

A Report on
Quality of Teachers in Primary Schools of
India

(20/07/2020 to 14/08/2020)



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TheRise Internship Programme - TRIP
An online internship programme

Abstract

In the last couple of decades, India has shown promising results vis-à-vis enrolment rates in primary classes. However in most of these schools, students are not being able to learn as much as they are expected to in the respective grade. Thus the question regarding quality of education becomes an important theme. The quality of teachers plays an important role in determining the overall quality of education that is being delivered.

The present study was aimed at assessing the quality of teachers in primary schools in India in context to different aspects. The primary objective of this study was to look into the quality of teachers in primary schools in India situated in rural or urban part of the country either in public sector or private sector. Based on evidence collected by a small scale survey and secondary research, it can be said there are several challenges which hamper the effectiveness of teachers across different settings and contexts. These challenges may vary in degrees across different settings, majority of the schools in India face these challenges that reduce the quality of teaching. Thus in order to better our education system, these challenges needs to be tackled first.



Work Plan

Week 1:- Searching the available literature and statistics

Week 2:- Questionnaire preparation, telephonic/email survey and data collection

Week 3:- Compilation of all inputs and its analysis for arriving at conclusions

Week 4:-

- Writing and submitting an article giving insights into the quality of primary education teachers in rural India
- Writing and submitting an article giving insights into the quality of primary education teachers in urban India
- Writing and submitting an article on the comparative study of primary education teachers in schools in public sector and private sector
- Final report writing and its submission for issue of the internship completion certificate



Introduction

India has made enormous progress in terms of providing access to primary education. The Indian Government has introduced various schemes and measures to attract children in large numbers to come to school. The consciousness among parents vis-à-vis the education of their children has also increased since independence. However this progress in terms of accessibility may be misleading at times as the quality of education across different schools in various parts of the country is not up to the mark. An important aspect of what encompasses quality education is the quality of teachers or in other words, the effectiveness of a teacher. While many schools across different contexts and settings are performing really well on this front, others are riddled with challenges. Overcrowded classrooms, dipping motivations, ineffective teaching methods, pressures of auxiliary tasks, etc. are among the many factors affecting the effectiveness of teachers. These challenges must be addressed to improve the effectiveness of teachers.

Literature Survey

The following research papers were read to build a core understanding regarding the subject. The understanding gathered from the following research papers composes the spine of the three articles enlisted at the very end.

- ***How do Government and Private Schools Differ? Findings from two large Indian states.***
 - This paper was written by Sangeeta Goyal and Priyanka Pandey. This paper uses survey data from government and private schools in two states of India, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, to explore systematic differences between the two school types. It finds that private school students have higher test scores than government school students. Other important finding of this paper is that private schools have lower pupil teacher ratios and seven to eight times lower teacher salaries but do not differ systematically in infrastructure and teacher effort from government schools.
- ***Assessing teacher quality in India***
 - This paper was presented by Mehtabul Azam and Geeta Gandhi Kingdon. Focuses on the methodology to measure teacher's effectiveness. Observable characteristics are not correlated to teacher's effectiveness. This suggests that it may be hard to identify good teachers ex ante, but administrative data can be used to identify them ex post.

- ***Primary education, teachers' professionalism and social class about motivation and demotivation of government school teachers in India***
- This study is presented by Jos Mooij. This study is based on focus group discussions and interviews with teachers in Andhra Pradesh, south India. This paper primarily identifies and analyses the reasons behind motivations and demotivations of government school teachers. The paper concludes that there is a need for a new professional ethos and culture.



Methodology

o Method used

The primary objective of this study was to look into the quality of teachers in primary schools in India situated in rural or urban part of the country either in public sector or private sector. Survey method has been used to collect data. Questionnaires were the primary tools used to collect the information.

o Types of Data Used

Both primary and secondary data was used. The information gathered via the survey was limited to urban private schools only. Hence there is heavy reliance on secondary sources of data for information on the public schools located in both urban and rural areas.

o The Chosen Sample

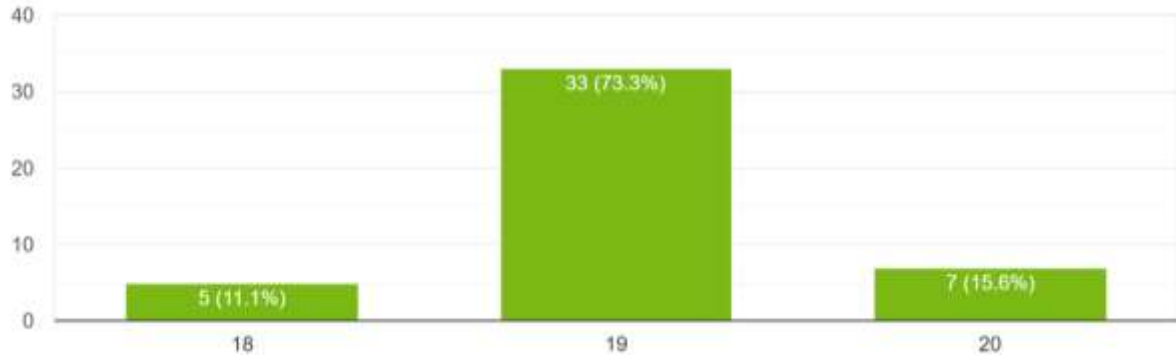
A total of 45 respondents were chosen for the survey. All of the respondents were students. Majority of the respondents were from Assam with a minority of respondents scattered all over the country. The age of the respondents was within eighteen to twenty years. The period of schooling ranged from 2004 – 2019. Majority of them studied in private primary schools and all of them completed their primary schooling from urban areas.

Findings of the survey

- *Demographic Details*

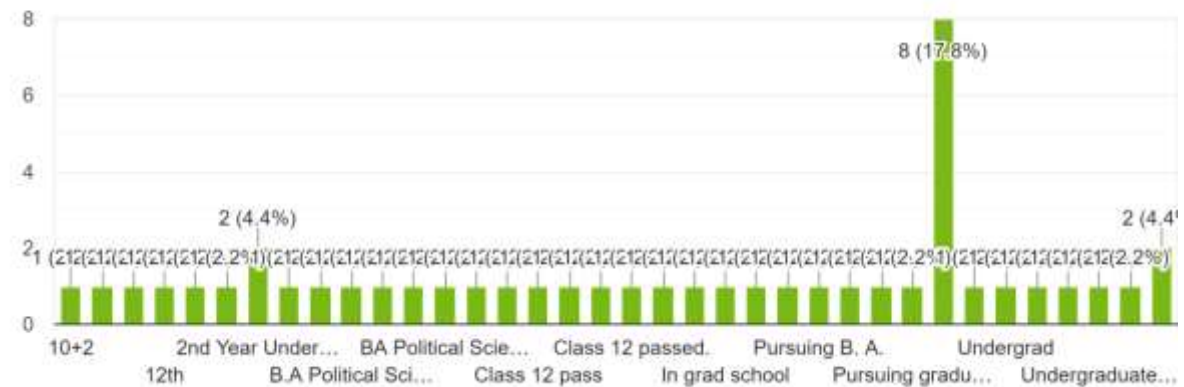
Age:

45 responses



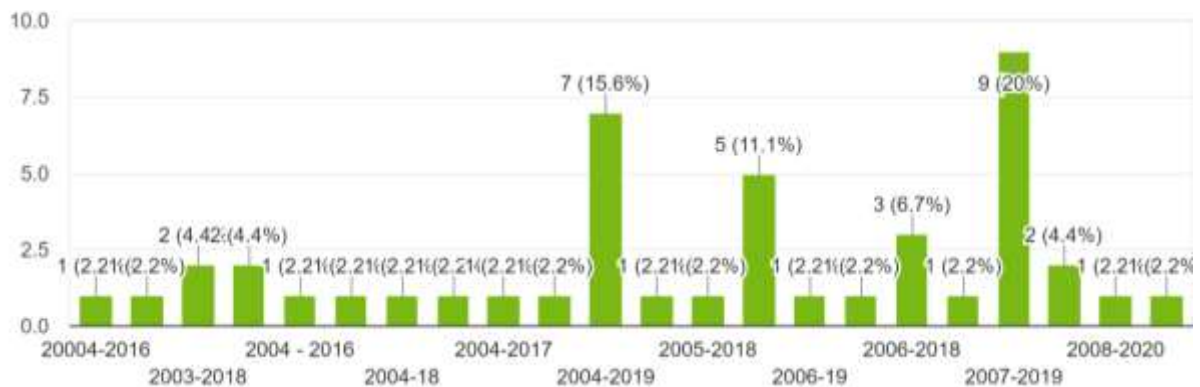
Qualification:

