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Train shaped state school turns education tide in LWE affected Jharkhand

The novel initiative is giving private schools a run for their money as parents are withdrawing their children and enrolling them in the attractive government school.

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Updated: Jun 25, 2017 11:46 IST



B Vijay Murty
Hindustan Times, Ranchi



Class rooms designed as bogies of train at Government Primary school , Bagru in Khunti(HT Photo)

Ranchi: Parents preferring private school over government school for their wards is no new phenomenon in India. But in Bagru, a left wing extremist (LWE) village in Jharkhand's Khunti district, there is a rush for admission in the local state-run primary school.

Interestingly, in the last one week, at least 35 children withdrew their names from private schools and enrolled in this government school located around 50 km from capital Ranchi. Enquiries for more admissions have enthused authorities who not long were worried over the extremely low admission and high drop out rate. But at the same time, they are apprehending overcrowding of the classes.

A creative and innovative effort by the local civil administration, which gave the school the look of a train has made the government funded primary school the most popular and attractive school in the district. Hundreds of children, young and old people from adjoining villages and panchayats are travelling to Bagru to catch a glimpse of the school.

The school building has been painted so dexterously that from any angle, it gives the feel of a train parked at a railway station. For majority of children in this village, who have seen a train- either in books or on television- their train shaped school is a coveted gift.

“We are



Class rooms designed as bogies of train at Government Primary school , Bagru in Khunti (HT Photo)

overwhelmed by the response to our initiative primarily aimed at curbing the high drop out rate,” said Khunti deputy commissioner, Manish Ranjan, who had conceptualized the idea during a visit to the Ranchi railway station. He said he clicked pictures of the station and engaged Manoj, a painter from Ranchi, to transform the shape of the school building into a train.

With an abysmal 61 % literacy rate in its rural areas, Jharkhand faces the daunting task of luring children to government schools and simultaneously checking the high drop out rate. There are a couple of government schools where the number of students is not even into double digits. The Birbanki Project High School for years had only six students and one teacher,

before Maoist insurgents blew up the building early this year, prompting the local administration to shift the school to a safer place.

The quality of education too is abysmal in this tribal dominated state, where 21 out of the 24 districts are declared LWE affected. According to the latest Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2016 around 49.7% class 6 students in the state failed to read class 2 textbooks and only 67.7% class 8 students managed to understand them

Total 48.1% class 1 students couldn't recognize numerical and 56.6% students of the same class couldn't recognize English letters, the survey said.

"Ever since my child, who goes to a private school, has seen the train shaped school, he is adamant on going to that school," said Kartik Munda, a local villager.

While the headmaster's room has been given the shape of engine, the rooms mimics bogies. A part of the boundary wall has been painted by the students.

Teachers said they never expected a response of this magnitude. "We will make this a model school in the state," said a teacher.

The deputy commissioner said soon they would come up with schools in the shape of airplanes and buses to catch the fancy of children and attract them to the classrooms.

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