

## Pratham Bihar March 2011

- Bihar is the second most populous state in India, with just over 10% of the country's population, and holds more than its share of the country's problems. With a high proportion of the population living below the poverty line, Bihar has the lowest literacy rate among the major states of India: only 38.5% of the population is literate, compared to the 52% national average and the literacy rate of 91% in Kerala.
- Yet despite these challenges, Bihar has witnessed a paradigm shift in the field of education. In the past few years, the proportion of out-of-school children has dropped dramatically; the government has engaged in a large-scale teacher recruitment drive; and much attention has been focused on the improvement of school infrastructure. These steps are important, but the persistently low learning levels across the state are a reminder that there remains much work to be done. Working both alongside government and in community-based volunteer programs, Pratham will continue to play a key role in education in Bihar.



# PRATHAM

Every Child In School...  
And Learning Well

### About Pratham

Pratham works in both urban and rural contexts across 21 states of India, reaching over 2.2 million children through its educational programs. **Read India** is Pratham's capstone rural program—a grassroots effort for which we recruit volunteers from local communities to help struggling students develop basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pratham trains volunteers and government teachers in our accelerated learning methods, provides effective teaching-learning materials, and monitors learning outcomes closely to ensure that children make consistent progress towards clear, targeted goals.

**Block Excellence Programs (BEP)** are units of Read India, operating in 100 villages in one selected block of a district. BEPs serve approximately 2000 children between the ages of 6-14, providing volunteer-taught classes either during or after school. BEPs aim to demonstrate to the Government and other stakeholders that rapid improvements in learning levels are possible at a low cost. **District Resource Centers (DRCs)** are run across the district, with one focus block operating like a BEP. Additionally, DRCs offer courses for middle and high school children as well as vocational courses for volunteers.

**Education for Education (EFE)** is a program designed to strengthen Read India by offering courses to volunteers in exchange for her contributions to the program. In the current phase of EFE, computer courses are available, while spoken English will be offered in the future.

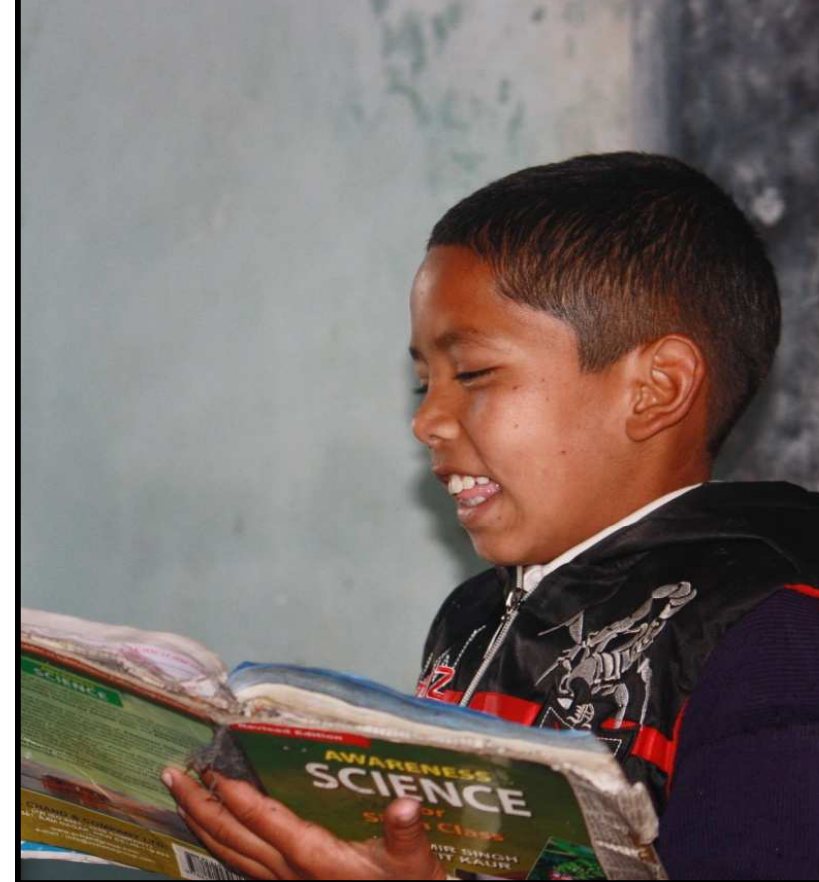
## Pratham in Bihar:

**Geographical Coverage: 2506 Schools in 19 Districts**

**Children Reached: 63,880 Children**

**Volunteers Mobilized: 8187 Volunteers**

- **Block Excellence Programs (BEPs) and Rural District Resource Centers (DRC)** are running across 19 districts in Bihar, with volunteers conducting daily classes for children in Standards 1-5. Classes are given in government schools, ensuring that the focused learning programs reach the neediest children of the region— children of every caste and hamlet of the villages in India’s poorest state. Pratham also trains “tola sevaks”, government workers hired to enroll and work with out-of-school children, in Pratham’s activity-based, outcome-oriented teaching methods. In two Read India blocks, Pratham is also conducting a mother’s literacy program, which is being evaluated by MIT’s Jameel Poverty Action Lab. In the Purnia DRC, local staff organized a science fair and demonstrations in government primary schools.
- The **Urban District Resource Center (DRC)** provides volunteer-led classes for children in Stds. 1-5 in government schools in Patna and in one nearby rural block, in addition to working with the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) preschools across the city and in the rural coverage area. Volunteers in the DRC undergo extensive training, with ongoing capacity building classes in Math, Hindi, and English for all volunteers.
- **Education for Education (EFE)** was rolled out in 2010 in Bihar, providing volunteers with the opportunity to expand their own horizons through lessons in computer literacy in exchange for their service as volunteers for Pratham. About 170 computer centers are currently operational in Bihar, serving approximately 3000 volunteers.
- Since its beginnings in 2004, the **Gyanshala Program for Rescued Child Laborers** has scaled up across Sitmarhi and Kishanganj Districts, in 4 blocks known for their high proportion of child laborers. Gyanshala is a general education and development program, providing academic support, sports, and skill development courses to “returned” child laborers. The children have benefited immensely from this opportunity, with some children receiving admission to the prestigious Navodav government boarding school, and others passing Stds 10-12 in record time.



### **Government Partnerships in Bihar:**

Pratham has a strong track record of collaboration and partnership with Bihar’s state and local government. For the past 4 years, Pratham has participated in the program design and execution of **Sankalp, Bihar’s flagship program** to enroll all children in primary school, working to bring a focus on school quality and learning attainments to the government’s enrollment project. Through this partnership, Pratham has contributed to curriculum and material design, and the training of government teachers. Pratham has also helped to create a children’s newspaper, **Bachpan**, which continues to be used in schools across the state.