

## “Communicative English Through Media: A Case Study”

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My paper is a case study on the Interactive Radio Instruction programme in Jharkhand. The Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) programme is funded through the dot-Edu project with the objective to improve the quality of education in the state. In India, it is also launched in the states of Karnataka and Chattisgarh. IRI Programme in Jharkhand is designed for 'Introductory English', in collaboration with the state Government and local Non-Government Organizations for use at Primary School Level.

The first phase started with the introduction of Interactive Radio Instruction program on pilot basis in 300 schools of three selected blocks Mandar in Ranchi, Mandu in Hazaribagh and Rajnagar in Seraikela Kharsawan districts in the year 2004 - 05. Initially, it was tough to convince teachers as well as other stakeholders that radio can also play a significant role in improving quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. But very soon they realized that radio has made its inroads in the classroom and become a popular friend of teachers and students. The positive responses coming from teachers and students could pave the way for introduction of IRI in other possible areas. The response of the program was overwhelming in most of the targeted schools as both teachers as well students found it interesting and a unique way of teaching-learning process. The study shows that the learning level of children of program schools improved through IRI whereas teachers also learned new techniques of active teaching process.

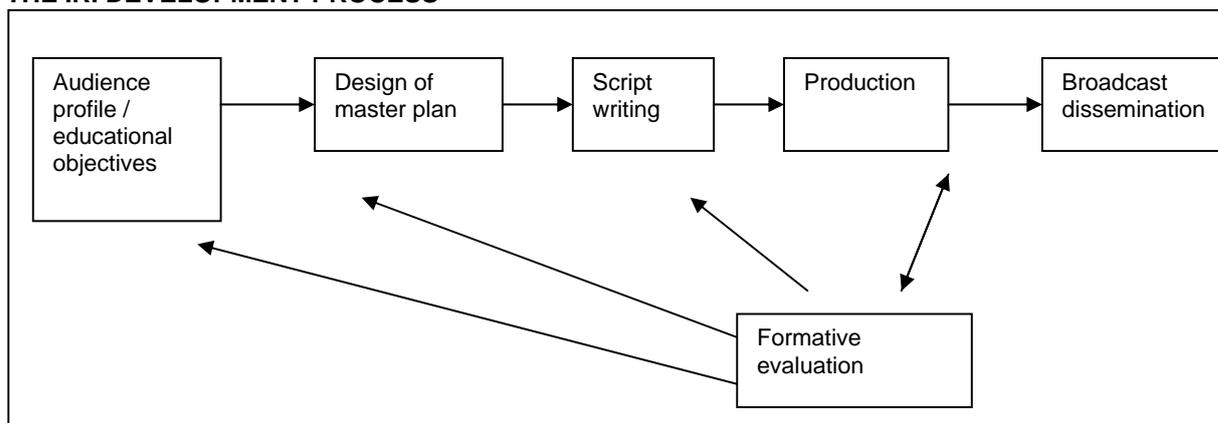
In the second year (2005-06), it was introduced in around 6000 schools of five districts, Ranchi, Bokaro, Jamshedpur, Lohardaga and Gumla. The broadcasting was done from primary channel of All India Radio, Ranchi. Centre for Social Welfare was adjudged to monitor the program in five districts of Jharkhand. After two successful years of IRI program, Education Development Council (EDC) and Jharkhand Education Project Council launched the radio programs in all primary sections of government schools of Jharkhand. The program started from 28<sup>th</sup> August 2006 from four radio stations Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Jamshedpur and Bhagalpur, The timing of the program is 12.15 PM to 12.45 PM from Monday to Friday and 9:30 AM to 10.00 AM on Saturday.

### Coverage Area: Monitoring of IRI Program

SI No.	Particulars	Number
1.	Total Number of Districts	22
2.	Number of Monitored Districts	21
3.	Number of Monitored Blocks	34
4.	Total Number of Schools (Primary/Middle/ Aided Education Guarantee Schools)	45,000 (Approx)
5.	Number of Intensive Monitoring School;	160
6.	Number of Random Monitoring Schools	127

IRI programs are distinct from traditional distance education programs primarily because they focus on and inspire interactive learning. During a typical IRI lesson, students listen to a set of characters that guide them through educational activities designed to improve learning in a particular subject matter, interactivity is both simulated and actual. Learners may respond directly to instructions given by a radio facilitator or teacher during designated pauses that are precisely timed. As the response of the radio instructor cannot predict exactly what students will do, scripts must be carefully crafted with precise directions, sequencing and timing. The IRI program sets up learning activities that demonstrate how to teach a particular subject matter while simultaneously engaging students directly in the learning process. IRI programs are also unique in their use of entertainment, story and characterization as vehicles for keeping engaged and interested in learning. The programs emerge from the local cultural context by adapting local activities in educational ways.

