Understanding the Motivations and Challenges of ARPs in Uttar Pradesh

DIAGNOSTIC REPORT

MAY 2024

Acronyms and Glossary

ARP	Academic Resource Person
BAC	Block Academic Coordinator
BEO	Block Education Officer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDI	In-depth Interview
NIPUN	National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy
TG	Teacher Guide
TLM	Teaching Learning Materials
NAS	National Assessment System
UP	Uttar Pradesh
CSBC	Center for Social and Behaviour Change
LLF	Language and Learning Foundation

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Executive summary

This qualitative diagnostic study done jointly by the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC) and the Language and Learning Foundation (LLF) investigates the behavioural challenges and barriers faced by stakeholders in the teacher mentoring system, with a particular focus on Academic Resource Persons (ARPs). The primary goal is to understand how one can support and encourage ARPs who, in return, can provide more effective support to teachers in achieving foundational literacy and numeracy goals.

Our conversations with ARPs and Block Academic Coordinators (BACs) allowed us to identify six broad themes that structure our insights: **roles and responsibilities of ARPs, training and resources, skills and qualifications, ARPs' relationship with teachers, ARPs' motivations, and the use of technology**. Insights from these themes are presented in the form of barriers and levers. Barriers are factors that act as obstacles to desired behaviours, while levers are opportunities that enable desired behaviours. By addressing these barriers and leveraging these opportunities, the study aims to enhance the effectiveness of ARPs in mentoring teachers, ultimately contributing to the achievement of foundational literacy goals.

ARPs face several barriers in their roles, including cognitive overload from various tasks and administrative duties, which reduce their productivity and motivation. There is often a mismatch between their subject expertise and the tasks they perform, leading to generic feedback that does not always help the teacher. Training provided to them is infrequent and largely theoretical, lacking practical, real-world applications, which leads to further ambiguity regarding their roles and responsibilities. Additionally, ARPs struggle with using personal devices for work, adding to their discomfort and costs. Building positive relationships with teachers is challenging due to resistance and peer dynamics. Lack of clarity about their role's future and heavy workloads further demotivate ARPs. A few recommendations from the study include streamlining ARPs' administrative tasks and providing them with time management training to reduce cognitive overload. Offer ongoing, practical training tailored to real-world challenges. Enhance feedback practices with templates and training for specific, constructive feedback and demonstrations.

How to Read

The following document consists of a detailed overview of the project process, beginning with a contextual Introduction, followed by the Approach to the study and Methodology used. This section provides a technical overview of the sample, the locations and a deep dive into the tools used during the diagnostic research

The Results section has two parts, the first part has exercise-wise insights and the second part consists of a thematic analysis which draws insights from across all tools utilised during the diagnostic interviews. Well-versed readers can start reading from this section on, namely **Section 3.2**.

This should be followed by a careful reading of the Discussion section which collates the insights and provides recommendations from the field and the research team. The Discussion Table in this section has been curated for LLF based on the current tools they use for ARP Profiling which includes Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes so that the insights from this report can be directly mapped and applied to LLF's existing tool. The recommendations on this table are the most feasible interventions that can be developed by LLF.

SECTION 01:

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Government Schools in UP

Government schools in Uttar Pradesh form a critical part of the state's educational framework, aiming to provide free and compulsory education to children under the Right to Education Act. These schools operate within a structured hierarchy, with various cadres, including Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Block Education Officers (BEOs), and Cluster Resource Coordinators overseeing administration and quality. Headmasters manage daily operations at the school level, supported by Assistant Teachers and Parateachers. The school day in a primary school typically begins with an assembly, followed by foundational literacy and numeracy classes. Each school gets a monthly visit from at least one ARP, an academic mentor for teachers who primarily provides feedback on teachers feedback on pedagogical practices. Despite facing challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and teacher shortages, efforts are underway to improve the system through better teacher training, the introduction of digital tools, and community involvement.

1.2. Role of ARPs

ARPs are designated to support District and Block offices in academic matters. In Uttar Pradesh (UP), they must visit 30 schools a month and provide feedback to teachers by observing their classrooms and going through their Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) and lesson plans, ensure NIPUN (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy) is followed in the classrooms, conduct FLN trainings and demonstrations for teachers, disseminate information about the NIPUN mission, be up to date with government programme and ensure it's levied in their schools. Their role further involves providing over 2 hours of onsite support and conducting spot assessments of 5 children per school[1]. This differs from state to state. For example, in Assam, ARPs are required to visit 15 schools and 15 homes in a month[2]. ARP posts in UP are assigned according to their subject expertise. Their qualifications entail graduation, a B.Ed. or teacher training degree, and a

[1] Government of Uttar Pradesh. Reforms & Interventions - Basic Education Dept Uttar Pradesh. https://upati.gov.in/MediaGallery/SM_2022_23_59.pdf

[2] Government of Assam. Roles and Responsibilities of IEs -RPs and ARPs and AARPs. https://ssa.assam.gov.in/sites/default/files/swf_utility_folder/departments/ssam_medhassu_in_oid_5/menu/document/Roles%20and%20Responsibilities%20of%20ARPs%20and%20AARPs.pdf

minimum of 5 years of teaching experience in schools[3].

1.3. Role of BACs

Block Academic Coordinators (BACs) are an important part of the LLF team at the district and block levels. They have been appointed in different districts by LLF to better implement demo projects for the foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) mission.

