

Status of Elementary Education in Eastern India: 2012

The Pratichi Institute

Background Note

The Pratichi (India) Trust, in collaboration with UNICEF, has taken up a study on the status of elementary education in five states of eastern India: Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Odisha and Jharkhand.

The chief objectives of this inquiry are to unearth the diverse interactive factors and institutions that influence the delivery of elementary education, and bring to light the many unrecognised instances of personal effort and achievement that teachers and school/education personnel contribute to our public education process. It also hopes to discover, via discussions with such individuals (and their representative groups) what their perceived/experienced lacunae within the system are, so that they can be highlighted and addressed for an improved delivery of education.

From this project, we expect - and have designed for - several positives and multi-faceted outcomes outlined below.

- a. To increase contextual understanding of elementary education, both of problems and their solutions.
- b. To incorporate of a diversity of voices - teachers, parents, NGO activists, government officials and others - in research, widely disseminate findings, and actively narrow the gap between the authorities and the 'average' people.

c. To motivate teachers and activists to maximise their contribution by recognising their efforts and generating public discourse about the work they do.

d. To add substantially to the knowledge-base of elementary education in India, with inter- and intra-state, macro and micro level understandings to facilitate greater access to local experiences from different regions and population groups.

The initial phase of the study is dedicated to an extensive review of existing literature on the subject, as well as an in-house analysis of secondary data available from the District Information System of Education (DISE). This phase shall be completed with a consultancy meeting in each state, to which administrative and civil society representatives involved in the delivery of elementary education shall be cordially invited to share their experiences and views with us, thereby enriching our experience of the public education system in each individual state. This meeting will aim at (a) acquire the experts' point of view about, and (b) to help us identify required areas of required research within, the current educational systems in each state. We expect that their suggestions pertaining to areas of further enquiry will make the project epistemologically enriched, socially relevant, and meaningfully practical.

We view this meeting as the first step in a long process of mutual collaboration and support in our common goal of enhancing the quality of public elementary education in India, making it more equitably accessible.