45 responses



Period of schooling:

45 responses



Results of the Survey

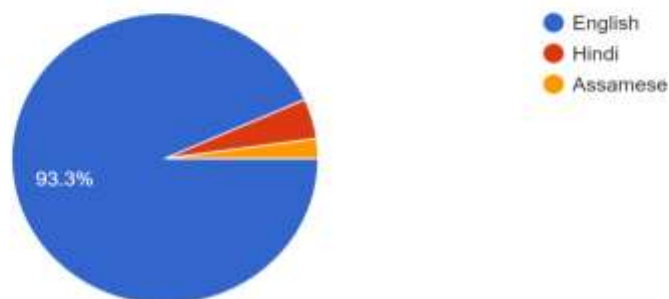
1. Choose the option which is most suitable for the school where you completed your primary education-

45 responses



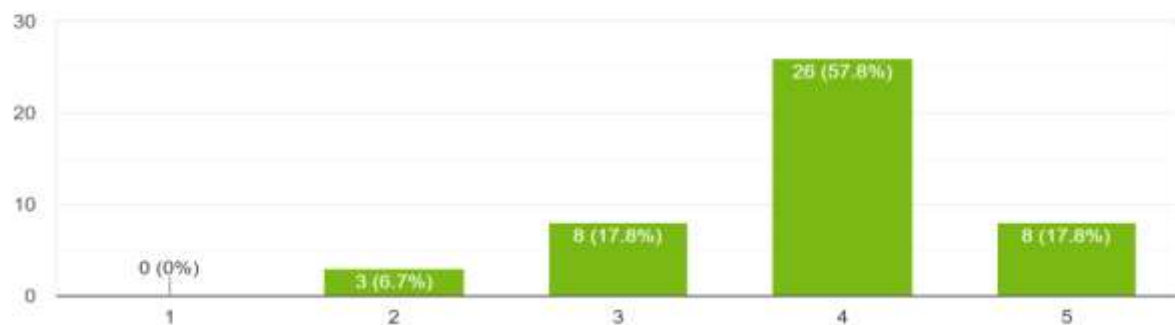
2. What was the medium of instruction?

45 responses



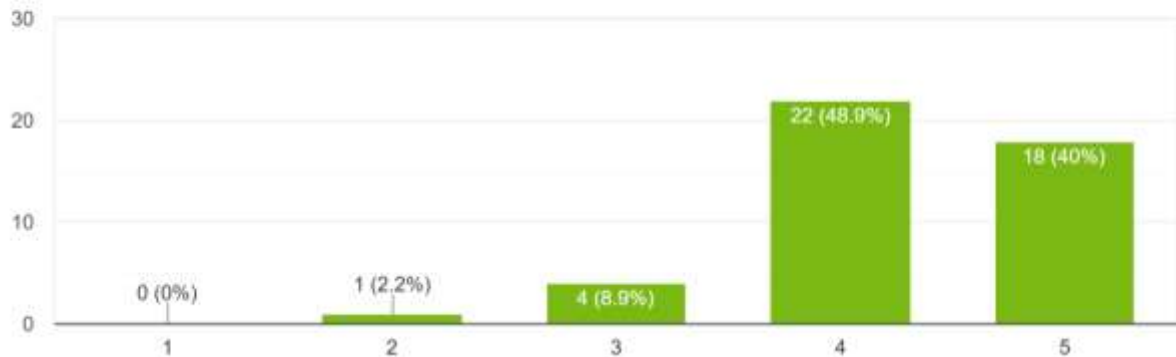
3. On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate the quality of primary education in the school where you are studying or had studied?

45 responses



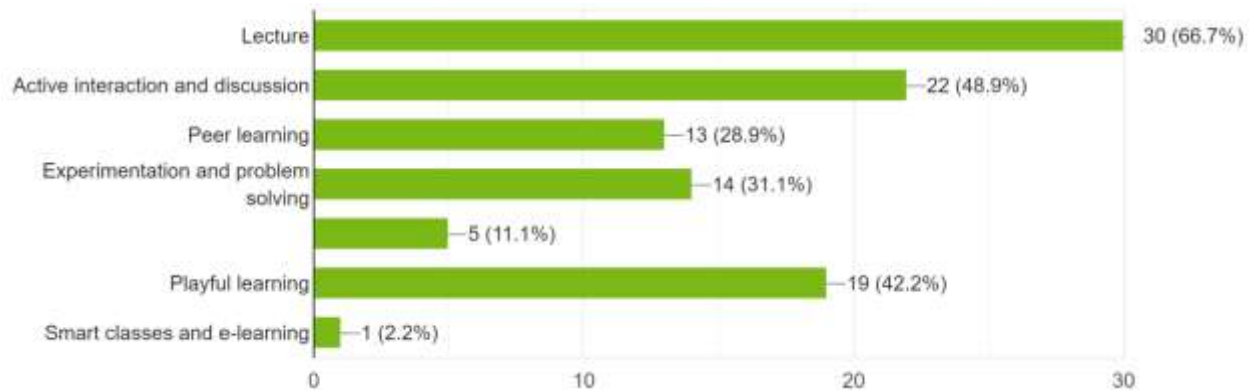
4. On a scale of 1-5 how would you describe your academic performance as a student in your primary classes?

45 responses



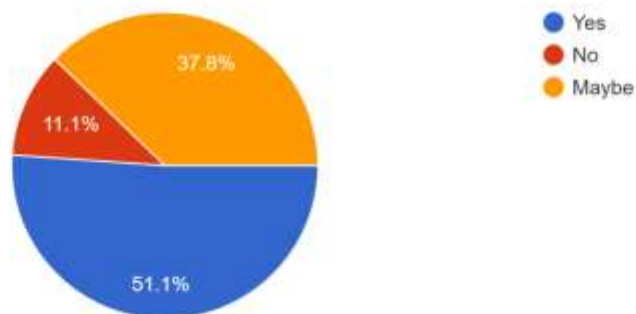
5. How were you taught in your primary classes?

45 responses



6. Did it help you in developing a strong academic foundation or skills useful for your higher grades/higher studies/career?

45 responses



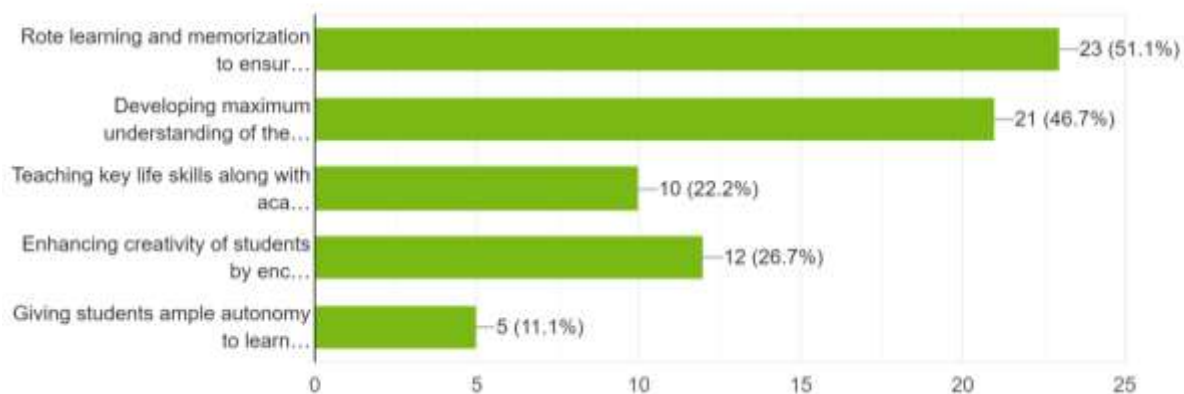
7. Did your teacher explain to you why you were learning the things that you were learning in your primary classes?