They ensure the effective implementation of all FLN processes in 100-150 schools in a block. They are primarily responsible for building the capacities of academic facilitators such as ARPs and cluster teachers. They help ARPs right from monthly planning for classroom observations and conducting joint school visits to discussing the unique individual challenges ARPs face and identifying areas for improvement for ARPs. They also ensure the regularity and quality of different training and meetings by providing feedback and suggestions. They also engage with BEOs by conducting review meetings to discuss program progress and provide support for better program coordination. The BACs are an integral part of the ARP system as they motivate the ARPs and work for positive behavioural change by reiterating the relevance of ARPs' contributions and encouraging them to adopt a positive problem-solving approach.

1.4. Understanding the Ecosystem

According to the National Assessment System (NAS), between 2017 and 2021, absolute learning levels dropped in almost all grades and subjects, with the average learning achievement dropping from 58 to 54 per cent. The NAS 2017 survey found that the learning levels of students in government schools were much lower than those in private schools. For example, only 28% of Class 3 students in government schools could read and understand a Class 2 level text, while the figure was 55% for private schools.[4]

A complex interplay of factors determines educational outcomes, such as infrastructure, parental involvement, school administration, etc. Research from India has demonstrated the positive impact of teacher quality on student's learning outcomes[5]. A 10% increase in teacher absence is

[3] Government of Uttar Pradesh. https://cdn.s3waas.gov.in/s30e65972dce68dad4d52d063967f0a705/uploads/2023/10/20231102111.pdf

[4] National Achievement Survey Report Card. (2017). https://nas.gov.in/report-card/2017

[5] Azam, M., & Kingdon, G. G. (2015). Assessing teacher quality in India. Journal of Development Economics, 117, 74–83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2015.07.001

associated with 1.8% lower student attendance and a reduction in test scores[6]. Teachers are also burdened with additional administrative responsibilities, which might affect the quality and time available for teaching. Additionally, teachers face unique challenges in educating students who enter the classroom with different levels of knowledge, skills, and needs. Improving the skills of teachers, thus, becomes a social and economic imperative. Teacher capabilities need to be strengthened by providing in-service

continuous professional development. In addition to teacher training, specifically tailored mentoring and coaching, often about specific pedagogical techniques, is

required to yield results[7]. For teacher training to be impactful, it must be targeted to unique, contextual needs, followed by repeated coaching[8]. Teacher mentoring systems can help in professional development, increasing teachers' time on instruction and enhancing their abilities to keep students engaged.[9]

Evidence from around the world points to the efficacy of teaching mentoring programs. In South Africa, students' reading proficiency increased largely when the teacher received in-class coaching and mentoring, compared to

[6] Kremer, M., Chaudhury, N., Rogers, F., Muralidharan, K., & Hammer, J. (2005). Teacher Absence in India: A Snapshot. Journal of the European Economic Association, 3(2–3), 658–667. https://econpapers.repec.org/article/tprjeurec/v_3a3_3ay_3a2005_3ai_3a2-3_3ap_3a658-667.htm

[7] World Bank (2018). World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise. World Bank. https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2018

[8] World Bank (2018). World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise. World Bank. https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2018

[9] Bruns, B., Costa, L., & Cunha, N. (2018). Through the looking glass: Can classroom observation and coaching improve teacher performance in Brazil?. World Bank . https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/7ecfcd7e-c817-5d0a-a368-9ff4646e0f2d/content

when the teacher received centralised training.[10] In 2016, after implementing the Chunauti program in Delhi, considerable improvement was observed in

students' reading and math levels from classes 6-9. The Chunauti program in Delhi selected mentor teachers to supervise five to six schools, ensuring the implementation of government schemes and the day-to-day functioning of schools.[11]

However, there has also been mixed evidence in assessing the effectiveness of teacher mentoring programs. A study conducted by the World Bank on the efficacy of Jharkhand's teacher mentoring system found that despite high levels of effort shown by the Resource Person (teacher mentors here), this did not result in improved teaching practices. This has been primarily attributed to the contract nature of ARPs' roles and the additional burden of non-academic related tasks[12]. Thus, it is crucial to explore systems of teacher mentoring in India to understand the efficacies and shortcomings of the system, and the scope for improvement.

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[10] The Journal of Human Resources (2019). How to Improve Teaching Practice?: An Experimental Comparison of Centralized Training and In-Classroom Coaching. https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.55.3.0618-9538R1

[11] Joshi, M. (2022, November 22). Mentor teachers — Delhi govt's secret sauce for education reforms. The Indian Express. https://indianexpress.com/article/education/mentor-teachers-delhi-govts-secret-sauce-for-education-reforms-6079484/

[12] Vivek, Kumar; Bhattacharjee, Pradyumna; Mani, Subha; Kumar, Avinav. 2021. "Strengthening Teacher Mentoring and Monitoring Systems: Evidence from India". Washington, D.C.: World Bank. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/245071615264400573/pdf/Strengthening-Teacher-Mentoring-and-Monitoring-Systems-Evidence-from-India.pdf