## THE IRI DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



This chart shows how a typical IRI project functions to design and produce IRI programs. It also demonstrates the important role formative evaluation plays along the way. Each element of the development process involves a specialized team of people with unique talents and skills working together towards particular goals.

The implementation of IRI program in all government schools of Jharkhand is a major breakthrough in addressing quality aspect in primary education in the state. The effective implementation of IRI in all primary schools is a collective responsibility of all stakeholders including Education Development Council, Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC), AIR, teachers, students and community. The success of the program largely depends on strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism which help implementers to understand existing situation and take necessary action to cope up with the given situation.

The major task of District level Monitors is direct school visit and monitoring of IRI program during broadcast time and the objective of monitoring is to understand learning-gains as well as the impact on attendance of school children during the program. It is also to observe the teachers involvement in classroom transactions because the teachers are the main pillar in the program and without their active involvement the concern for quality cannot be addressed. In this section, I have concentrated on analysis of data collected during field visit and presentation of findings.

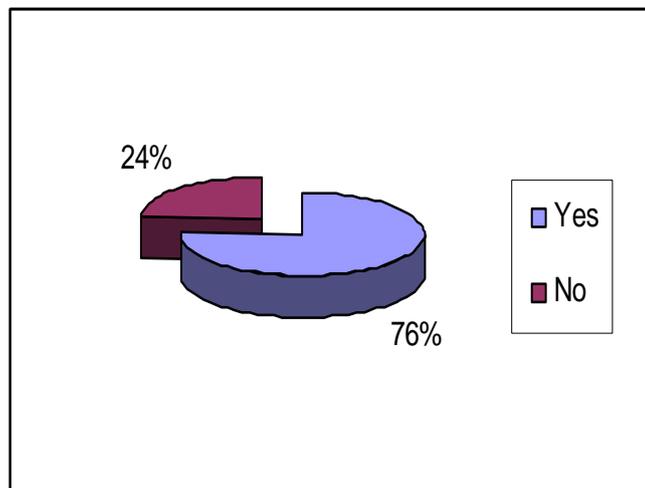
## INTENSIVE MONITORING SCHOOLS: MAJOR FINDINGS NUMBER OF TEACHERS IN INTENSIVE MONITORING SCHOOLS

Districts	Number of Schools	Number of Students in class I & II	Total Number of Teachers		
			Male	Female	Total
Ranchi	10	1294	25	33	58
W. Singhbhum	10	1204	20	41	61
Palamu	15	2227	53	50	103
E. Singhbhum	7	372	34	14	48
Seraikela - Kharsawan	8	882	26	27	53
Sahebganj	7	784	12	48	60
Godda	8	996	33	28	61
Latehar	10	1608	64	30	94
Chatra	5	685	21	24	45
Giridih	8	842	66	35	101
Pakur	4	316	26	37	63
Jamtara	3	215	36	16	52

Hazaribagh	10	1142	38	37	75
Koderma	5	1227	26	17	43
Deoghar	8	1223	49	39	88
Dumka	7	964	23	36	65
Bokaro	10	1867	54	55	109
Dhanbad	10	2165	57	118	175
Lohardaga	4	611	19	11	30
Simdega	3	275	6	8	14
Gumla	8	1560	34	60	94
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>22459</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>1492</b>

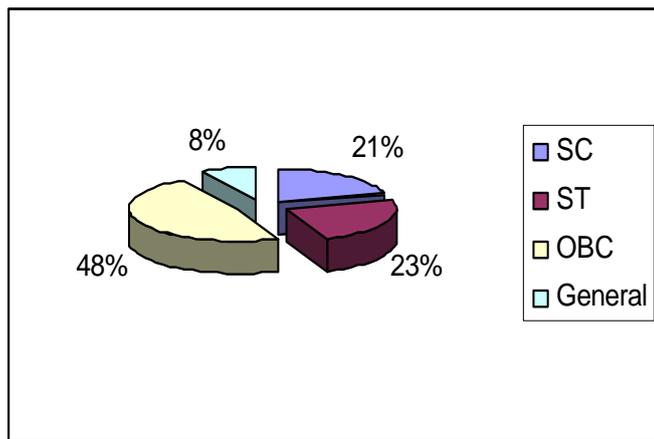
The above data is the compilation of total number of teachers of monitored schools. This data includes community teachers also. As per the above data female teachers are more than male. The reason for more number of female teachers is because of the coverage of some girls schools where no male teachers were posted. The teacher pupil ratio is higher in the given data. The reason is due to coverage of all teachers in schools primary (I - V) / Middle (I -VIII) whereas on students' part we covered class - 1 and II only. As per the above data, it is clear that the lack of teachers is not an issue in running IRI program in classroom. It is advisable to provide training to all teachers of a school so that if one teacher is not available during IRI broadcast others can also run the program without a break.