45 responses



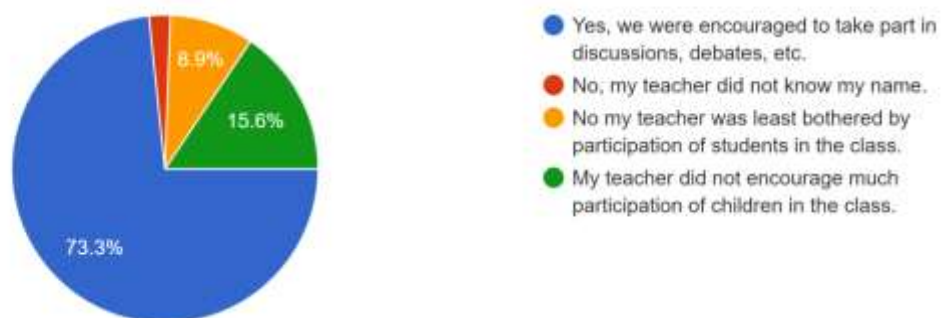
8. What do you think is the main approach of primary teachers towards education?

45 responses



9. Did your teachers encourage you to participate actively in class?

45 responses



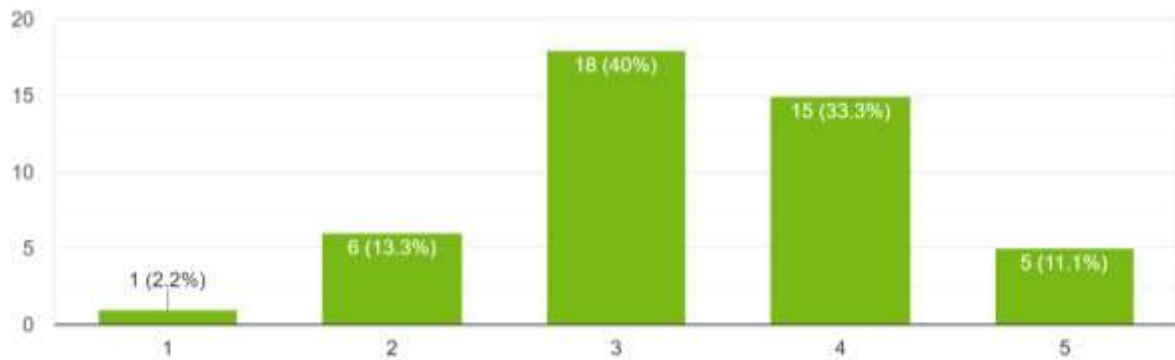
10. Did your teachers encourage you to solve questions on your own with little or no help from the teacher?

45 responses



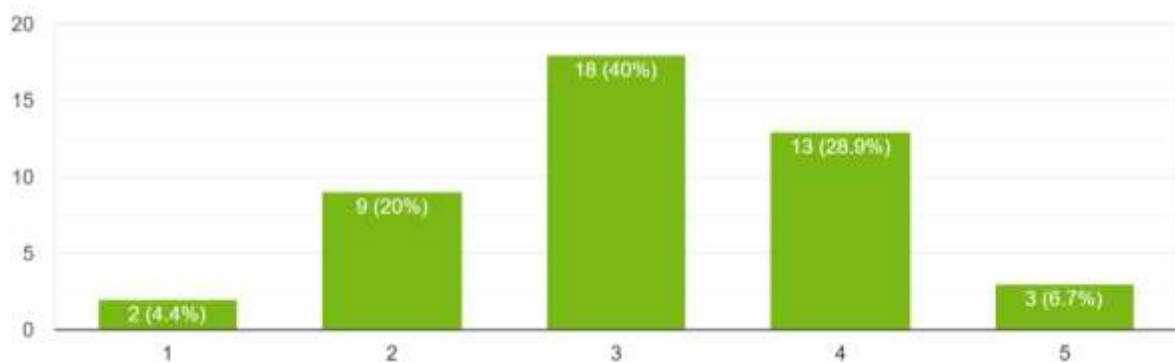
11. On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate your teachers' ability to motivate students to learn?

45 responses



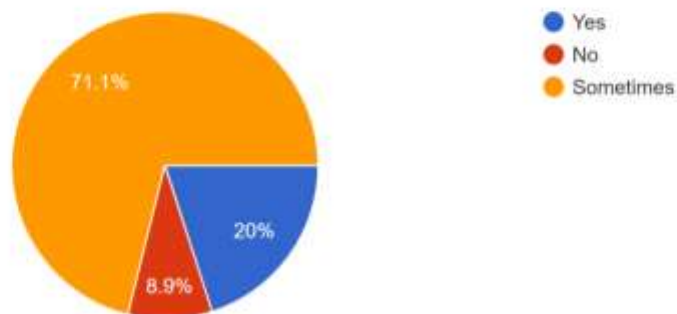
12. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the ability of your primary teachers to arouse your curiosity to learn?

45 responses



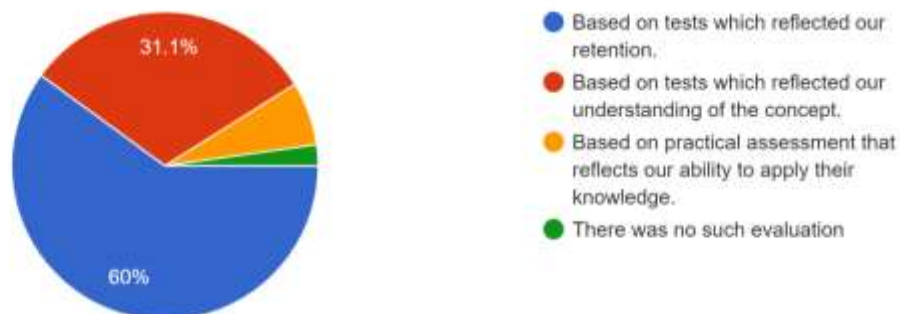
13. Did your teachers make the effort to understand how well you have understood something?

45 responses



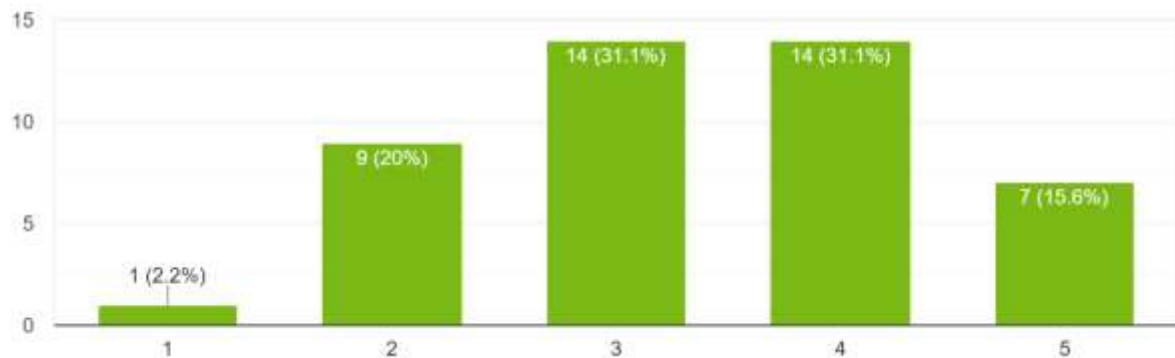
14. How was your understanding of the subject matter primarily evaluated?

45 responses



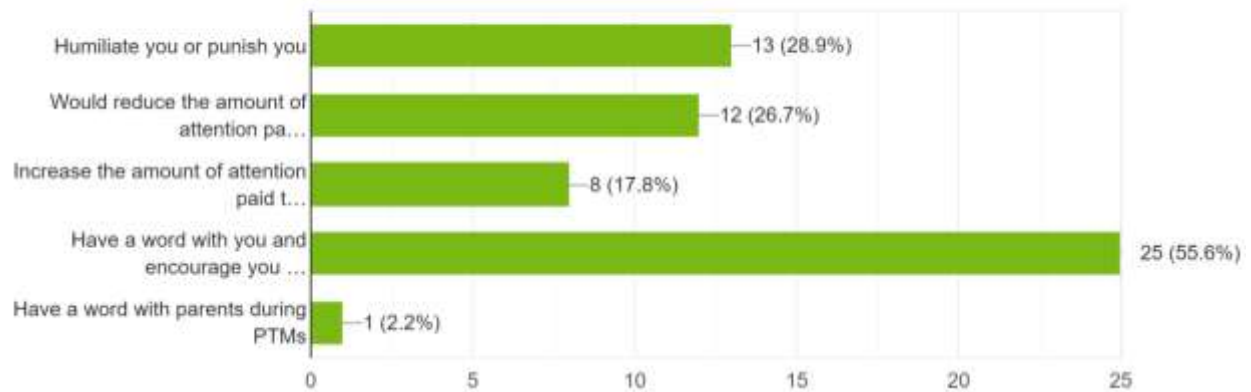
15. How would you rate your primary teachers in terms of providing you with encouragement?