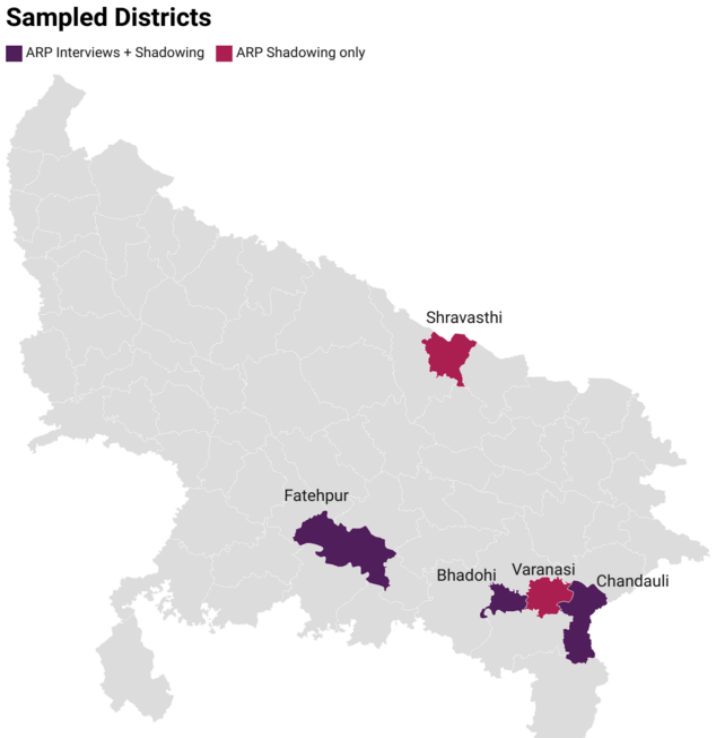
SECTION 02:

APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

2.1. Location and Sample

Our qualitative research focused on 5 districts in Uttar Pradesh - Bhadohi, Chandauli, Fatehpur, Shravasti and Varanasi; the 5 districts in which LLF has field presence. The study included in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with ARPs, ARP shadowing, an FGD with BACs, and a discussion with two BEOs from the Bhadohi district. IDIs are one-on-one interviews with qualitative enumerators that allow for deep exploration of individual perspectives, while FGDs are group discussions where interaction between participants can generate different ideas and insights. LLF selected blocks for shadowing, and the CSBC team used random selection to choose the ARPs within those blocks. Blocks for IDIs and FGDs were selected based on feasibility and proximity.

SAMPLE	INTERVIEWS	LOCATION
ARPs	12 IDIs 6 FGDs	Bhadohi, Chandauli and Fatehpur
BEOs	2 IDIs	Bhadohi
ARP - BAC visits	40 school visits	Bhadohi, Chandauli, Fatehpur, Shravasti, and Varanasi
BAC	1 FGD	Bhadohi, Chandauli, Fatehpur, Shravasti, and Varanasi



2.2. Research Methodology

42 ARPs were selected for IDIs/FGDs from 3 districts - Chandauli, Bhadohi and Fatehpur. In each district, 14 ARPs were chosen from 3 blocks. In each district, one buffer block was also selected for replacement in case ARPs from the designated blocks were unavailable. Four experienced field enumerators and a supervisor were contracted

through the NYAS agency. They went through a day-long training on the discussion guides of the IDIs and FGDs. Two CSBC team members oversaw the field work along with help from the LLF team. A list of selected blocks and the number of ARPs is added in Table 2 in the Appendix.

2.2.1. In-depth Interviews and focus group discussions

4 IDIs were conducted from each of the 3 blocks, covering 12 ARPs. 2 FGDs were conducted from each block, with ARPs. Each FGD had around 4-5 ARPs from the block. Additionally, 2 conversations with BEOs and one with 10 BACs together from across the 5 districts (2 BACs per district) were held. The BAC FGD was conducted online to accommodate participants from diverse districts, and all other discussions were conducted in person. IDI and FGD lengths typically varied from 60 to 90 minutes and were conducted in Hindi. Discussions were audio recorded and were thematically coded by researchers in English.

2.2.2. ARP Shadowing

As part of the ARP shadowing, BACs from the LLF field team accompanied ARPs to the school visits and recorded ARP's activities such as classroom observation, feedback to the teacher, etc. The objective of this exercise was to observe and record the behaviour of the ARPs at work. A total of 40 ARPs were studied through this exercise. 8 ARPs were sampled from each of the 5 districts. 20 BACs were selected (one from each block). Each BAC completed the shadowing of 2 ARPs from the sampled list in their respective block. CSBC team trained the BACs on the shadowing tool, during which the LLF team and BACs provided feedback that was incorporated.

2.3. Discussion Guides Overview

This qualitative diagnostic study aims to understand the barriers concerned stakeholders face in the teacher mentoring system, especially the ARPs, in the context of providing effective support to teachers in achieving foundational literacy and numeracy goals. The key areas of enquiry for IDIs and FGDs with ARPs were based around understanding the following themes – ARPs' knowledge, their beliefs, attitudes, and motivations towards their role, their perceptions of what they are supposed to do in their job, perceived skills and qualifications that an ideal ARP should have, and their relationship with teachers. Additional data collection tools that were employed included a job description exercise, social support mapping and questions based on narrative vignettes (see description below). Feedback provided by the LLF team on the discussion guide was incorporated.