**IRI PROGRAM USED IN CLASSROOM**  
**Enrolment data of Students in Class I & II**



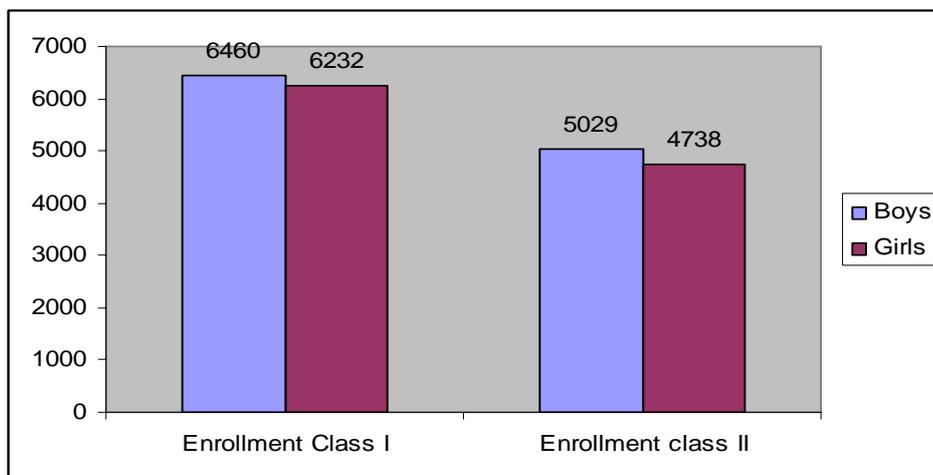
The above data shows that more than 76% of intensive monitoring schools used IRI program in classroom whereas 24% of them still don't use it. The figure in pie chart reflects the situation during first visit of monitoring. However from second and third visit almost 100% of schools started using the program in classroom.

**Enrolment Data - Class I & II**



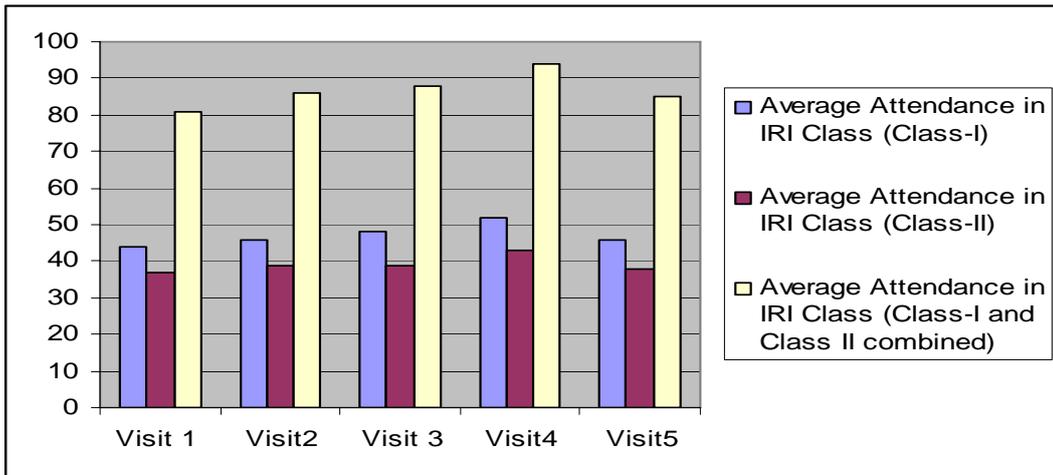
As regards enrolment, the Pie chart shows the enrollment composition in class I & II in 160 intensive monitoring schools from 21 districts of Jharkhand. The OBC category leads with 48% of share in total enrolment whereas ST and SC are neck to neck in enrolment. The OBC data includes Muslim children also.