45 responses



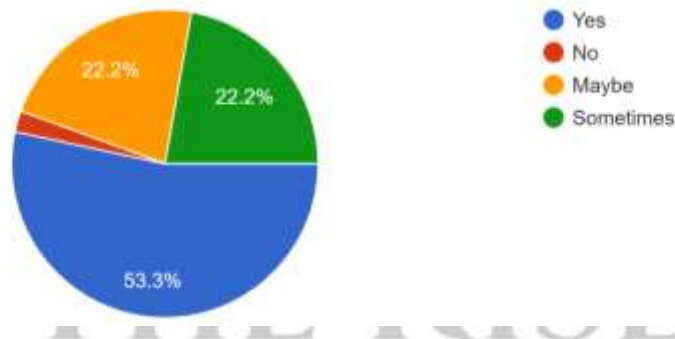
16. What did your primary teachers do in case you performed poorly in an assessment?

45 responses



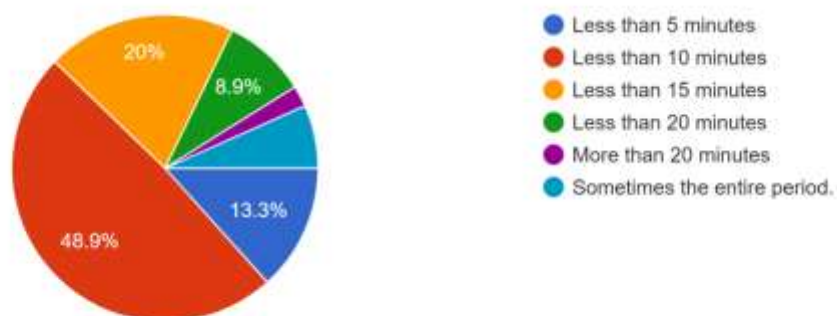
17. Do you think your teachers came prepared for the class?

45 responses



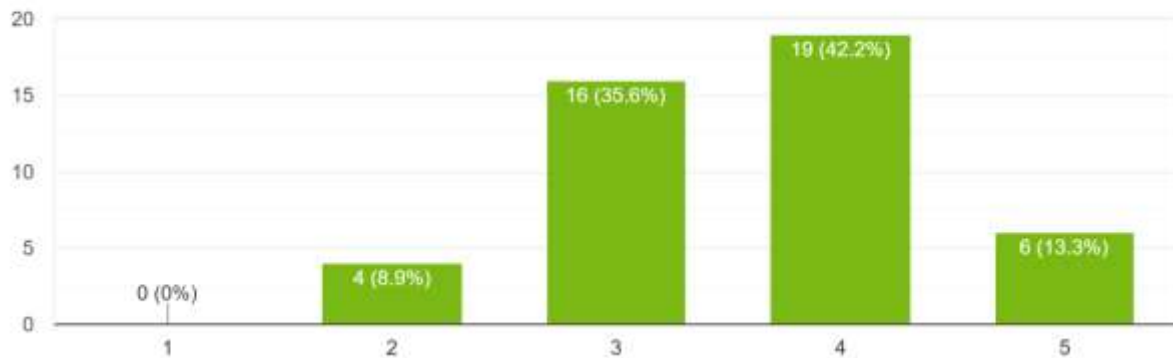
18. How much time was dedicated to non academic work (attendance, performance report, filling out of forms, etc.) everyday in a class?

45 responses



19. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the quality of primary teachers at the school where you are studying or had studied?

45 responses



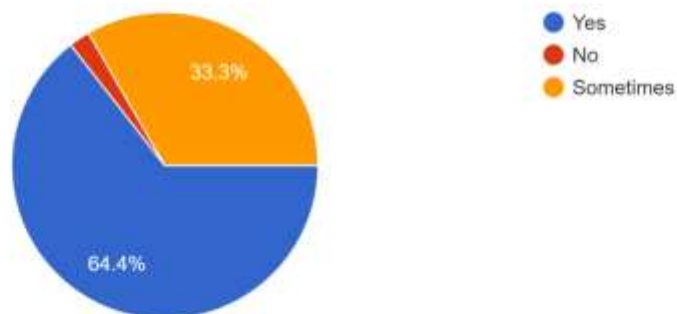
20. Was your classroom overcrowded?

45 responses



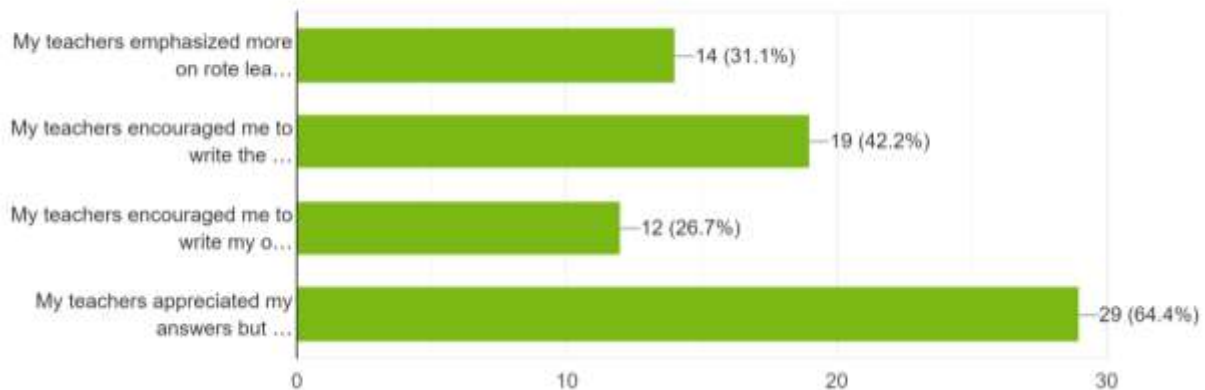
22. Were your teachers more concerned about completing the syllabus than making sure you actually learnt something from the chapter?

45 responses



23. Which of the following statements are true?

45 responses



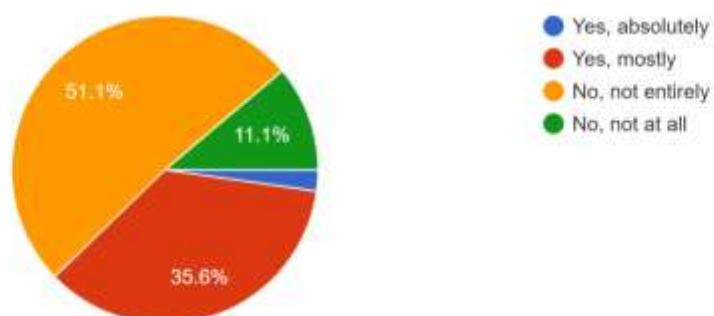
24. What attribute do you think constitutes quality teaching?

| | Categories | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| | Personality traits | Skills/abilities | Teaching practices |
| Attributes of related to effectiveness of a teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient • Dedicated • Encouraging • Unbiased • Inclusive • Good relationship with all the students • Empathetic • Sensitive to the learning needs of different students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent communication skills • The ability to motivate students • The ability to engage students in discussions and classroom activities • Must also be able to inculcate critical thinking • Inspire and enhance students' creativity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide autonomy to the children to think outside the box • Encourage students to solve problems on their own • Less emphasis on rote learning • Focus more on comprehension of key concepts. • Not only be limited to textbooks • Learning key life skills and values • Playful teaching methods rather than |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | monotonous lecture methods. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom preparedness on the part of the teacher. |
|--|--|--|--|

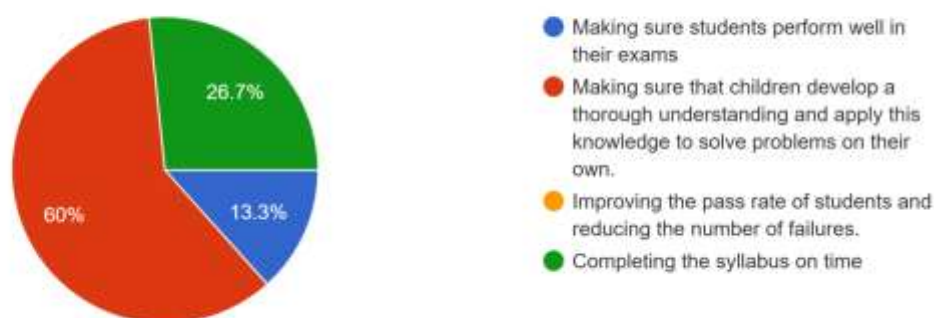
25. Were any of these attributes (referred in item 24) present in your teachers?