2.3.1. Social Mapping Exercise

ARPs were asked to fill in a map and identify the people in the system closest to them. This would give us an idea of the important stakeholders present in the system and the order in which they support ARPs, without us asking the question directly. Refer to the appendix to find the social map used during the process. People ranked 1 and in the innermost circle are the closest to the ARP. These are the people the ARPs work with most closely in their roles and interact with the most. Those ranked 2 and 3 are subsequently farther away and not as close.

2.3.2. Job Description Exercise

ARPs were asked to fill out a job description form for ARPs, allowing us to infer their perceptions of the skills and qualifications an ideal candidate should have. This involved listing the specific roles, responsibilities, skills and qualifications they would want when recruiting an ARP. Further questions were asked to understand the reasons behind their responses.

2.3.3. Narrative Vignettes

Narrative vignettes were employed to understand ARPs' relationship with teachers and the practice of giving feedback to identify behavioural challenges they face in the process. These vignettes included hypothetical scenarios and certain follow-up questions. By discussing hypothetical situations rather than personal experiences, participants may feel more comfortable and less judged, reducing the tendency to give socially desirable answers. These scenarios featured feedback from an ARP to a teacher, followed by questions on how they would improve this feedback. Scenarios also revolved around ARPs' relationships with teachers and BEOs and how they would feel if teachers and BEOs appreciated them.

SECTION 03:

RESULTS

3.1. Exercise-wise Insights

3.1.1. Insights from IDIs and FGDs

Through conversations with the ARPs, we gained an initial understanding of a typical school visit. ARPs stated that each school visit generally lasts about 2 to 2.5 hours, though some ARPs reported shorter or longer durations. Most ARPs start their visit with a meeting with the headmaster, which lasts around 20 minutes, to collect data indicators such as teacher and student attendance, and other relevant information. The ARPs mentioned that classroom observation is a key component and typically takes about 40 minutes, but there were differences in what the ARPs focussed on. Some ARPs emphasised observing student interaction and teaching content, while others at the use of TLMs. Demonstration teaching sessions usually lasted around 20 minutes and were sometimes done to compensate for the short teaching time of teachers. While some ARPs conduct these demonstrations in another class and include the observed teacher, others might not always perform demonstrations unless specifically requested by teachers or deemed necessary.

Feedback sessions were essential to the visit and included positive reinforcement and constructive suggestions. The format of these sessions varied; some ARPs talked to all teachers together, while others preferred individual discussions. The timing and delivery of feedback also differed, with some ARPs giving immediate feedback after classroom observations and others providing it at the end of the visit.

Spot assessments were commonly conducted, where ARPs select a few students to evaluate their learning progress. However, the methods and emphasis of these assessments varied among ARPs.

Through our IDIs and FGDs, it was clear that ARPs understood their primary role is supporting the teachers, facilitating cross-learning and sharing best practices across schools. ARPs were found to be highly intrinsically motivated towards making an impact and helping improve the quality of teaching in schools. ARPs knew their roles and responsibilities. i.e., class observations, demonstrations, feedback and spot assessments. However, they also noted that they often get pulled into other administrative tasks, such as meetings and programs at the block, affecting their work quality.

ARPs provided detailed insights into the state of FLN in UP. Most ARPs agreed that low FLN is a widespread problem in UP, including their own districts and blocks, noting that many students are not achieving the goals of NIPUN. However, a few ARPs felt this issue might not be as prevalent in their specific

districts. The main reasons for low FLN levels identified by ARPs included irregular student attendance, particularly among students from rural and economically disadvantaged backgrounds who often assist in agricultural or household work. The lack of parental involvement and understanding of the importance of education, coupled with a focus on expanding access rather than improving the quality of education, were also cited as significant factors. Some ARPs pointed to poorer families' economic challenges and the shared responsibility between parents and teachers for students' educational outcomes.

To address these issues, ARPs suggested engaging with parents through Panchayat and Parent-Teacher Meetings to motivate regular school attendance, providing local employment opportunities to reduce the need for children to help at home, and improving the school environment to attract students. They also recommended implementing remedial classes, offering incentives such as rations and cash to families, and integrating economic activities like handicrafts into the school curriculum.

The ARPs had a generally positive outlook on the NIPUN Bharat program, believing it would be useful for improving FLN. They appreciated the program's focused goals on achieving literacy and numeracy for classes 1-3 and were optimistic about its long-term impact on educational outcomes. While most ARPs believed the program would be beneficial, a few emphasised the need for better implementation and improvement at the pre-primary stage as well.

ARPs shared their opinions on new teaching techniques, Teacher Guides (TG) and TLM. Most ARPs did not view these resources as a burden, believing they help improve student learning outcomes and ease teachers' work. Even reflecting on their own experiences as former teachers, the majority felt they would have been helpful resources, appreciating that these materials save time and provide structured support. However, a few ARPs felt that while TGs and TLMs are not burdensome, the sheer volume of trainings can be overwhelming, especially in schools with limited infrastructure to support these materials. Additionally, some ARPs mentioned that online training components could add to the burden for teachers.

Regarding the value of TGs and TLMs in low-resource schools, opinions varied. Some ARPs believed that these resources are not particularly useful in schools with limited staff where teachers have to manage multiple classes, citing difficulties in implementation. Others felt that TGs and TLMs could still be valuable, especially if used creatively to engage students, such as through student leaders or integrating the materials into classroom activities. A few ARPs mentioned that despite their usefulness, the practical challenges in such settings might limit their effectiveness.

