



Pratham

Every Child in School and Learning Well

ENGLISH IN EDUCATION

BIHAR PROFILE: summary

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BIHAR TODAY: FACT FILE

Economic status

- Second poorest state in India, with 33.74 per cent of the population living below the poverty line¹
- Significant differences between urban centres and rural areas

Technology

- Demand for power often not met by supply and over two thirds of the population do not have access to electricity
- Very limited access to computers or laptops: national and state initiatives in developing information technology, mainly for governance purposes
- Phenomenal increases over the last decade in use of and access to mobile phones²

Occupational trends

- 75 per cent of the population involved in agriculture, almost 98 per cent of the state classed as rural
- Since the formation of Jharkhand, very little employment in heavy industry
- In urban centres such as Patna, steep economic growth in service industries including banking and insurance, trade, hotels and restaurants and communications³

Languages

- Hindi and Urdu state official languages
- Wide range of more local languages spoken across the state

Demographic trends

- Bihar: 12th largest state of India by area and the third largest by population (104 million, 2011)
- 46 per cent of the population below eighteen, population growth: 35.4 per cent (urban) 24.25 per cent (rural)



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BIHAR SECONDARY SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

Education systems in Bihar: 10+2 system	
Elementary	Primary: Standards I–4 and Upper Primary: Standards 6-8
Secondary	Standards 9-10
Senior secondary / Intermediate 'Inter'	Standards 11-12

- 5,686 secondary and 2,568 higher secondary schools⁴ across the state, although not all fully functioning⁵
- Estimated expenditure on education under the State and Non-State Plan for 2015–2016 estimated at INR 220 billion⁶ (19.16 per cent of the total budget)



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Number of teachers in Bihar 2013–2014 ⁷	
Primary only	134,300
Primary with upper primary	256,857
Primary with upper primary and secondary and high secondary	6,973
Upper primary only	2,318
Upper primary with secondary and high secondary	1,214
Primary with upper primary and secondary	5,208
Upper primary with secondary	1,910
Secondary only	15,041
Secondary with higher secondary	20,395
Higher secondary	5,208
Total	460,275

Number of school children in Bihar September 2013		
Standard 9		
Boys	Girls	Total
721,572	687,268	1,408,840
Standard 10		
Boys	Girls	Total
660,363	593,343	1,253,706

POSITIVE CHANGE

'Bihar has seen an increase in access rates and a significant increase in comprehensive classroom infrastructure and has improved the classroom environment by reducing the pupil teacher ratio (PTR). For reduced PTRs to translate into improved learning outcomes, it is critical that robust systems for developing high quality teachers are in place'.⁸

'Being in a cohort exposed to the CM Bicycle Programme increased the probability of a girl aged 14 or 15 being enrolled in or having completed grade 9 by 30 per cent ... the program also bridged the pre-existing gender gap in age-appropriate secondary school enrolment between boys and girls by 40 per cent'.⁹

- A 10 per cent increase since 2006 means almost all children are now enrolled in school¹⁰
- Gender parity index is now better than the national average
- Dramatic improvements in provision of facilities including drinking water and toilets¹¹
- Construction of over three thousand schools since 2010 (number of schools per 100,000 population 67.1, compared to 60.2 in 2005-06¹²
- Recruitment of over 15,000 secondary schools teachers¹³
- Participation in the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)
- Free bicycle distribution scheme (*The Chief Minister's Bicycle Programme*), specifically targeting girls
- Planned in-service distance learning for teachers



CHALLENGES WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Challenges: teachers and learners

- High rates of student absenteeism and dropout from school (around 30 per cent at secondary level)¹⁴
- High pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) 54:1
- Low levels of student achievement are common
- Significant shortage of teachers in the state and not all teachers are sufficiently qualified
- Despite progress, insufficient systems of pre- and in-service training

Challenges: schools

- Distance from secondary schools presents many challenges to students
- Only 59 per cent of secondary schools have power¹⁵
- 14,000 secondary schools are needed to accommodate all students¹⁶

Private or public?