45 responses



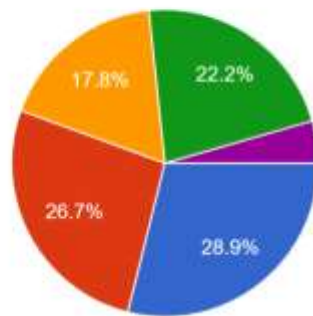
26. What do you think is the top priority of a primary school teacher?

45 responses



27. Were your teachers open to constructive criticism from your end or your parents'?

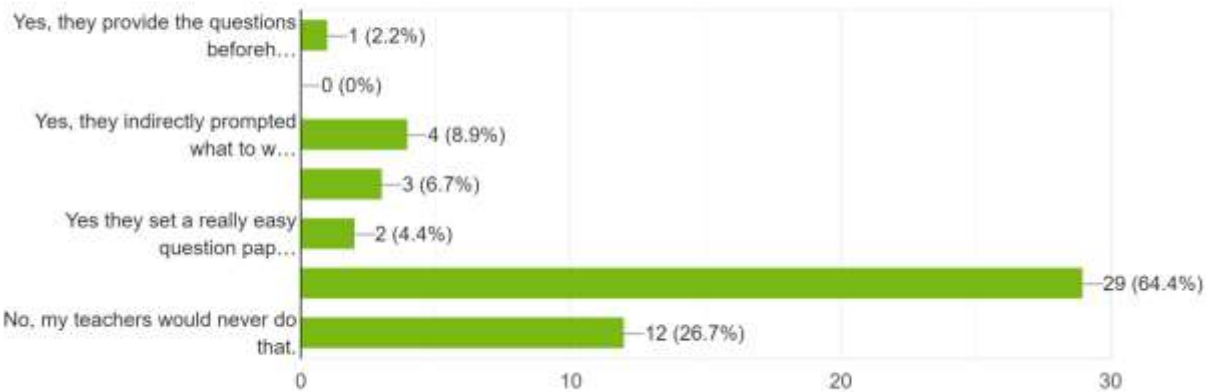
45 responses



- Yes they were open to it and received it well.
- Yes they were open to it but were very defensive also.
- Yes they were open to it but did not implement any change.
- No they were not very open to it.
- They were not at all open to it and were reluctant to change.

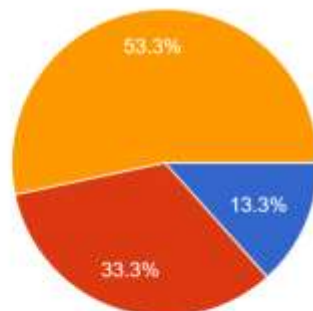
28. Did any of your teachers use unfair means to promote students to the next grade in an examination?

45 responses



29. Did your primary teachers admit their mistakes openly when they were wrong?

45 responses



- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

Analysis of Survey Results

Majority of the participants reported the quality of primary education in urban private schools as good and most of the participants rated the effectiveness of their teacher as more than satisfactory.

The primary attributes that constituted the effectiveness of a primary teacher as per the responses from our participants can be put into three categories, namely personality traits, skills and pedagogical practices.

In terms of personality traits, an effective teacher is patient, dedicated, encouraging, unbiased and inclusive. He/she has a good relationship with all the students and is empathetic and sensitive to the learning needs of different students.

According to our survey, most of the private urban schools have a comfortable student teacher ratio. In 53.6% of the cases, primary teachers were encouraging towards the child when they performed poorly in tests. However the survey results also pointed out that in some schools primary were not very supportive and often humiliated the child or showed signs of biasness by reducing the paid to the child after a poor performance.

In context of the second category i.e. skills, an effective primary teacher should possess excellent communication skills, the ability to motivate and engage students in discussions and classroom activities. They must be able to enhance the child's critical thinking and creativity.

Majority of respondents have rated their teachers' ability to motivate and arouse curiosity as satisfactory. 73% of the participants reported that they were encouraged by their teachers to participate actively in classroom activities and discussions. Interestingly, 64 %

of the respondents reported that despite encouragement to frame one's own answers, more marks were awarded for reproducing textbook lines.

Further in terms of pedagogical practices, the elementary school teacher should be able to provide autonomy to the children to think outside the box and solve problems on their own. The teaching process should be more holistic with less emphasis on rote learning and more focus on comprehension of key concepts. Teaching should not only be limited to textbooks and also extend to key life skills and values. There was also an emphasis on incorporating playful teaching methods in class and classroom preparedness on the part of the teacher.

63% of respondents pointed out that their primary teachers focused on developing thorough understanding and making sure that children apply this knowledge to solve their own problems. Majority of the teachers began by explaining the rationale behind learning something. This helped in developing a primary foundation that was strong enough to help them in their higher grades or college. 53% reported that their teachers mostly came prepared to the class. 66% of respondents were encouraged to solve problems on their own with little or no help from the teachers and active peer engagement. Thus

There are various problematic areas as well vis-à-vis quality of teachers in urban schools. 66.7 percent of respondents in our survey reported that lecture method is the dominant mode of teaching in majority of the schools. The challenge to complete syllabus is one of the major concerns of school teachers especially in the upper primary classes. 64% of respondents reported that completing the syllabus is more important than actually making sure that the students learnt anything from it.

Moreover the rote learning approach seems to be another massive challenge compromising the quality of learning in most of the schools in urban areas and across the country as well for that matter. 60% of respondents were primarily assessed on the basis of marks obtained in tests which primarily test the retention power of children.

Thus even though teachers in urban private schools are highly effective in certain aspects, challenges like overemphasis on rote learning, fixation on completing the syllabus, monotonous methods of teaching and assessment of students' performance based on tests that assess their retention capacity rather than understanding, certainly reduce their effectiveness and compromise the quality of education that they are delivering. Hence there is a need to address these challenges so as to improve the learning outcomes in majority of the schools across the country.

THE RISE

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Appendix - 1 : Questionnaire for Students and Teachers

Questionnaire for Students

Name:

Age:

Qualification:

Name of School/College:

Period of schooling being considered for feedback in year:

Please read the questions carefully and mark the appropriate answers in context to your primary school education-

1. Choose the option which is most suitable for the school where you completed your primary education-
 - a. Private school located in a rural area
 - b. Private school located in an urban area
 - c. Government school located in a rural area
 - d. Government school located in an urban area
 - e. Other (please specify)

2. What was the medium of instruction?
 - a. English
 - b. Hindi
 - c. Other

3. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being extremely bad to 5 being extremely good) how would you rate the quality of primary education in the school where you are studying or had studied?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
4. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being extremely bad to 5 being extremely good) how would you describe your academic performance as a student in your primary classes?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3

- d. 4
 - e. 5
5. How were you taught in your primary classes?
- a. Lecture
 - b. Active interaction and discussion
 - c. Peer learning
 - d. Experimentation and problem solving
 - e. Learning through a lot of graphic aid
 - f. Playful learning
6. Did it help you in developing a strong academic foundation or skills useful for your higher grades/higher studies/career?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
7. Did your teacher explain to you why you were learning the things that you were learning in your primary classes?
- a. Yes, they would explain the rationale behind learning something before starting a chapter.
 - b. No, they straightaway jumped into teaching it.
 - c. Other (please specify)
-
8. What do you think is the main approach of primary teachers towards education?
- a. Rote learning and memorization to ensure maximum retention
 - b. Developing maximum understanding of the subject matter
 - c. Teaching key life skills along with academics
 - d. Enhancing creativity of students by encouraging them to think outside the box
 - e. Giving students ample autonomy to learn on their own and develop their problem solving abilities
 - f. Other (please specify)
-
9. Did your teachers encourage you to participate actively in class?
- a. Yes, we were encouraged to take part in discussions, debates, etc.
 - b. No, my teacher did not know my name.
 - c. No my teacher was least bothered by participation of students in the class.
 - d. My teacher did not encourage much participation of children in the class.

