

### **Pratham-Orissa: The Pathway**

All the classes in Cuttack, Orissa run in communities and the place for running the class indifferently made available by the community people. The number of classes though seems low in numbers, but the growth in its understanding, learning in the class room and teaching quality improved a lot from the scratch. Some teachers started believing in the methods of fast learning and outsiders including community people, social organizations showing interest in the way Pratham in Orissa working.

Pratham-Orissa began its work in October 2003. During the period, from October 2003 to February 2005, it expanded its activity to 31 slums and catered to the educational needs of a total of around 1000 children. Two monitors doing their job in helping the teachers to solve any hurdle come in the way. Material in the local language was being developed basing on the experience of teaching the children. Initially, the testing of the material and the training to the teachers were done in the classroom itself. The response from the teachers and the children was quite encouraging. A formal training was conducted around the end of March 2004. The training, accompanied by regular visits to the class, improved the confidence of the teachers and the supervisor. Some more training was conducted at intervals to improve the skill and efficiency of the teachers.

The library programme was initiated during this period. In 10 communities the programme is being run and the response is pretty good. The children are interested in reading books and many places the parents borrowing books from the teacher herself or from their own children.

Reading levels is the ultimate show up of the programme running in any part. The reading level in December 2004 shows that around 60% of the children could read and write. If the irregulars are removed from the list the result shows little bit upper hand in reading level where a 10% increase in the readers is found out.

A survey is undertaken in Cuttack to find out the strategies to be adopted in future. The results show there are certain pockets which need some more attention. Some plans are there to start some balwadi classes in the community along with learning to read and Library classes.