To encourage teachers to adopt new methods, ARPs suggested several strategies. Many emphasised the importance of demonstrating the benefits of

these methods through real-world examples and improvements in student outcomes. ARPs also believed that motivation is crucial, whether intrinsic or provided by ARPs through encouragement and positive reinforcement. Demonstrations were highlighted as an effective way to show teachers the practical application of new techniques. Some ARPs also recommended using examples from private schools to inspire teachers to reach similar levels of effectiveness.

On being probed about their own experience giving feedback, many ARPs shared positive experiences where their feedback led to noticeable improvements in teaching practices. For example, one ARP recounted a teacher who successfully incorporated suggested activities and teaching guides, resulting in better student engagement. Another ARP highlighted a school that established a reading corner based on their recommendation, significantly enhancing the learning environment.

However, there were also instances where feedback was not well-received. Some ARPs encountered resistance from teachers, particularly in schools with limited resources where teachers felt overwhelmed by additional suggestions. One ARP described a situation where a teacher managing multiple grades found it difficult to implement the feedback, citing an increased workload. In such cases, ARPs had to handle the situation delicately, often by providing additional support and understanding the teachers' constraints. They emphasised the need for a collaborative approach to overcome resistance and ensure that feedback was seen as helpful rather than critical.

In terms of written feedback, ARPs mentioned varied practices. Some said they provided written feedback daily, highlighting both positive aspects and areas for improvement, while others used written feedback more sparingly, often for formal documentation. There were differing opinions on the effectiveness of written feedback; some ARPs felt it acted as a helpful reminder and was impactful, while others noted that teachers might perceive it as too formal or authoritative, leading to resistance.

ARPs across districts talked about the difficulty they faced with using their personal devices for work purposes, and the additional costs they incur. ARPs further expressed a lack of clarity about the future of their role and the trajectory it will take. They would like to have their contracts renewed if given the opportunity.

3.1.3. Understanding Social Support: Mapping exercise

[full table can be found here]

This exercise identified fellow ARPs as the closest to ARPs, followed by BEO and teacher. There were diverse rankings for closeness with students and

teachers, ranging from 1 to 3. Looking at the number of ARPs ranking different stakeholders as closest to them, i.e., rank 1: almost all ARPs ranked fellow ARPs in the circle closest to them, about half of the ARPs ranked teachers and BEOs as also being in that first circle, with fellow ARPs. Next were ARP families, followed by students and BACs. This ranking helped us understand ARPs' social support system and put insights from other activities in perspective.

ARPs can develop a sense of belonging and relatedness with fellow ARPs through meetings and resource-sharing sessions. Further, they also share a common goal and an intrinsic motivation for impacting the education system through their role. Although each ARP faces unique challenges, they have a shared sense of challenges discussed during meetings. Talking about these challenges and sharing experiences provides support and cohesiveness among fellow ARPs.

The perception of their relationships with students and teachers varied across ARPs. Although all ARPs have similar interactions and tasks with teachers, they might have unique relationship dynamics. This might depend on factors such as how resistant the teacher is towards accepting feedback, the NIPUN rankings of the school, ARPs' interpersonal skills, etc. Some ARPs must feel that their role is more teacher-centric and does not involve directly engaging with the students; hence, they might perceive them as not so close in their system. For some, students are also seen in the inner circles because the ultimate goal of ARP support to teachers is to improve learning outcomes for students.

For some ARPs, BEO appreciation is essential and can be motivating. Some ARPs find joint visits with BACs helpful in getting advice on their feedback when giving practice. BACs often also help with classroom demonstrations, which some ARPs find helpful while others do not.

Some might feel closer to the teachers since ARPs must constantly juggle administrative and academic tasks. In contrast, for BEOs and BACs, others might feel closer to the administrators and BACs, hence the diversity in responses.

3.1.4. Insights from the Job Description Exercise

[full table can be found here]

The responses showed an agreement in the roles, responsibilities, and teaching experience required to be an ARP. ARPs shared a common perception of their roles and responsibilities. There was consensus that an ARP's roles revolved around providing academic support to schools, attending cluster meetings, and disseminating information about government programmes. While many ARPs mentioned the roles in quite a bit of detail, with multiple

mentioning supportive supervision, a couple mentioned just singular roles of 'visiting the school on time' and 'reporting'.

Communication skills and 'achha vyavhar' (good behaviour) were repeatedly emphasised throughout, especially while providing teacher feedback. Practical communication skills are considered necessary by ARPs to motivate and inspire teachers. Other skills mentioned included mutual respect, cordiality, and helpful nature, and one ARP even mentioned being innovative.

"Achha vyavhar - Agar hum vyavhar se kuchh kahe, tab hi agla vyakti bhi baat sunega." (ARP 1, Fatehpur District)

"Apni baat ko rakhwana, aur unse kaam kara paana, yeh kshamta honi chahiye." (ARP 1, Fatehpur District)

Many ARPs consider technical skills, such as computer skills, critical as their role involves extensive digital data recording during school visits. Lastly, punctuality would be a crucial skill for ARPs as it would increase their credibility among teachers and the school administration. Driving skills have been considered essential because the role involves a lot of commuting to and from schools.

The minimum teaching experience required for ARPs ranged from 5 to 10 years. Although a work experience of 5 years is published on government postings, some ARPs believe that a minimum of 10 years' worth of teaching experience is essential to the better an ARP can relate to teachers' experiences and solve challenges. Teaching experience also exposes one to the workings of the education system in India and the unique challenges teachers and students face.

