

## Third Annual General Meeting of shiksha alochana

22-23 December, 2018

Vidyasagar Abasik Balika Vidyalaya

Tamna, Purulia

The two-day 3rd annual general meeting of shiksha alochana was concluded on 23 December. It was organized at the Vidysagar Abasik Balika Vidyalaya, Tamna, Puruliya. The meeting, attended by 130 primary teachers and others from across the state reviewed last year's works and took up some important resolutions for the next year. The spirit of the meeting was in perfect commensuration with the guiding principle that while it is important to resist and agitate against the flaws in the system we must escape invoking the systemic discrepancies to make for us a comfort zone and do as much as possible now and ever, by drawing strength from social morality, the spirit of the meeting was all activists here spend their time and money to make the schools into fruitful social institutions. Since the task of enhancing education with ensured quality and equity has been taken as a social responsibility, no participant had any other expectation but to learn from others and enhance their self-motivation. there are flaws in the system, and they must be corrected through collective action. The flame of morality made it possible for the participants to ignore the stress involved in from strenuous, and long travel to difficult stay in the make shift dormitories of the school in cold winter nights.

The meeting began in **scheduled time** with a song by the very enthusiastic girls of the school, who later presented a beautiful cultural program. Participants were welcomed by Amitabha Mishra, member of the reception committee of the meeting, Sabir Ahamed of the Pratchi Institute, and Mandira Banerjee, Head teacher of the school. Chandana Roy Chowdhury, one of the three conveners of shiksha alochana (other two being Pabitra Mohanta and Tapan Pramanik), presented the annual work report, which was discussed and accepted after incorporating the feedbacks of the participants. In brief, the report highlighted the progress of work done in the previous year. They included, aside from improvement in school functioning, organizing a series of meetings to discuss the problems and prospects of teaching and learning; workshops on preparation and use of teaching-learning materials (TLM); workshops on storey-weaver – a program on story reading; teachers' writing workshop to improve the writing skill of

teachers; and, the publication of the study report, “Primary Education in West Bengal: The Scope for Change”, prepared through a collaborative effort of primary school teachers, academics, researchers, and activists, and was released by Professor Amartya Sen on 10 July, 2018. Some of the participants that the report, which was perhaps the first of its kind, had had some impact on policy in the form of some – not what was collectively estimated – enhancement in monetary allocation for Mid-day Meal and school functioning and rationalizing of distribution of teachers to some extent. Having acknowledging the success of the report, participants pointed out toward several policy gaps and insisted on carrying out further research to generate public discussion on those aspects.

Following intense discussion, the meeting charted out a broad work-map for the next year. Works resolved to be taken up next year include:

- (a) Experimenting further to enhance the quality of education, and sharing and collating the experiences in a more coherent manner;
- (b) Broadening and deepening teachers’ knowledge through discussion among teachers, and with experts in the field; organizing self-improving orientation meetings; and, of course reading and learning through other means including audio-visual materials;
- (c) Reaching out to all children, especially those who find themselves in certain deficiencies in learning;
- (d) Finding ways and means to address the issues of language and other social barriers; taking initiative of evening learning centres at the community level – as and where necessary and possible; and accompanying the children with severe, and unusual deficiencies to their homes, and assess the conditions to find possible means to facilitate the children in his/her studies;
- (e) Maintaining teachers diaries and children's registers, in order to identifying the gaps in teaching and learning and other areas of school functioning;
- (f) Expanding community libraries, a programme that has been running successfully in some schools but not running that successfully in other schools;
- (g) Continue with added vigor the initiatives of raising the level of involvement of parents and local community including mother's;
- (h) Identifying areas of further research;

- (i) Expanding the coverage of the transformational influences – to bring into fold other schools by motivating the teachers and others.

That good work is not contingent to money only - it's important, but merely to achieving something else, and hence cannot stop us working - got testified again and again. "Shiksha alochana " has no institutional funding, but many well wishers came forward to support it, added to its moral strength and also gave money. The Vidyasagar Abasik Balika Vidyalaya provided immense help. All participants were overwhelmed by the warmth of the school management, staff, and especially the students volunteered to serve food and other helps. We can depend upon these warm, smart, and morally charged girls.

As resolved in the last meeting, held in Balurghat, Dakshin Dinajpur, that a convener can serve the platform in the capacity of convener for a maximum period of three years, two of the three conveners, Tapan Pramanik and Pabitra Mohanta, requested to release themselves from the designation. Nevertheless, they promised to continue playing an organizing role. Accordingly, and given the increased area of work, participants choose to increase the number of conveners to six. They are:

Chandana Roy Chowdhury (Kolkata)

Archana Mondal (Kochbihar)

Manoj Ghosh (Dakshin Dinajpur)

Ambuja Raha (Murshidabad)

Amlan Bishnu (North 24 Parganas)

Swarup Bishui (Jhargram)

In addition, a state level team with forty members has formed to spearhead the activities of shiksha alochana.