The category wise analysis of enrolment data reflects the composition of society in Jharkhand. Out of 21 districts covered, OBC enrolment is higher than other categories in 15 districts, Scheduled Tribes are leading in 4 districts including Lohardaga, Seraikela Kharsawan, Ranchi and West Singhbhum districts and Scheduled Castes enrolment is higher in two districts Pakur and Jamtara, It is significant to note that Muslims are included in Other Backward Classes category.

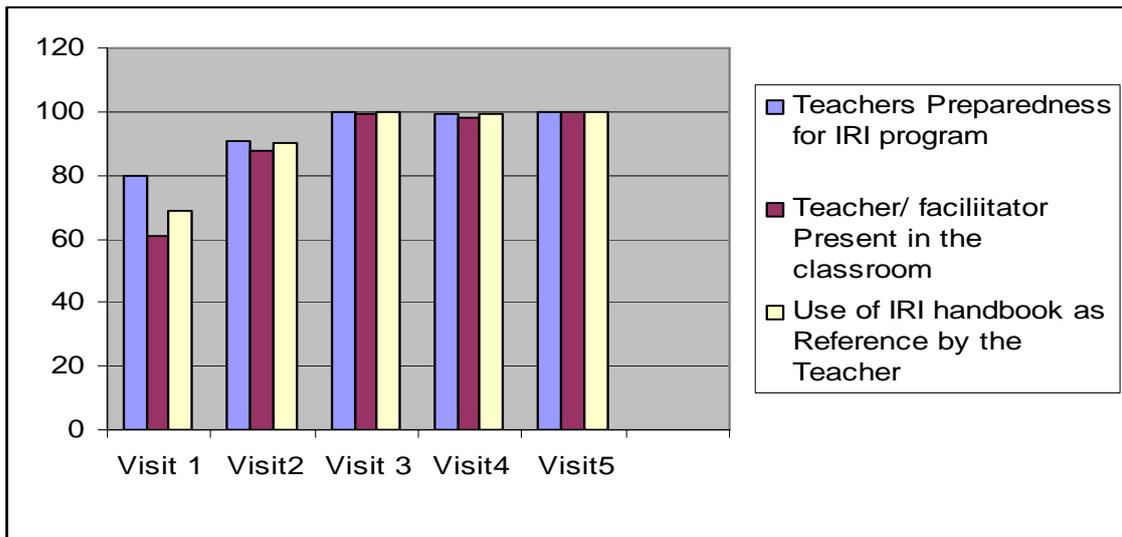


Gender wise analysis of data reflects the efforts of government to bridge the gender gap in primary level education. In the above graph, the girls' enrolment is almost equal to boys which is an encouraging sign of gender parity and increased involvement of parents in sending girls to school. However, during sowing and harvesting time the sharp decline in attendance of children especially girls is still a matter of concern.

Attendance is one of the major tools to evaluate performance of IRI program in classroom. The rise or decrease in attendance-during IRI broadcast time may be attributed to acceptance of IRI among teachers and students. However, there are other factors that affect the rise or fall in attendance. As for example, during festival, sowing or harvesting time a natural decrease in attendance can be noticed in schools.



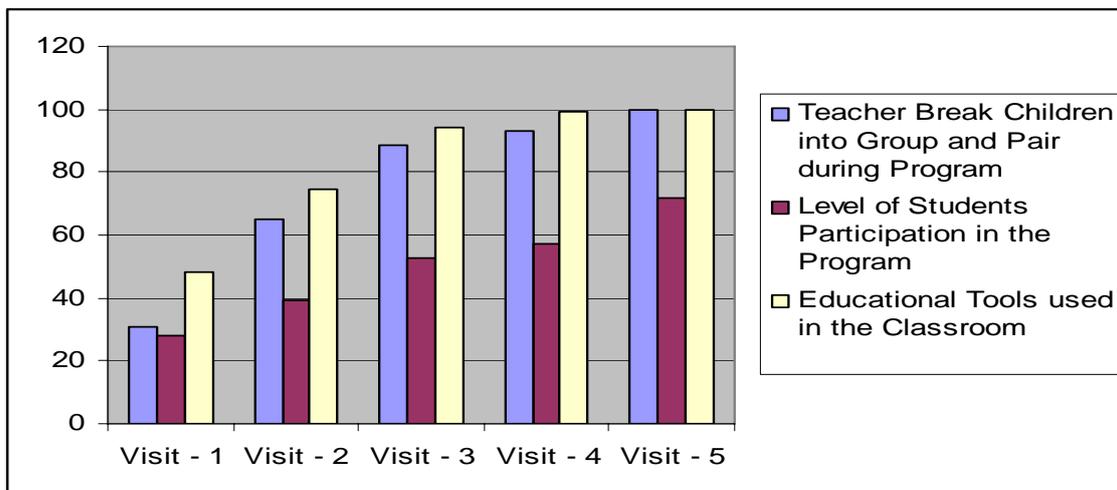
Teachers' involvement in IRI activities makes the class more lively and conducive for learning in a joyful environment. Teachers' manual is helpful in preparation for a lesson before broadcast as it helps them to understand concepts of IRI, their role in IRI classes and planning for next lesson. The pre, during and post broadcast information given for each and every lesson is a big help for teachers.