"Jab aapke paas kamse kam 5 saal ka anubhav hoga toh aap jaan payenge ki shikshan mai kya kamiya aa rahi hai, kya dikkate hai, aur samadhan ke liye kya kya kar sake." (FGD 1, Bhadoi District)

There were mixed responses regarding the educational qualifications that an ARP should have. Some mentioned that a Bachelor's or a B.Ed. It would suffice, while others preferred a Master's as that would entail better conceptual, subject matter expertise for the ARPs.

There were diverse responses for the monthly allowances (i.e. over and above their salaries) that should be offered to ARPs. In Fatehpur, ARPs said either 6,000 or 10,000 rupees, while in Bhadohi, 3,500, 6,000, or 10,000 rupees were mentioned. In Chandauli, 5,000, 10,000 rupees, or 200-500 rupees per visit were mentioned. There was no correlation between the years of experience mentioned and the remuneration associated with it. Contrary to what one might expect, no conclusion could be drawn to support the fact that the higher the years of experience an ARP mentioned, the higher the remuneration they deemed fit for the role. This suggests that they do not view remuneration as related to the years of experience one has.

3.1.5. Insights from the Vignette Exercise

Through responses to our narrative vignette tools, we found that ARPs have different perceptions about the quality of feedback. We read out a story of an ARP giving a teacher generic feedback to include activities to increase student engagement. It emphasised the negative aspects of the class and did not include any positive feedback. Overall, there was a consensus among the ARPs that while the feedback content was generally acceptable, the delivery was often perceived as authoritative or accusatory. ARPs felt there was a focus on flaws without useful suggestions about activities, and many said more detail was required. When asked how to improve the feedback, ARPs offered various suggestions, including using a non-authoritative tone and connecting concepts to students' prior knowledge, starting with appreciation before giving critical feedback and explaining reasons behind recommendations, using concise feedback while adding specific activities, and the need for a child-centric approach and demonstrations. Other suggestions to make the feedback stick included starting with positive comments before suggesting changes, feedback becoming memorable if it positively influences performance, asking teachers to try out suggested activities and report back on their effectiveness, and providing written feedback and giving demonstrations on the spot.

We wanted to understand ARPs' behaviour in a revealed preference fashion. They may be more truthful about a third-person by distancing the question from themselves. In a vignette that asks what ARPs should do when teachers come to them telling them their students are struggling to follow a class on how to write letters, almost all selected that the ARP should cancel their next school trip to observe the class and understand why students are struggling, and then have a discussion about it with the teacher and the head teacher. Only one selected that the ARP should suggest a new activity for the teacher to try, and none selected that the ARP should follow their usual schedule.

Through similar narratives, we find that ARPs said that with ARP support (assuming all other factors remain constant), approximately 31% (ranges from 7.5% to 60%) more students, on average, would be able to achieve their learning goals. They also said 31% (ranges from 10% to 75%) more students, on average, would acheive their learning goals in a district with TG compared to a district without TG.

All ARPs believe that their relationship with teachers is good and mostly take their feedback positively. For more than 90% of the ARPs, teacher appreciation matters and motivates them to work harder. 3 ARPs expressed that BEO appreciation does not matter to them, 5 ARPs said that BEO appreciation would make them happy but would not impact their performance, while 4 ARPs expressed that BEO appreciation would make them happy and motivate them to work harder.

3.1.6. Insights from the BEO interviews

We conducted two interviews with two BEOs in district Bhadohi's Gyanpur and Bhadohi blocks to understand ARPs' roles from a system perspective. The primary role of ARPs, according to the BEOs, is to provide academic support to teachers by conducting school visits, utilising the NIPUN app and spending time with the teachers and students. One BEO mentioned that ARPs are uncertain about their roles and consider it a monitoring job. BEOs believe that ARPs should not go into the role with a mindset of monitoring or auditing but rather identify gaps in teaching and provide support accordingly. A weekly meeting happens at each block between the ARPs and BEOs to understand the status of schools and brainstorm opportunities to motivate the schools better. They also discuss the position of 10 selected schools by each ARP - how many are saksham (successful), medium, and sangarsheel (struggling). Further, they try to understand the reasons behind sangharsheel vidyalayas and how to provide better support in these schools. BEOs encourage the ARPs to use TGs and help the teachers use TGs. BEOs sometimes conduct joint visits with the ARPs, sometimes planned and sometimes surprise visits. According to the BEOs, ARPs' challenges are mostly around teacher acceptance. While the initial opposition has now reduced, and 80% of the teachers are now supportive, some teachers in schools with low rankings feel that ARPs are not grading the schools effectively, which is causing the low rankings. 10 to 15% of the teachers believe that their agency or independence has been taken away because of ARPs. This perception also exists because ARPs were also earlier teachers. Irregular student attendance has also been identified as a challenge.

"Humari swatantrata chheen gayi hai, kewal ek roadmap bana diya gaya hai." (BEO Interview, Bhadohi)
****This is a quote from the teachers, as per the BEO***

"Challenging isliye bhi hai kyunki unhi (teacher) mein se woh (ARP) aatein hain." (BEO Interview, Bhadohi)

Although the BEOs are regularly in touch with the ARPs, they do not play any role in ARP training facilitated at the district level. Sometimes, the ARPs get recognised at the state level, but there is no formal platform for appreciation and recognition. BEOs further reported sharing a good working relationship with the ARPs and working together as a team.