10. Did your teachers encourage you to solve questions on your own with little or no help from the teacher?
- a. Yes, we were encouraged to solve the problems on our own without any help
 - b. Yes, we were encouraged to solve the problems on our own with little help from the teachers
 - c. Yes, we were encouraged to solve the problems on our own with help from our peers
 - d. No, we were provided readymade answers.
 - e. Other (please specify)
-

11. On a scale of 1-5(1 being extremely bad to 5 being extremely good) how would you rate your teacher' ability to motivate students to learn?

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5

12. On a scale of 1-5, (1 being extremely bad to 5 being extremely good) how well were your primary school teachers able to arouse your curiosity to learn?

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5

13. Did your teachers make the effort to understand how well you have understood something?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes

14. How was your understanding of the subject matter evaluated?

- a. Based on tests which reflect their retention.
- b. Based on tests that reflect their understanding of the concept.
- c. Based on practical assessment that reflects their ability to apply their knowledge.
- d. There was no such evaluation

15. How would you rate your primary teachers in terms of providing you with encouragement?
(1 being extremely bad to 5 being extremely good)
- 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
16. What did your teacher do in case you performed poorly in an assessment?
- Humiliate you or punish you
 - Would reduce the amount of attention paid to you in class
 - Increase the amount of attention paid to you in class
 - Have a word with you and encourage you to work harder
 - Other (please specify)
17. Do you think your teachers came prepared for the class?
- Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
 - Maybe
 - Other (please specify)
-
18. How much time was dedicated to non academic work (attendance, performance report, filling out of forms, etc.) everyday in a class?
- Less than 5 minutes
 - Less than 10 minutes
 - Less than 15 minutes
 - Less than 20 minutes
 - More than 20 minutes
19. On a scale of 1 to 5, (1 being extremely bad to 5 being extremely good) how would you rate the quality of primary teachers at the school where you are studying or had studied?
- 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5

20. Was your classroom overcrowded?

- a. Yes, to the extent that it hampered the quality of teaching
 - b. Yes, but the teaching quality was unaffected by it
 - c. No, we had a comfortable student-teacher ratio
 - d. No, there were very few students in our classroom.
 - e. Other
-

21. Were your primary teachers able to cater to the learning needs of every one?

- a. Yes, absolutely
- b. Yes, mostly
- c. No, rarely
- d. No, never

22. Were your teachers more concerned about completing syllabus than making sure you actually learnt something out of the chapter?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes

23. Which of the following statements are true?

- a. My teachers emphasized more on rote learning.
- b. My teachers encouraged me to write the exact answers in exams that they had provided.
- c. My teachers encouraged me to write my own answers but gave less marks for writing my own answers
- d. My teachers appreciated my answers but gave more marks when we reproduced textbook lines in our exams.

24. What attribute do you think constitutes quality teaching at primary level?

25. Were any of these attributes (referred in item 24) present in your teachers?

- a. Yes, absolutely
- b. Yes, mostly
- c. No, not entirely
- d. No, not at all

26. What do you think is the top priority of a primary school teacher?

- a. Making sure students perform well in their exams
 - b. Making sure that children develop a thorough understanding and apply this knowledge to solve problems on their own.
 - c. Improving the pass rate of students and reducing the number of failures.
 - d. Completing the syllabus on time
27. Were your teachers open to constructive criticism from your end or your parent's?
- a. Yes they were open to it and received it well
 - b. Yes they were open to it but were very defensive also
 - c. Yes they were open to it but did not implement any change
 - d. No they were not very open to it
 - e. They were not at all open to it and were reluctant to change
28. Did any of your teachers use unfair means to promote students to the next grade in an examination?
- a. Yes, they provide the questions beforehand.
 - b. Yes, they directly wrote the answers on the blackboard during an examination / told the students what to write.
 - c. Yes, they indirectly prompted what to write
 - d. Yes, they increased the grades so as to promote a student
 - e. Yes they set a really easy question paper with minimum level of difficulty so that everyone could pass the exam
 - f. No I'm not aware of any such incident.
 - g. Other (please specify)
29. Did your primary teachers admit their mistakes openly when they were wrong?
- a. No
 - b. Yes
 - c. Sometimes
30. On a scale of 1 to 5, (1 being extremely bad to 5 being extremely good) how would you rate your primary education in terms of quality?
- a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5

Questionnaire for Teachers

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Profession:

Please read the questions carefully and mark the appropriate answers-

1. Choose the option which is most suitable for the school that you are currently working in-
 - f. Private school located in a rural area
 - g. Private school located in an urban area
 - h. Government school located in a rural area
 - i. Government school located in an urban area

2. Which grade do you teach?

- | | |
|------|------|
| a. 1 | e. 5 |
| b. 2 | f. 6 |
| c. 3 | g. 7 |
| d. 4 | |

3. Which subjects do you teach? Please specify the grade against the subject.

a. English

e. Science

b. Hindi

f. Social Studies

c. Mathematics

g. G.K.

d. EVS

h. Any other

4. Have you received any prior academic training in the subjects that you teach?

a. Yes

b. No

5. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

a. AISSE

b. Bachelors

c. Masters

d. Other

6. In your school which of the following considerations do you think is given maximum priority while hiring a teacher?
- a. Qualification
 - b. Experience
 - c. Academic performance
 - d. Aptitude test scores
 - e. Task performance
 - f. Others
-

7. Was teaching your first preference for a profession?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

8. On a scale of 1-5, rate your feeling towards your job as a teacher-
- a. I hate it
 - b. I don't like it
 - c. I don't mind teaching.
 - d. I like it
 - e. I love it. It's my passion.

9. What was your primary motivation behind becoming a teacher?
- a. Respect attached to the profession
 - b. Good Salary
 - c. Job security
 - d. Desire to contribute towards the development of the nation by molding children into good citizen.
 - e. Teaching is your passion
 - f. Had no other choice
 - g. It's easy to become a teacher
 - h. Other
-

10. In your school, are ample professional development activities (training workshops, seminars, observation and school visits, etc.) and resources available for updating the knowledge and skill set of teacher?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

11. If yes, what is the primary focus of these professional development activities?
- Classroom management
 - Better student assessment practices
 - Knowledge and understanding of instructional practices
 - Teaching students with special learning needs
 - School management and administration
 - Teaching in a multicultural setting
 - Improvement and innovation in pedagogical methods
12. In a typical school week, estimate the number of hours you spend on the following for this school. Please write a number in each blank and round to the nearest hour in your responses. Write 0 (zero) if none.
- Teaching of students in school (either whole class, in groups or individually)
 - Planning or preparation of lessons either in school or out of school (including marking of student work)
 - Administrative duties either in school or out of school (including school administrative duties, paperwork and other clerical duties you undertake in your job as a teacher)
 - Other (please specify):
13. Choose the most appropriate option describing the student teacher ratio in your class.
- Overcrowded
 - Comfortable student - teacher ratio
14. If your classroom is overcrowded, are you able to focus and attend to every student's learning needs?
- Yes, but with a lot of difficulty.
 - Sometimes, but not always.
 - No.

15. How much autonomy do you have on the subject that you teach with regards to the teaching method and lesson plan?

a. I have full autonomy in terms of both lesson plan and teaching method on the subject.

b. I have partial autonomy (please specify)

c. I have no autonomy at all.

16. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being not at all motivated and 5 being extremely motivated) how motivated are your students to study?

a. 1

b. 2

c. 3

d. 4

e. 5

17. On a scale of 1-5(1 being bad and 5 being extremely good), how would you rate your ability to communicate with the students?

a. 1

b. 2

c. 3

d. 4

e. 5

18. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being very bad and 5 being excellent) how do you rate your quality of teaching?

a. 1

b. 2

c. 3

d. 4

e. 5

19. How would you assess the quality of your teaching?

a. By the pass rate of students

b. By their academic scores

c. By their ability to apply their knowledge of the classroom in practical scenarios

d. By the improvement in creativity and problem solving abilities

20. How would you describe your teaching practice?

- a. More focused on retention and memorization.
- b. More focused on enhancing the life skills of students.
- c. More focused on development of thorough understanding and application of knowledge.

21. How active are your students in class?

- a. Very active
- b. Moderately active
- c. Not at all active

22. How do you assess the performance of students?

- a. Based on tests which reflect their retention.
- b. Based on tests that reflect their understanding of the concept.
- c. Based on practical assessment that reflects their ability to apply their knowledge.

