with the exclusion of ASP.

Table 3.1  
**Learning Achievement Levels (Percentage/Class/Subject Wise)**

Number and Percentage of students to total number in each scoring range

S.	Programme	Class III Hindi				Class V Hindi				Class III Maths				Class V Maths			
		25%<	25% to 50%	50% to 75%	>75%	25%<	25% to 50%	50% to 75%	>75%	25%<	25% to 50%	50% to 75%	>75%	25%<	25% to 50%	50% to 75%	>75%
1.	Shiksha Karmi, Rajasthan	10 37%	10 37%	5 18.5%	2 7.5%	9 34.6%	11 42.4%	5 19.2%	1 3.8%	10 37%	4 14.8%	6 22.2%	7 25.9%	10 38.46%	12 46.15%	3 11.53%	1 3.84%
2.	Alternative Schooling Programme	5 26.3%	2 10.5%	9 47.3%	3 15.78%	-- --	1 16.5%	3 50%	2 33.3%	2 10.5%	3 15.8%	9 47.4%	5 26.3%	2 33.3%	3 50%	1 16.5%	-- --
3.	Shiksha Karmi, Madhya Pradesh	6 27.27%	9 40.9%	5 22.7%	2 9%	3 21.4%	7 50%	3 21.4%	1 7.15%	5 22.72%	9 40.9%	6 27.27%	2 9%	6 66.6%	1 11.1%	2 22.2%	-- --
4.	Volunteer Teacher Scheme, Himachal Pradesh	9 37.5%	7 29.16%	7 29.16%	1 4.16%	-- --	8 33.3%	15 62.5%	1 4.1%	5 20.8%	9 37.5%	8 33.3%	2 8.33%	10 41.6%	13 54.16%	1 4.6%	-- --
5.	Rajkiya Prathmik Vidyalaya, Rajasthan	9 40.9%	1 4.5%	8 36.3%	4 18.2%	2 12.5%	8 50%	6 37.5%	-- --	6 28.5%	3 14.28%	5 23.8%	7 33.3%	4 25%	8 50%	3 18.75%	1 6.25%
6.	Shaskiya Prathmik Vidyalaya, Madhya Pradesh	11 47.8%	6 26%	5 21.7%	1 4.3%	8 36.3%	9 40.9%	3 13.6%	2 9%	8 34.7%	7 30.4%	2 8.7%	6 26%	18 75%	2 8.3%	2 8.3%	2 8.3%

MP). There was also a downhill trend in the case of Class V - Hindi and Maths, as compared to Class III (both subjects), with 75 per cent and 83.5 per cent children scoring less than 50 per cent marks in Hindi and Maths, respectively.

In Rajasthan the performance of the Government primary schools was a shade better. There, in both Hindi - and Maths - Class III, less than 50 per cent of the children scored less than 50 per cent. In

schools under the SKP, in Rajasthan, this percentage was 74 per cent and 52 per cent in Hindi and Maths respectively. Once again, Class V - Maths results were disheartening: the percentage of children scoring less than 50 per cent rose from 43 per cent to 75 per cent. Still, though not satisfactory, the performance of government schools in Rajasthan was slightly better than that of the para teacher schools. The only exception being schools under the ASP in Madhya Pradesh.

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