

The Times of India

Most of the schools in Uttarakhand has just single teacher

RUDRAPUR: Just days after a report tabled in the parliament revealed that over 1 lakh schools in India have just one teacher, it has emerged that a primary government school in Rampura in Rudrapur has a single teacher for 628 students. The school is in a dilapidated condition and has no benches, tables, fans or teaching infrastructure. There is just one toilet shared by all the students.

What's worse is that students in class 5 do not seem to know the English alphabet and many could not even spell Rudrapur, the name of their hometown. The situation of the school exposes the claims of the Uttarakhand government that it has raised the standards of state-owned schools.

The lone teacher, Shashibala Pahwa, who doubles up as the principal of the school, told TOI that she has requested district officials of the education department many a times for additional teachers but no action has been taken yet.

Local resident and former member of Rampura municipal corporation, Banarasi Dass, said that it was impossible for a single teacher to teach so many classes. "I think parents send the children to such schools so they can be fed the mid-day deal, education is not foremost on their mind."

When TOI visited the school on Saturday, the unhygienic surroundings and the condition of the fast-decaying building were appalling. Classes were taking place right next to a heap of garbage inside the premises due to lack of classrooms. The students were sitting on the hard floor for lack of chairs and tables. There were no fans in any of the rooms.

When contacted, district magistrate (US Nagar) Dr Ashish Srivastava said that he has ordered the commissioner of the municipal corporation to install fans in the school and renovate the building. Srivastava said that he would also hold talks with the directorate of education to ensure more teachers are posted in the institution. Among the Himalayan states, Uttarakhand has the highest number of schools with single teachers at 1,771. Himachal Pradesh has 1,119 such schools while Jammu and Kashmir has 1,430.