

Students begin day by cleaning their school

Shruti Tomar

shruti.tomar@hindustantimes.com

BHOPAL: For the last four years, Narendra Paraste, 13, and his schoolmates have begun their day at the government primary and middle school at Nariya in Madhya Pradesh's Dindori district – by cleaning it.

The efforts have shown results. The school was found to be one of the cleanest in Madhya Pradesh in an education department survey conducted across the state this year.

The attendance of students at the school has also improved by 50%. The dropout rate, too, has been reduced by 50%, teachers said. Students no longer fall ill frequently and enjoy being at the school, they added.

Paraste and the other students began cleaning the schools after teachers held a session about the importance of cleanliness under Swacch Bharat Mission in 2014.

The class 8 student said they were taught the importance of hygiene, cleanliness and about Mahatma Gandhi views on the issue.

Moolchand Marawai, a teacher at the school, said the students began cleaning the school after they were told that there cannot be any designated peon and sanitary worker.

"Next day, the students came to the school with brooms and brushes and said if we can clean our homes, we do not need anybody's help to clean our schools," said Marawai.

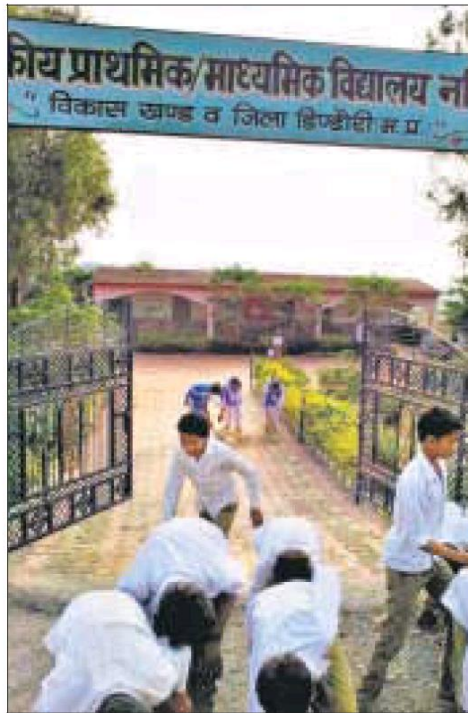
He said they help the students. "Now, we have formed a cabinet which takes all the decision related to the development of the school."

Initially, the parents of the students did not like the idea and objected.

"The parents of a few students, including my mother, did not like the idea of students cleaning the school," said class 8 student Anil Yadav.

"But when they saw the condition of the school, they changed their views," he said.

He said the cabinet, which includes a 'prime minister' and ministers for sani-



■ The school was found to be one of the cleanest in Madhya Pradesh in an education department survey conducted across the state this year. HT PHOTO

tation, education, health and culture, designates duties to each of 200 students according to their choices.

"Our classes start at 10 am but we all reach school between 9.00 am and 9.30 am. We start cleaning the classes, playground, library and toilets," said class 6 student Omdi Uike, 11.

"We also take care of greenery. Some students maintain the plants. We also take care of hygiene. After completing our work, we clean ourselves. Some even return to their homes for bathes," said Uike.

Praveen Sonakia, the school principal, said they have never forced any student to clean the school.

"They are self-motivated. They have started a cleanliness campaign in the village as well."