

# Pragmatic Research on Agency-Based Holistic Approach to Education through Innovation and Vision (PRABHAV - प्रभाव)

## Summary

Our research study PRABHAV, exploring teacher agency, focuses on the role of teachers as agents of change in India's educational landscape. Within this landscape, teachers are increasingly recognised as agents of change. Our focus on teacher agency aligns well with the Bihar government's current educational priorities, evident in its significant budget allocation to the sector, its policy focus on the teaching of foundational literacy and numeracy (Mission Daksh), and the intention to revise teacher recruitment on a priority basis.

We will explore the various elements of teacher agency, examining how teachers experience it and how it relates to their ability to innovate in their classroom. We will also investigate the systemic enablers and constraints that influence teacher agency and their capability to create holistic and inclusive learning environments. The aim of the study is to understand the complex network of influences affecting teachers' capabilities and practices, focusing on individual teachers' identities and agency while considering systemic effects.

Our research study will employ a sequential mixed methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches within and potentially beyond the schools included in Schools2030 program in Bihar, India for a period of two years (2024-2026). The data collection process will include large-scale WhatsApp / SMS based surveys (small x, large n) and teacher focus group discussions with all teachers within Schools2030 schools, alongwith immersive classroom observations, photovoice activity, and card sorting interviews with teachers in selected 6 to 8 schools. These participatory methods will allow us to gain insights into the relationships between teacher agency, innovation and classroom practices.

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The research team includes Dr. Jwalin Patel (PhD from University of Cambridge), Dr. Seema Nath (PhD from University of Cambridge), Dr. Mansi Nanda (PhD from University of Cambridge), Dr. Benjamin Alcott (associate professor at University College London), and a team of research associates who would be visiting the schools included within the Schools 2030 program. These researchers would spend 3 to 6 days in each 6 to 8 shortlisted schools for the qualitative round of data collection across the two years.

This actionable research study on understanding teacher agency will not only help inform schools2030 interventions in and beyond India, but can also help build the foundations for a resilient, innovative education system in Bihar. The study findings can be utilised for several of Bihar's key policy priorities like model school setups, and new teacher recruitments and training initiatives to ensure a motivated and effective teaching workforce.

We understand the significance of reaching a broader and more diverse audience. As a way of giving back to the stakeholders, we intend to disseminate the findings and learnings from the research through exhibitions showcasing research results, particularly emphasising the photovoice activity, open to the public, educators, students, and policymakers, fostering interactive engagement. In addition to this, structured roundtable discussions will convene researchers, policymakers and educators to discuss implications on educational policy, encouraging interactive problem-solving, sharing concerns, and promoting collaborative solutions, bridging research, policy, and practice. We also intend to present the findings and our research work through various platforms such as blogs, academic journals and national and international conferences during the two year research. In all such instances, we will duly acknowledge AKF and Bihar government's education department.