

Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat – a case study from Sikkim

Government of India launched the initiative of Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat in August 2014, the framework was shared with all States. The focus of this programme is to ensure that children develop basic foundational skill to read with understanding and basic mathematical concepts in Standards 1 and 2 at school.

In Sikkim the State team came up with an innovative way to disseminate information about this initiative. The team used social media applications like Facebook and Whatsapp to disseminate information about the initiative. Discussions on how to take this forward started through whatsapp groups of teachers.

Without waiting for a formal government order or letter from the district authorities, teachers at **Doksing Government primary School in East Sikkim** decided to implement the initiative in their school. The teachers collected all the story books available in their school. The books were then categorized for all classes. The books suitable for the reading level of children in classes 1 and 2 were displayed using innovative methods. The teachers put a string across the wall and the books were hung on the string. The teachers changed the time table ensuring that there was a library period when children could choose books from those displayed to read themselves. The teachers from the school took pictures and circulated these on the whatsapp group. The word spread fast and teachers from different schools started to set up reading corners in their school classrooms. The **Secondary School Ranka East Sikkim, followed by Ms. YomimaBhutia principal of the Singithang Primary School.**

In order to further supplement the school libraries and the reading corners, State developed supplementary reader in English and Nepali. These materials were distributed to all schools. Teachers teaching students in class 1 and 2 were trained to effectively use this material.

The teachers from the **Doksing Government primary** school have reported that since the time the reading corners have been established they are being regularly used by the children from classes 1 and 2. The teachers have noted an improvement in student attendance at school. There has been marked improvement in reading habits of children. Seeing children's response to the reading corners teachers are encouraged to collect books from community, other schools, writing letters to people to donate books to the school.

The other schools that have promoted reading in their schools and can see the benefits from the programme include

- **Lethang Primary School in Sikkim West where the teacher Mr. K.B. Rai** has taken steps to improve reading among children. Mr. Rai reports that children have started speaking fluently in English, some children have established a

reading corner in their own house, children started enjoying reading books and there is an improvement in reading habits of children.

- **Singithang Primary School in South Sikkim, the school principal Ms. YomimaBhutia** has reported that since the time the school set up reading corners and has promoted reading habit among children there has been an increase children's attendance; children started telling stories on their own and Children started enjoying reading books
- **Similar reports have been shared by teachers from** Adampool Junior High School Ms. TshetenDomaBhutia in Sikkim East; Tanzi Primary School in Sikkim South Mr. Kumar Chauhan and Nadey Primary School in Sikkim North Mr. KesangNamgyalSaring. Some of the schools have reported increase in enrolment, improved attendance