The effectiveness of IRI program largely depends on teachers' preparedness for the program. Maintenance of radio and battery has to be done well before broadcasting of the program. It is also important to prepare and make ready required materials for the particular lesson.

The implementation of IRI programme 'Learning English is Fun' is a major breakthrough in all Primary Schools of Jharkhand. The qualitative aspect of teaching - learning environment require teachers to experiment and adopt innovative ways in classroom situation. Breaking children into groups are some of the examples of IRI techniques. During the first visit it was observed that very few teachers believe in the concept of group learning, rather they adhere to old modeled "chalk and talk" ways of teaching. District Level Monitors worked hard to motivate teachers to act according to the instructions of IRI. Breaking children into groups is important for conducting learning activities. The above chart shows that only 30% of teachers actually adhere to the instructions of radio by breaking children into groups. In the subsequent visit, the teacher's involvement in the program marked a rise. It is now a common

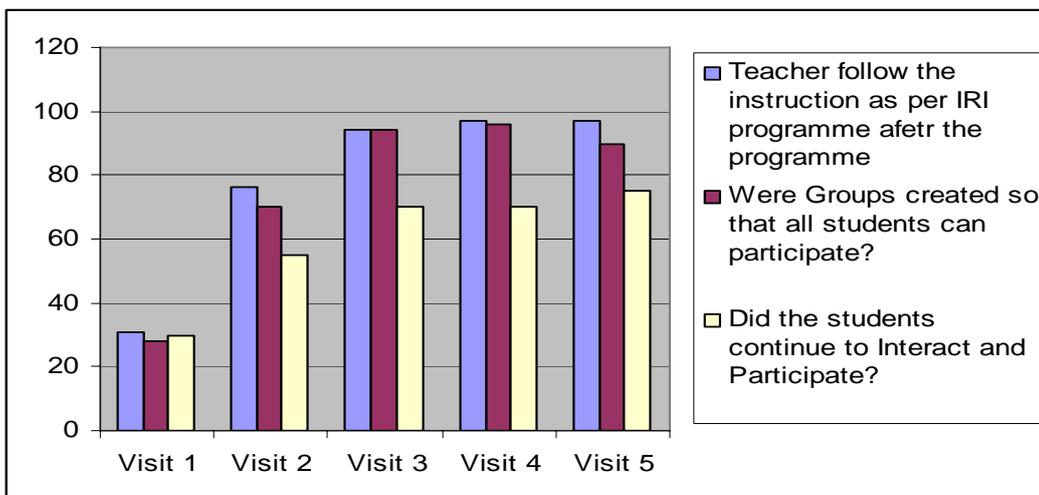
practice among teachers to break children into groups and to conduct learning activities. They also try to employ such techniques in other classes to teach other subjects.



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The above diagram shows interesting trends in level of student participation in the program. Initially, student participation in IRI program was low but gradually their involvement increased. It has also been observed that students enjoy the songs, games and other activities during the program and hence their participation increased. The level of participation of students was found better in those schools where program is running regularly. But teachers have to work hard to make children understand concepts of IRI and learn in a joyful environment. Use of educational tools is a common feature in schools. The importance of educational tools in IRI program makes it popular among teachers and students. But some of the teachers still don't like to use such tools in their classes. They need more inputs and motivation during training so that they also start using educational tools during IRI program.

Initially, it is difficult for both teachers and students to understand and follow instructions of radio character. But as lessons proceeds they start picking the instructions and follow accordingly. Poor broadcast quality also hampers the process of picking up the instructions well. Post- Broadcast activities are an important aspect of IRI learning process. Children learn more through repetition of games, activities and songs given in IRI lesson. It is also observed by monitors that children of those schools learn faster where teachers undertake post-broadcast activities.