23. As a teacher what is your top priority?

- a. Making sure students perform well in their exams
- b. Making sure that children develop a thorough understanding and apply this knowledge to solve problems on their own.
- c. Improving the pass rate of students and reducing the number of failures.
- d. Completing the syllabus on time

24. After completing a chapter, how do you describe the ability of your students in completing the exercises at the back of every chapter?

- a. They can't solve it on their own and require readymade answers.
- b. They can solve it on their own with little help from me
- c. They try to solve it on their own without my help by discussing it among themselves.
- d. They can solve it on their own.

25. Do you face any pressure to improve the pass rate of students or reduce the failure rate?

- a. Yes, extreme pressure
- b. Yes, moderate pressure
- c. No, do not face any pressure

26. How often do you receive appraisal and/or feedback about your work as a teacher in your school?

- a. More than once per month.
- b. Once per month.
- c. Once in every three months.
- d. Once in every six months.

- e. Once a year.
- f. Once in every two years
- g. Never

27. What do you think is the main aim/ goal of the practice of assessment of the quality of teacher's performance?

- a. To improve teaching practices and quality of education.
- b. To improve pass rates to students and reduce failure rates.

28. In your opinion what are or should be the key criteria or considerations for the appraisal and/or feedback of the quality of teacher performance?

- a. Retention and pass rates of students
 - b. Improvement in student performance in the subject since the last grade
 - c. Other student learning outcomes
 - d. Innovative teaching practices
 - e. Direct appraisal of my classroom teaching
 - f. My knowledge and understanding of the subject
 - g. Student feedback on my teaching
 - h. Feedback from parents
 - i. How well I work with the principal and my colleagues
 - j. Student discipline and behavior
 - k. Other (please specify below)
-

29. Which of the following is directly influenced by a positive appraisal/ feedback?

- a. Increase in salary or other financial bonus or monetary reward.
- b. Improvement in teaching quality and motivation.
- c. Changes in your work responsibilities that make the job more attractive.
- d. Public recognition from the principal and/or your colleagues.

30. To what extent do you think the review of teachers' work has an impact upon the way teachers teach in the classroom?

- a. No impact
- b. Little impact
- c. Moderate impact
- d. Large Impact

31. Do you think you have been able to make any contribution towards improving the quality of education in your school?

- a. Yes
- b. Maybe
- c. No

32. According to you what are some of the challenges concerning the quality of teachers in primary education of India?



Appendix - 2 : Articles Written under the Internship

ARTICLE 1: Quality of Primary School Teachers in Rural India

India has come a long way since Independence in terms of providing access to education in rural areas. Enrollment rates have been shooting up since the late 1980's and especially since the mid 1990's. Efforts on the part of the government in the form of schemes like the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), SarvaShikshaAbhiyan, mid day meals and Right to Education Act have motivated a lot of children to come to schools. Parents have also become much more conscious about sending their children to school. This has tremendously helped in increasing the rate of enrollment of children into primary schools in India. In rural areas as well majority of children go to a school. The [Annual Status of Education Report \(Rural\) of 2019](#) highlights that, 90 percent of children in the age group of 4-8 years are enrolled in an educational institution.

The enrollment rates paint a really sanguine and optimistic picture about the state of education in the country. But how accurate is this picture in reality?

Truth be told, I'm afraid not very much. Under the façade of positive enrollment ratios comes a deeper problem associated with the quality of primary education being delivered in most of the rural elementary schools of the country. The private schools in rural areas are no better in terms of learning outcomes.

According to the ASER report of 2018, in rural India only 50.5 students in 5th standard could read a standard II level text and less than 30 % could perform simple division sums. Hence even though majority of children are going to a school, a lot of the children are completing their primary schooling without acquiring the expected literacy and numeracy skills.

Various factors come into play in determining the quality of primary education in rural areas. One of the key factors is quality of teachers in rural areas.

One of the primary challenges associated with quality of primary teachers in rural areas vis-à-vis government schools, is the burden of official non academic work. In many of the rural schools, classroom activity remains low as teachers are burdened with auxiliary tasks such as filling forms, reporting progress, looking after the implementation of social schemes at the school level, etc. All of this takes away from the time which is actually devoted to teaching, and takes a toll on the quality of learning delivered.

Further a [study](#) conducted by the World Bank in 2016 reported that the teacher absent rate in India stands at 23.64 per cent. However it is important to note that 52 percent of the observed absences were on the account of authorized leave or official duties. Teachers are assigned an array of duties other than teaching such as election-related duty, examination duty, trainings, etc. Thus teachers are unable to devote their entire time and energy to teaching as they work under the massive burden of carrying out several administrative tasks.

Further the quality of primary teachers is severely affected by lack of motivation. In rural areas, most of the teachers are often de-motivated because of factors such as pressures of non academic work, overcrowded classrooms, lack of proper infrastructure, lack of support from the community, political interference, the demand for multi-grade teaching, etc. Lack of appreciation and acknowledgement along with poor mechanisms to reward their hard work discourages teachers to actively improve their methods and pedagogies and strive for improvement. This can greatly affect the quality of teaching as teacher may lose the interest and passion towards what they do, thus hampering their performance in a classroom.

It is also important to note that the assessment of the quality of education is primarily focused on the performance based evaluation. The performance is evaluated on the basis of some measurable indicators. It doesn't take into consideration the qualitative aspects of classroom activities and student teacher interactions. And there is immense pressure on the teachers as the educational bureaucracy demands progress which often forces them to fill in false data. Additionally it also diverts the time and energy of the primary teachers from improving classroom engagement and student participation.

There is a shortage of teachers in many states. This leads to overcrowded classrooms with an uncomfortable teacher-pupil ratio. Quality of primary education is severely compromised in such a setting as the teacher isn't able to cater to the learning needs of every child. Many a times in order to fill the vacancies, the state governments appoint primary teacher without proper qualifications.

Moreover teachers very often do not have enough autonomy over the subjects that they teach. Teaching methods are often prescribed. Many teachers feel that they should have a greater say over teaching methods. Further, the teaching practices taught in training programs are very often difficult to carry out in overcrowded primary classrooms. The practice of multi-grade teaching is also quite common in

rural areas. Often, the prescribed teaching practices are not very effective vis-à-vis multigrade teaching. This reduces the effectiveness of a teacher in a class.

India is almost on the verge of achieving its aim to universalize education. But this would have very little meaning without addressing the challenges facing the quality of education in rural India. The burden of administrative work, teacher absences, lack of motivation, poor mechanism to reward good performance, ineffective training, lack of decision making power and autonomy vis-à-vis teaching practices and overcrowded classrooms with uncomfortable student teacher ratios are some of the key problems which need to be tackled in order to improve the effectiveness of teachers.



ARTICLE 2: Quality of Primary School Teachers in Urban India

Education plays a very important role in the growth and development of a country. In this context the role of quality primary education becomes very crucial. The elementary schools act as the primary buttresses of our education system as this is where children are taught basic concepts which lay a strong foundation for them to grasp more advanced concepts as they grow up. The government of India has taken various initiatives to ensure that children have access to primary schooling. The gross enrolment rate (2015-16) at elementary stage was reported to be 96.9 as per [data](#) published in 2018 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India. It is fair to say that India has tremendously improved the number of students who are enrolled in a school so much so that most Indian children receive elementary schooling.

While India has shown promising results on the front of accessibility, the quality of education delivered in most of the schools is highly questionable. Many schools across the country are delivering subpar education wherein children in their primary grades are unable to acquire basic and expected literacy and numeracy skills. The rural schools have earned a bad name for themselves when it comes to quality of education. On the other hand, schools located in urban areas have often performed significantly better than their rural counterparts but there are significant variations seen in the quality of learning across different schools.

One of the key factors that aid the quality of education is the effectiveness of teachers. Many studies have tried to measure teacher effectiveness. As per the value added analysis, a good teacher is one who can achieve greater and higher achievements from the students. In this context, to understand the quality of primary teachers in urban primary schools, we conducted a small survey wherein we asked the students questions about the different aspects of their elementary education.

When asked about the key attributes that constitute the effectiveness of a primary teacher, the attributes as per the responses from our participants can be put into three categories, namely personality traits, skills and pedagogical practices.

