

Teachers bring smart classes to UP govt schools

POSITIVE TURNAROUND Making lessons enjoyable with the help of technology has brought about a change in students' attendance as well as learning outcomes. Sadly, Lucknow is yet to see such initiative

When Ravi Pratap Singh, principal of a primary school in Gonda district, joined the institution in August 2013, only 138 students were enrolled there. The biggest challenge was to make education interesting for them.



The number of govt schools running smart classes has been growing slowly but steadily

He started using his mobile phone and tablet to teach students rhymes and realised that their interest levels increased sharply. Seeing Ravi's performance, a local MLA supported him with cash prize of Rs 1 lakh which he used to buy a projector and speakers etc.

Seeing its performance, the state government rewarded the school with a cash prize of ₹ 1.2 lakh in 2015-16. "I used the money to buy audio video gadgets and transformed the school into a smart class. I started using the audio-visual

mode of communication to teach other subjects as well. The attendance began improving. Now there are 325 students in the school. Today, the students don't want to miss any class," he said. This is not the lone example. Alpa Nigam, headmaster of a school in Gorakhpur, said when she joined in 2010, very few students were enrolled and most of them ran away after lunch time. To catch their interest, Alpa too started using a mobile phone and speakers.

Impressed with her dedication, Rotary Club and other well-wishers donated a projector, which is being used to screen educational movies for students. Now the school has three laptops and learning is fun here.

Sushil Singh, principal of primary school Gulriha in Harak block of Barabanki district said, "We had received ₹1.2 lakh from the state government as part of an excellence award. We used the prize money to buy a projector, speakers and an inverter and started smart classes. The results have been encouraging. We hope other schools will follow our model instead of waiting for government assistance."

The number of government schools in Uttar Pradesh running smart classes had been slowly but steadily growing, said a basic education department official. He said this was largely due to efforts of individual teachers who were seeking help from good Samaritans or opting for crowd funding to arrange the money needed to digitize the teaching process.

At a time when the state government is still to make any budgetary provision for running smart classes in schools, these teachers are doing their best to equip their

institutions with the latest technologies and compete with private institutions mushrooming in small districts.

Now the basic education department is preparing a database of all such schools.

“The findings, so far, have come as a surprise. Nearly 1,200 schools (out of the total 1.54 lakh in the state) are running smart classes,” said director, basic education, Sarvendra Vikram Bahadur Singh. He said it was equally surprising that the state capital was yet to catch up with other districts in this respect.

He said that most of these institutions were concentrated in far off districts like Gorakhpur or smaller ones such as Hardoi and Sitapur.

“Gorakhpur has the maximum number (124) of smart class schools. Hardoi is a close second with 122 schools, and Sitapur is next with 120. Some of the other districts with such schools are Azamgarh (33), Mau (28), Muzaffarnagar (20), Bulandshahr (18), Lalitpur (17), Kaushambhi (15) and Jaunpur (10),” he said.

Singh said that by integrating technology with education, these schools had transformed the teaching-learning process, making it far more interesting.

“It has helped a lot in increasing student retention. For instance, now a science teacher doesn’t just talk about blood circulation but actually shows the students how blood is circulated in the body via arteries and veins,” he said.

The official said that soon these teachers would be invited to the state capital where they would interact with other government school teachers, inspiring them to generate resources to make their respective schools more appealing for students.

“Some of the teachers who have done good work will also be felicitated,” Singh said.

Govt Schools Running Smart Classes

Gorakhpur	124
Hardoi	122
Sitapur	120
Azamgarh	33
Mau	28
Muzaffarnagar	20
Bulandshahr	18
Lalitpur	17
Kaushambhi	15
Jaunpur	10