3.1.7. Insights from the ARP Shadowing Exercise and BAC FGD

[full table can be found here]

Overview

ARPs generally meet their target of visiting 30 schools to conduct observations, spot assessments, and interact with school staff. However, they face challenges at two levels. Firstly, completing 30 visits is difficult due to additional responsibilities like training sessions and departmental events, leading to an increased workload and potentially compromising visit quality. This may result in ARPs visiting schools to meet targets rather than spending quality time. Secondly, at the school level, ARPs are diverted by the need to complete data entries in their app, which includes indicators not directly related to classroom observation. This focus on compliance affects the quality of observations and feedback, as BACs noted that ARPs often overlook crucial teaching aspects. Additionally, app data influences school rankings, leading ARPs to deviate from ideal practices, such as selecting high-performing students for assessments or inflating indicators.

Shadowing exercises and discussions with BACs reveal that nearly 40% of ARPs provide generic feedback, often due to focusing on app data or lacking the skills for constructive feedback. ARPs also tend to skip written feedback due to teachers' negative perceptions or their own lack of clarity on what to write. Furthermore, demonstrations are often omitted due to a lack of confidence, skills, or subject-matter knowledge. To address these issues, ARPs need training on various feedback mechanisms, resources like standardised templates, and enhanced subject-matter knowledge. Giving

ARPs more autonomy in activity duration and making app-based data collection more flexible could prevent mechanical compliance and reduce mental fatigue, improving observation and interaction quality with teachers.

Details of the ARP Shadowing

The shadowing exercise of 40 ARPs provided valuable insights into their activities during school visits, and feedback practices. The average age of the ARPs was 43.9 years, with an average of 3.83 years of experience as ARPs and 15.4 years as teachers. The majority were male, with 38 men and only 2 women.

Out of the 40 ARPs, 24 self-selected their schools, while 16 were appointed. This difference raises questions about the potential impact of allowing ARPs to choose their schools. All ARPs conducted classroom observations, but only 18 completed the recommended 30-minute observation period, with most observing for 15-20 minutes. Although the protocol recommends 30-40 minutes, some ARPs and BACs believe a shorter duration can still be effective if the observation quality is high. Disruptions during observations were noted in 35% of cases, primarily due to ARPs asking questions, correcting teachers, or addressing app-related issues.

ARPs mainly recorded data using an app, though 14 also took separate notes. There were discrepancies in 70% of the recorded data, with BACs noting that information was often inflated to enhance school rankings. Spot assessments were conducted with 3-5 students by 36 ARPs, but only 13 chose students randomly. The selection was often influenced by teachers' or ARPs' preference for well-performing students, with some ARPs assisting students with answers. Time spent on spot assessments varied, with 30% spending over 30 minutes and 25% less than 20 minutes.

Feedback was provided to teachers by 39 ARPs, but the quality and relevance varied. While some ARPs spent over 20 minutes on feedback, the majority spent less. Only half provided context-specific feedback, with the rest giving generic comments. ARPs often started with positive feedback before moving to constructive criticism. Demonstrations were provided in less than 30% of the instances where BACs felt they were needed, indicating a need for more training and resources for ARPs to conduct demos confidently. Among those who did, the quality was generally good and beneficial for teachers.

28 ARPs provided written feedback, but 30% did not offer it, citing time constraints, discomfort with the process, or teacher resistance. Interaction with school leaders was common, with most ARPs spending at least 15 minutes discussing academic program implementation, previous classroom observations, and feedback on teaching materials. However, extensive data entry tasks often took significant time away from classroom observations and teacher interactions.

The BACs perceived most ARPs as confident in giving feedback, with 26 very confident and only one not confident. Teachers and school leaders were generally receptive to the feedback, although the quality and depth of the feedback varied.

3.2. Thematic Exploration of the Problem

Based on the objective of this study, our conversations with ARPs and BACs led us to narrow down themes to structure our insights. There are 6 broad themes that we focus on in this report: roles and responsibilities of ARPs, training and resources, skills and qualifications, ARPs' relationship with teachers, ARPs' motivations, and use of technology. Through the roles and responsibilities, and skills and qualifications theme, we aim to understand the ARPs' knowledge and perception about their roles/identity and skill-set required to support teachers. The relationship with teachers theme helps us identify frictions/gaps and collaborations between ARPs and teachers. Motivations help us understand how the belief systems of ARPs align with the program goals and the desired behaviour. Lastly, we aim to see how external factors such as systemic support influence ARPs' abilities and motivation.

Insights from these themes are presented in the form of barriers and levers. Barriers are factors that act as obstacles to a desired behaviour, while levers are opportunities that enable a desired behaviour.

3.2.1. Roles and Responsibilities

3.2.1.1. Barriers

a. Cognitive overload and reduced productivity due to multitasking and tedious data collection

Apart from academic support work, most ARPs performed tasks such as checking records and collecting data for the app. Drawing from the ARP shadowing exercise, some ARPs appeared to have dedicated a significant amount of time, exceeding 30 minutes, to these activities. This takes away some of the time that could be used in classroom observation. Typically, they manage to cover around 30 schools, but it's quite challenging because ARPs often get sidetracked by other responsibilities like training sessions, departmental tasks, and various events.