In terms of personality traits, there seemed to be a wide consensus among all the respondents that an effective teacher is patient, dedicated, encouraging, unbiased and inclusive. He/she has a good relationship with all the students and is empathetic and sensitive to the learning needs of different students.

According to our survey, most of the private urban schools have a comfortable student teacher ratio. Hence in most of the urban schools, the teachers are able to attend to the learning needs of majority of the students, thereby increasing the teacher effectiveness and the learning outcomes. In 53.6% of the cases, primary teachers were encouraging towards the child when they performed poorly in tests. However the survey results also pointed out that in some schools primary were not very supportive and often humiliated the child or showed signs of biasness by reducing the paid to the child after a poor performance.

In context of the second category i.e. skills, an effective primary teacher should possess excellent communication skills, the ability to motivate and engage students in discussions and classroom activities. They must also be able to inculcate critical thinking and creativity.

Majority of respondents have rated their teachers' ability to motivate and arouse curiosity as satisfactory. 73% of the participants were encouraged by their teachers to participate actively in classroom activities and discussions. Interestingly, 64 % of the respondents reported that even though their teachers encouraged them to make their own answers, when it comes to exams, more marks were provided for reproducing textbook lines.

Last but not the least, the respondents pointed out that in terms of pedagogical practices, the elementary school teacher should be able to provide autonomy to the children to think outside the box and solve problems on their own. The teaching process should be more holistic with less emphasis on rote learning and more focus on comprehension of key concepts. Teaching should not only be limited to textbooks and also extend to key life skills and values. There was also an emphasis on incorporating playful teaching methods in class and classroom preparedness on the part of the teacher.

63% of respondents pointed out that their primary teachers focused on developing thorough understanding and making sure that children apply this knowledge to

solve their own problems. Majority of the teachers began by explaining the rationale behind learning something. This helped in developing a primary foundation that was strong enough to help them in their higher grades or college. 53% reported that their teachers mostly came prepared to the class. 66% of respondents were encouraged to solve problems on their own with little or no help from the teachers and active peer engagement. Thus the quality of class activity and engagement was high in most of the private urban schools. Overall, majority of the participants rated the effectiveness of their teacher as more than satisfactory.

Even though a very promising picture has been painted so far vis-à-vis the effectiveness of teachers in urban areas, it is important to note that the respondents of the survey were primarily from urban private schools. Given the complexity of urban demography, the results of our survey may not apply to all the schools.

There are various problematic areas as well vis-à-vis quality of teachers in urban schools. 66.7 percent of respondents in our survey reported that lecture method is the dominant mode of teaching in majority of the schools. The challenge to complete syllabus is one of the major concerns of school teachers especially in the upper primary classes. Since a vast syllabus needs to be covered in a limited span of time, the lecture method is the most preferred mode of teaching. However this fixation on completing the syllabus may limit the scope for teachers to engage in pedagogical practices that has enough possibilities for students to participate and engage in elaborate discussions and explore other important topics beyond the realm of what is given in the textbooks.

Moreover the rote learning approach seems to be another massive challenge compromising the quality of learning in most of the schools in urban areas and across the country as well for that matter. The assessment of students is often done on the basis of marks obtain in tests which primarily test the retention power of children. Further, the problem of overcrowded classrooms persists in many of the schools that make it impossible to attend to the learning needs of every child.

Thus even though urban areas may be doing better than their rural counterparts vis-à-vis test scores, the quality of education in urban India is not entirely free from challenges. The rote learning approach to education, fixation on completing the vast syllabus, assessment of learning outcomes based on test scores that are

primarily based on the retention capacity of children and overcrowded classrooms are some of the key challenges that need to be addressed so as to improve the effectiveness of teachers in classrooms.



ARTICLE 3: Quality of Primary Teachers in the Public Sector vs. the Private Sector

The awareness and consciousness vis-à-vis the importance of education in the advancement of a country has significantly developed since the late 1990's. With parents becoming much more conscious about the primary education of their children along with the Indian government optimistically introducing and promoting measures to universalize elementary education, India has come a long way since independence in terms of enrollment rates in primary grades. The [Annual Status of Education Report \(Rural\) of 2019](#) highlights that, 90 percent of children in the age group of 4-8 years are enrolled in an educational institution.

A recent trend that has been observed in the education scenario of the country is the tremendous growth spurt in elementary private schooling. According to a [paper](#) published by Geeta Gandhi Kingdon, over the span of four-years from 2010-11 to 2014-15, the number of private schools rose by 71,360 schools. By contrast, the total number of government schools in India, across 20 major states of India, rose by a mere 16,376 government schools. The rising demand for English medium education and the widespread perception of private education being superior to public education play a key role in facilitating the growing unpopularity of public elementary schooling.

We at *TheRise.co.in* had conducted a small survey wherein in 93 percent of the respondents in private schools reported that the medium of instruction was primarily English. Further [studies](#) have pointed out that student test scores of private schools are considerably better than government schools.

Parents want to provide their children with the best education and hence the debate about quality of education in private vs. public sector assumes a central role in deciding a school for their children. However this discussion assumes a little more meaning if the question about teacher quality and effectiveness and the challenges associated with it in both the sectors are also taken into account.

There is general perception that the primary teachers in private schools are more accountable than primary teachers of public schools. [The Probe Report \(1999\)](#) also validated this perception by pointing out that in a private school the teachers are

accountable to the manager or school authorities who can fire them. However in a government school, primary teachers have a permanent job. The Headmaster cannot fire a teacher. This reduces the accountability of teachers in public sector schools.

The lack of accountability in the government elementary schools arises due to lack of motivation on the part of the teachers. According to a [paper](#) published by Jos Mooij in 2008, the primary educators in the government schools are expected to perform of an array of things such as ensuring proper implementation of schemes to election duty apart from teaching. Further there isn't a proper reward structure for the teachers to reward their efforts and hard work in both the sectors. This greatly reduces their motivation. Further lack of adequate support from the community may also make matters worse.

The pressures of performing non academic duties doesn't only add to the burden of work on teachers but also takes away significantly from their teaching time. How can a teacher improve classroom activity and maximize learning outcomes if he/she spends half the time looking after administrative work? Many studies have revealed that the teaching activity is higher in most of the private schools. A [study](#) published in 2009, revealed that private recognized and unrecognized schools in Uttar Pradesh had higher rates of teacher activity as compared to government schools. Activity rates were 11-18 percent points higher in private schools. The PROBE, 1999 report found that unlike government primary schools, many of which are dysfunctional, private schools provided active teaching. When investigators visited these schools, teachers were almost always in class and were engaged in teaching.

Further the functioning of the education bureaucracy is such that it only focuses on results and demands progress. The performance of students is reduced to measurable variable. It does not take into consideration the qualitative aspect to classroom activity and interaction. Thus teachers in public schools face immense pressure to increase enrollment rates, performance rates of students, etc. that very often they are forced to fill false information and resort to unfair practices. Teachers in private schools do not have to perform as much administrative work as the public school teachers and can spend relatively more time on teaching. But

they too have to bear the pressure from higher authorities to improve the performance of students.

Primary educators in private schools have a greater autonomy over school pedagogy than their government counterparts. Even though government teachers receive in service training, they have very little say in decision making especially with regards to teaching methods. The needs and demands of students vary across schools, grades and classrooms. A prescribed teaching methodology may be very restrictive and inefficient if the teachers don't have enough autonomy to adapt it to the needs and requirements of the classroom. In this context, the primary educators in a private institution might not face much restriction in terms of teaching methods.

A major area where private schools have an edge over public schools is smaller class sizes. The student-teacher ratio in most of the private primary schools is slightly lower than the public schools. This helps the teacher to devote more time per student and address the learning needs of most if not all the students.

Another interesting development vis-à-vis the public education scenario is the rising class divide. A [paper](#) published in 2008 pointed out that the government teachers have increasingly started seeing themselves as part of the middle class. This has led them to view themselves as different from the children and the parents that they deal with. They have lowered the expectations from the children that they teach and perceive the quality of education that they are providing as inferior to private English medium schools.

We may have come a long way in terms of accessibility, but there is still much more left to achieve in terms of the quality of education being delivered across school throughout the country. There is a significant gap which has been created vis-à-vis the performance of students in private and the public schools. A major reason behind the emergence of such a divide is the difference in teacher accountability, motivation and student-teacher ratio among other things. Thus it is important to address this gap between both the sectors because as Henry Ford rightly pointed out, 'Education is preeminently a matter of quality not amount'.
