

APNA SKOOL

# अपना स्कूल

A School for the Children  
of Labourers employed in  
Brick kilns and  
Construction Sites



## THE BEGINNING



From A Single Room 25 Years Back



People kept endorsing the initiative

## Migrant Labourers

# प्रवासी मज़दूर



Mostly from Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and some districts in Uttar Pradesh- Hamirpur, Urai, Jaloun, Mau and Baliya

### Social Condition

A majority of the labourers are from Scheduled castes.

### Financial and Educational Condition

Mostly landless labourers; almost all of them are illiterate.

## Reasons for Migration

- Lack of Employment opportunities in the village
- Scarcity of labour opportunities in the native place
- Employment opportunities in brick kilns and construction sites as labourers, in Kanpur



## Children's Educational Status

# बच्चों की शैक्षणिक स्थिति



- Children suffer the most.
- No opportunity for education, due to their constant migration
- The parents' illiteracy and lack of awareness about the importance of education, a major barrier in the path of their children's education
- The indifferent attitude of the government, administration, brick kiln owners and the builders towards the education of migrant labourers and their children

## APNA SKOOL: An Initiative



- The first effort in a house at IIT Kanpur, 25 years ago
- This was the first step towards the education of the children of migrant labourers employed in construction work at IIT Kanpur.
- The next target was brick kilns and construction sites in and around Kanpur.
- Year 1992: The first Apna skool outside IIT Kanpur, at brick kiln sites at Deep and Pawan at Bhaunti.



- This was an effort in which the people involved in the struggle were threatened with dire consequences
- During this phase the attitude of the administration was that of complete indifference and non-cooperation
- Nevertheless, continued a quiet and peaceful struggle for the children's education
- Gradually, new people kept on joining the struggle; there was a positive change of attitude in some brick kiln owners, resulting in a growth of Apna skools

- In Collaboration with All India Women's Conference (A.I.W.C.), new Apna skool centres were set up at various construction sites in the city in the year 1992





## Apna Skool: An Overview

- The Apna skools are generally run from 15<sup>th</sup> October to 15<sup>th</sup> June every year, a period when brick-making activity takes place.
- Every year, on an average 15 to 20 Apna skools are actively engaged in teaching children.
- 20 Apna skools were opened in the year 2006-07, out of which, 15 skools were opened on the brick kiln sites and the rest on the construction sites.
- Every year, 500 to 600 children get their education in Apna skools, and about 40% of these children are girls.

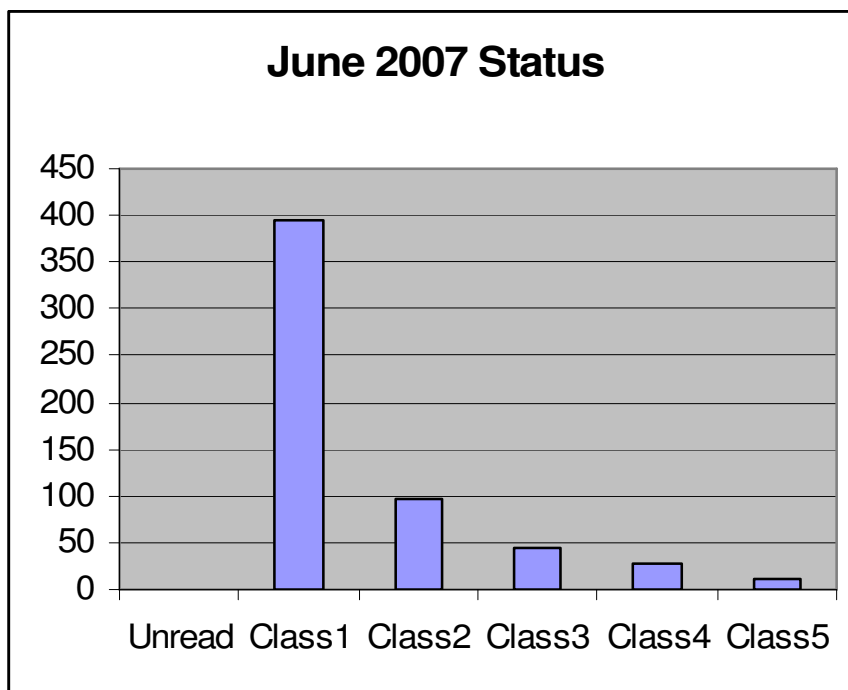
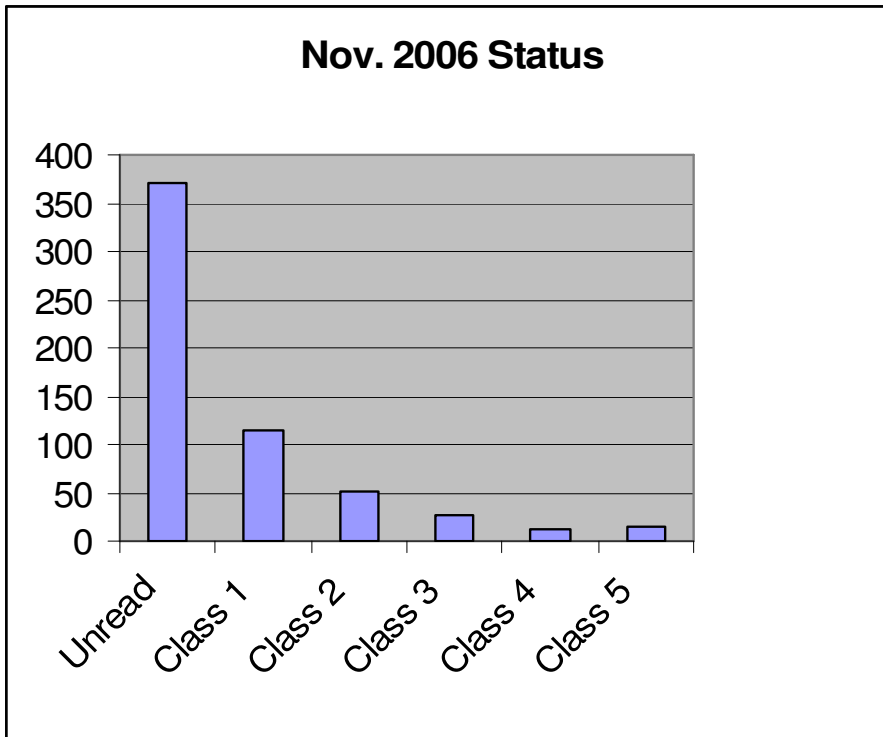