It has been observed by monitors during their first visit that teachers shows no interest in classroom activities in non- IRI time. Monitors motivated them to follow IRI instruction to teach students during non broadcast time. Initially teachers were unable to understand the benefits of such activities but gradually they started adopting IRI techniques in non program time also. They form groups among students to enable them to participate in active learning process. The songs and activities are used in these sessions. Students enjoy songs and other simple sentences learned from IRI program. They continue to interact with each other even after their school time. Some of the IRI songs are so popular among students that they always sing in groups. Teachers find enough time to conduct activities with students where all students can participate. The above graph reflects the gradual increase in follow up activities done by teachers in classroom. IRI transaction in non - IRI time gives enough time and scope for both teachers and students to practice IRI songs, activities and games.

The important aspect of IRI monitoring is to study classroom transaction during IRI broadcast. During their visit to schools from September 06 to February 07, the monitors encountered various situations, some of the schools were performing very well, others needed more support to understand the concept. The success of IRI depends on teachers' attitude towards new concepts, teacher with positive attitude always tries to find ways to perform better and use new techniques in teaching - learning. If we evaluate teachers' performance with respect to IRI, we can put them in two categories. Some of the teachers are very hopeful and enthusiastic, receptive of new teaching techniques and wanting to bring something new for children. The second type of teachers is indifferent to any new development in teaching. They teach or participate in activities like IRI only because of pressure from administrative authorities. However, it is encouraging to note that number of teachers with positive attitude is more than the indifferent teachers. They understand the concept and try to act accordingly. For most of the districts, where IRI program is altogether a new concept, the teachers of such schools take more time to understand the concept and their specific roles in the program. They are also not familiar with the concept of participative and joyful teaching-learning environment. As regards, the level of students' participation, they also take time to adjust in new ways of joyful teaching-learning environment. They overcome their hesitation gradually and start participating in the program.

Classroom transaction in non-IRI time is an important aspect of IRI. In half an hour time during broadcast teachers have to conduct lot of activities depending upon the instructions of radio characters. But they can continue or organizes IRI class in non broadcast period also. It is also interesting to note that teachers feel comfortable in non -IRI time as they don't have to follow time limit to complete an activity. They can continue with any learning game or activity until each and every child of class has not participated. Some of the districts, like West Singhbhum, Pakur, Garhwa, Deoghar etc have problem of non reach or poor broadcast quality. It has been observed that teachers of these districts rely on teachers manual and conduct activities during non program time.

#### **General Observations:**

During field visit, it was observed that there were two types of teachers with reference to IRI program. First type of teacher is the young and energetic one who is eager to know new things and apply them in his teaching. They take IRI program as one of the positive ways to impart quality education to students and understand the role of feasible technologies in improving quality of education in rural areas. The other type of teachers is the indifferent ones who always look for some pretext why they don't run the program. They are not convinced about the role of technologies in education especially at the primary level. Female teachers are more conscious about IRI program. There are few examples where teachers record the program in blank cassettes and run the program even during non-IRI time. There are examples of teachers who use techniques of IRI in teaching other subjects like Mathematics and Environmental science. Most of the teachers and students ask for more programs for higher classes on other subjects. Although the program is meant for Class 1 & 2 students, it was found that students of class 3 and 4 also participate in the program.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Poor broadcast quality is a big problem in many districts. Teachers demand for audio cassettes or CD of the program. They are eager to run the program in their schools, hence steps should be taken to make the broadcast technologically efficient.

- Due to different time table of minor schools, teachers miss some of the lessons. It is advisable to consider this issue while making broadcast schedule for next year.
- More programs on other subjects and for higher classes should be made and students of class III, IV & V may also participate in IRI program.
- Orientation of District and Block level officials may help in effective implementation of program.
- Self monitoring system should be developed. The involvement of BRC, CRC, school authorities and community is important in sustainability of the program.
- The involvement of parents and community member is crucial for the success of the program.
- The involvement of teachers in non - teaching activities also affects the smooth running of the program. We should encourage community to take care of such issues as they can employ one community person to take care of IRI program.
- More number of schools should be covered by intensive monitoring as it helps teachers to run the program well and also motivate nearby schools to perform well.

**SOURCES:**

Reports of Dev Net (NGO).

Reports of Jharkhand Education Project Council, Govt. of Jharkhand.

Reports of EDC.

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