Many low-income parents are prepared to pay to send their children to private school, especially boys, as they see non-government, low-fee schools as providing better quality teaching, learning and facilities.¹⁷ One study shows around 40 per cent of teachers delivering private tuition in Bihar.¹⁸

Quality varies enormously from school to school, private education may result in high levels of family debt and is not affordable for the poorest sectors of society. More understanding of the dynamic between the public and private sector is required.¹⁹



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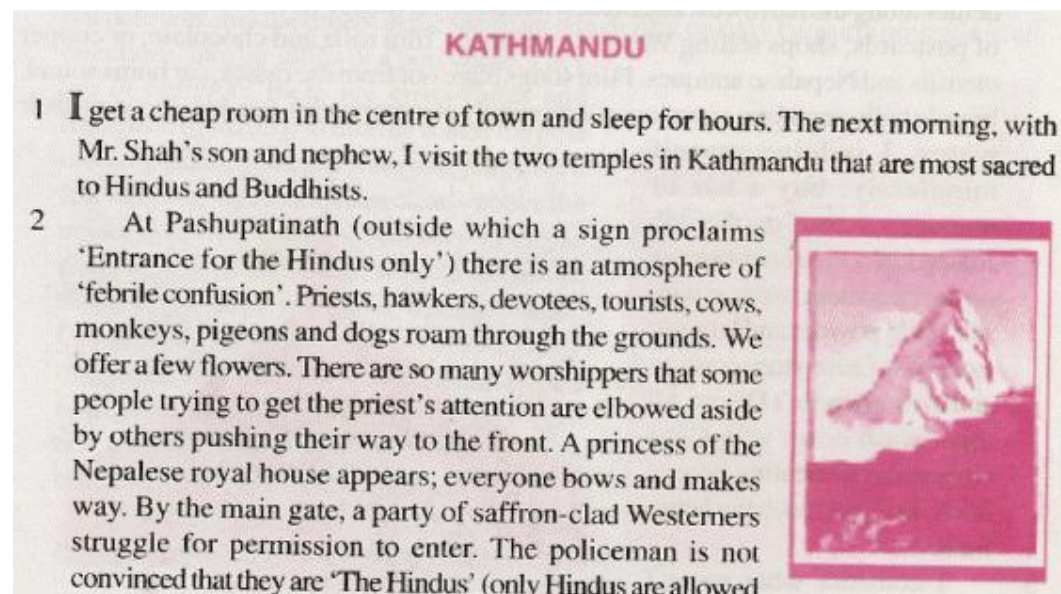
ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BIHAR: CURRICULUM AND COURSEBOOKS

'The children in the state are mostly of rural background and they lack the exposure to English language or English vocabulary at the initial stage. Hence, the NCERT syllabi for Class I and II can expect their children to develop ability to 'enact small plays / skits and 'talk' about themselves, members of the family and the people in their surroundings' but this will be too ambitious an objective for the children with rural background and with little or no exposure to English language and its vocabulary'.²⁰

- Increasing priorities for English
- English taught to all learners from Standard 1 from 2006
- Bihar Curriculum Framework (BCF) developed in 2006 and published in 2008
- Major project to re-design the syllabus and coursebooks for thirteen years from 2009 under supervision of the SCERT
- English examinations organised by the Bihar State Examination Board at Standard 10, but English is not a compulsory component of the school leaving examination

'The very principle of equality entails that English should not remain associated only with the rich, elite or the upper middle class. Even a rural child of the underprivileged has an equal right to gain a sufficiently good level of proficiency in it so that he should not suffer discrimination for lack of it'.²¹

Coursebooks



Panorama coursebook Standard IX

'Proficiency in the learner is needed for the spontaneous and appropriate use of language in different situations'.²²

TEACHERS, PARENTS AND LEARNERS

TEACHERS

Teacher qualifications: secondary school teachers in Bihar (by percentage) 2013–2014²³

Below graduate	Graduate	Postgraduate	MPhil	PhD
19.8	26.69	43.60	0.91	2.21

LEARNERS

Studies have shown:

- 20 per cent of learners at Standards 1 and 2 clearly failing; only half the class achieve a 'moderate' level of learning²⁴
- Learners at Standards 3, 5 and 8 score significantly lower than the national average in reading comprehension and mathematics²⁵
- At Standard 8, 23 per cent of students were able to recognise letters but not simple words²⁶
- Learners are very responsive to new activities, technology and ways of learning when these are experienced²⁹

PARENTS

Studies have shown:

- Parents are keen to support their children when they can
- 46 per cent of fathers had not completed their primary education and 68 per cent per cent of mothers had not received any kind of schooling at all²⁷
- 39 per cent of children received help and support at home for schoolwork from parents or other family members but 61 per cent did not receive help of any kind²⁸
- The state has seen phenomenal growth in the number of English medium schools and a high prevalence of private tuition, fuelled by parental demand



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