## Year 2006-07: Overview

- A total of 20 Apna skools: 15 at brick kiln sites and 5 at construction sites
- Total number of students: 591
- Total number of boys: 359
- Total number of girls: 232
- The teaching methods and syllabus of Apna skools are prepared in such a way that in a 6-month period, a completely illiterate child can read and write in Hindi and know basic tools of Mathematics such as addition and subtraction



# Enrolment figures in Apna Skool



## A Joyful Approach to Education

- Apna Skool: A place of interesting and pleasant education.
- The Basis of Education: Children are full of potential; What is needed is to make them realize it
- Hindi: Instead of beginning with the alphabet, the teaching of Hindi is initiated with the learning of simple words



- The primary thrust is on activities where an attempt is made to make the process of teaching and learning interesting and fun.
- Without relying only on blackboards, liberal use of charts and colourful picture cards
- Use of some games activities for teaching Hindi and Mathematics.



## Other Activities

- Besides studies other activities such as drawing, painting, music, dance, and play-acting are regularly held for the children
- Nutrition: Children are given nutritious food such as eggs, fruits, and nuts everyday.



- Health-related activities: Immunization programmes , distribution of Vitamin A, B, C tablets, roundworm and tapeworm tablets are undertaken on a regular basis apart from having first aid boxes at every centre



- Children with ailments are treated by reliable doctors in the city, as per requirements
- School uniforms and winter clothes are distributed among the children every year



- Video shows: Films and documentaries about issues on education among children and labourers, health awareness and rights of the workers are shown from time to time.



- Educational Trips: Every year the children are taken to zoos and similar excursions as part of their educational trips.



- Every year, the children participate in cultural functions on Independence day, Republic day and Annual day





- Regular meetings are held with the children's parents and other labourers, on issues such as education of children, personal and community hygiene and awareness regarding minimum wages



- **Teacher Training Programme:** On the first Saturday of every month, detailed discussions are held with all the teachers of Apna skools, on the process of learning and teaching, and innovative and effective ways of imparting education to children.

- Every year week-long workshop is held in the month of November for the overall development of teachers.



- Employment-oriented education: From time to time, the elder children are taught such skills as stitching, ornament-making, candle-making, mask-making etc.



## Some Achievements

- **Change in the attitude of Labourers:** There was a time when the labourers were reluctant to send their children to schools for education; the same people have now become aware of the importance of education and prefer to work only in those brick kilns where Apna skools are run.
- **Workers' Co-operative:** During the time when an effort was being made to provide education to the children of migrant labourers working in IIT Kanpur, the volunteers involved in this process also put forth the issue of the labourers not getting minimum wages; A sustained struggle then ensued, mostly fuelled by the indifferent attitude of the administration, that led to the formation of the Workers' Co-operative in IIT Kanpur; Because of this, the workers enjoy the security of work and get minimum wages in IIT Kanpur now
- **(Late) Makhanlal Case:** 15 October, 2002 – Died in an accident at the construction site as earth caved in trapping him under debris- A consequence of negligence by the builder. His son Chandrabhan, was a student of Apna Skool at Ratandham centre. Instead of being properly compensated, Chandrabhan and his mother, Smt. Nanki Bai were subjected to ill-treatment by the builders. Through persistent efforts, a case was filed and the builders were forced to pay a compensation of Rs. 1,00,160/- to Nanki Bai



## Migrant Children: A Tale of Struggle

- Doojbai: The daughter of a migrant labourer Doojbai, began her education in an Apna skool and now works as a teacher in a government Primary school in Chhattisgarh.



- Teejbai: Doojbai's sister, began her education in an Apna skool. Currently, working as a 'Shikshamitra' in Raipur.



- Sumita Sahu: Began her education in an Apna skool. She has become an Arts graduate



- Vimla: Attended Apna skool ; She is now fully committed to her daughter's education.

- Sharda: Initiated to schooling in an Apna skool. Passed 10<sup>th</sup> class examination in 2007.



- Dhaniram: Is currently studying in Commerce stream in the 10<sup>th</sup> class.



- Satyanarayan: Currently studying in 12<sup>th</sup> grade in Science stream



- Sanjay: Began his education in an Apna skool, passed his 12<sup>th</sup> class examination in 2007.
- Geeta, Rajni, Sahil, Indrajeet Prashant, Nishant: Began their education in Apna skool 4 years ago, and are now studying in 7<sup>th</sup> class.



- Tarannum, Noble: Currently, studying in 6<sup>th</sup> class.
- There are many other students who are fighting against odds for their education, and Jagriti is committed in playing its part in helping them in their struggle.

