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Govt schools in a shambles

- Dismal performance of primary students, says study

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Ranchi, July 17: Poor educational foundation at the primary level has threatened to wreck the future of more than half of the students enrolled in state government schools, revealed a survey.

The findings are alarming: 58 per cent of Class III students cannot read books of Class I — alphabets, words and numerical; 73 per cent of Class III pupils cannot read simple English words and 61 per cent cannot solve subtraction involving two digits.

As a result, when the children reach Class VIII, 33 per cent students cannot read simple sentences in English and 17.5 per cent cannot solve mathematical sum of division (**see chart**).

The findings were made public by Aser, a Mumbai-based organisation, after surveying 750 state-run schools in November last year. Pratham, an NGO in Jharkhand, helped the Mumbai organisation to take off with the study.

“The standard of education in primary section is relatively poor here,” said the report of Aser, released today at a function attended by state human resource development secretary J.B. Tubid and Jharkhand Education Project director Rajiv Arun Ekka.

It also pointed out that only 47 per cent of Class II students could identify numbers from 11 to 99. In Class III, only 39 per cent children could perform sums of subtraction.

Ironically, there are some students even in Class VIII who do not know beyond reading simple words of Hindi and numerical from 1 to 100.

This category of students form around 3 per cent of the total students of Class VIII.

The state also lags behind in all-India education scenario, a report on which was also brought out by Aser. While 49 per cent children in Class III can read and write lessons of Class I nationally, the same is just 43 per cent in Jharkhand.

However, to the relief of the state government, the dropout rate in the primary section, according to Aser report, has come down from 8.9 per cent in 2006 to 5 per cent in 2007. Tubid said that the state record showed higher dropout rate figures at primary level at 15 per cent.

The attendance of teachers in village schools has improved in the past two years. While it was 83.7 per cent in 2005, in 2007 it increased to 91.5 per cent. In case of students, it was 60.9 per cent in 2005 and 62 per cent in 2007.