"Vaastav mai jo hume ek kaam diya gaya hai, agar ek pe hum focus kare toh achha kar payenge. Lekin kyunki vibhaag ka aadesh hota, woh bhi karna hota hai." (FGD 1, Bhadohi District)

"ARP ka vishesh roop se focus data par hi rehta hai." (BAC Discussion)

BACs also conveyed that certain interruptions in classroom observation arise when ARPs need to interact with teachers to address data-related queries for inputting into the app or to step out momentarily to improve network connectivity.

The involvement of administrative duties increases the workload of ARPs, leading to cognitive overload and impacting their ability to perform well. Cognitive overload occurs when one is given too much information or too many tasks simultaneously. In such cases, the brain cannot process information as accurately in short periods of time, affecting decision-making and productivity. This might generate feelings of inadequacy or inability to focus on one's tasks, reducing motivation towards one's work. The tedious documentation processes via the app are time-consuming and energy-draining. Moreover, the ARPs are unaware of the actual purpose of their non-academic related tasks, which can lead to reduced motivation to pursue these duties.

***"App mai naya data jod diya gaya hai anganwadi ka, iski wajah se unka kaafi samay observation se chala jaa raha hai."* (BAC Discussion)**

***"Kayi baar woh kayi indicators samajh nahi paate hai, aur unka purpose nahi jaan pate, bas scroll karte jaate hai. Isliye woh irritate hote hai."* (BAC Discussion)**

"Vidyalayo mai ARPs ka chayan hua hai woh academic ke liye hua hai, toh academic ke alawa dusre karyo se agar dur rakha jaye toh

***behtar hai"* (ARP 3, Fatehpur District)**

b. Frustration and stress due difference between job expectations and reality

ARPs' primary role is to support the teachers and schools in academic-related tasks. They are responsible for sharing best teaching practices and facilitating cross-learning across schools. Government documents indicate that ARPs' roles and responsibilities are confined to functions related to academic support. This is also reflected in the JD exercise responses, where the respondents stated the roles and responsibilities of an ARP.

However, as we concluded from discussions with ARPs and BACs, this differs starkly from their actual tasks as it involves much more than academic support-related duties. As mentioned in the previous point, they often are assigned administrative duties including recording data, helping with school events, organising and attending meetings, etc.

This creates a misalignment between their expectations about the job and the reality of it. Misalignments between job expectations and reality can lead to work stress, burnout and increased rates of drop-outs from a job. This can further lead to reduced motivation to fulfil one's responsibilities.

c. Time constraints and discomfort lead to inefficient feedback delivery & spot assessments

While there is the awareness that written feedback is a part of their role, ARPs often provide only verbal feedback, as revealed through discussions with the BACs. When written feedback is provided, it's not specific; it covers only positive points that don't seem confrontational or are not academically oriented. This can be attributed to factors such as time constraints, discomfort with the process, the perception that written feedback is needed only in a dire situation, not wanting to damage one's relationship with teachers, coupled with the apprehension that they might have to return to being colleagues with the teachers if their contract does not get renewed.

***"ARPs written feedback mai sirf sakaratmak baatein hi likhte hai, academic baatein nahi likhte. Sujhav ki bahut kami hoti hai."* (BAC Discussion)**

Conversations with BACs also provided similar insights into the spot assessment that ARPs must conduct. Students for this assessment must be randomly selected during each visit. ARPs often don't randomly choose students for spot assessments and decrease the school ranking.

***"Top 10 ranking mai hone ke liye woh unhi bachhon ka spot assessment karte hai jo nipun hote hai. Taaki unka data achha dikhaye de."* (BAC Discussion)**

Further, the fact that ARPs do not have real authority to enforce their suggestions/feedback on teachers can create frustration and demotivation. Their efforts to improve teaching quality might go in vain, with no consequences to the teacher. This can also be a primary reason why ARPs might not be able to effectively fulfil their role of feedback provision.

d. Mechanical compliance of tasks to meet requirements

While all ARPs provide feedback, it is usually done to complete the task requirement and not to address learning and teaching challenges.

Ideally, an ARP is required to observe a classroom session for 30 minutes. However, our ARP shadowing exercise found that more than 50% of ARPs conducted a classroom session for less than 30 minutes. Most ARPs observed classroom sessions for 15-20 minutes. In a few cases, this duration could also be attributed to the teacher only teaching for that length of time. More than 30% of ARPs did not sit quietly at the back. However, some BACs noted that 20 minutes is also adequate to observe a classroom effectively and give feedback in some cases.

3.2.1.2. Levers

a. Realistic expectation setting

Both the BEO and the BAC confirmed that ARPs sometimes feel their role is mainly monitoring, as opposed to their actual role of providing academic support. The recognition of this fact from both stakeholders will be a key start. There needs to be transparency in communicating the roles and responsibilities of the ARPs, and it should reflect the on-ground, non-academic related tasks that they are often involved in. Ideally, this communication should start during the application process, and their roles can be reiterated in the cluster and weekly BEO meetings. ARP milestones and plans should be discussed in meetings and training to provide further clarity.

3.2.2. Training and Resources

This section refers to the training that the ARPs provide to the teachers.

3.2.2.1 Barriers

a. Increased workload leading to high opportunity cost

ARPs' school visits are expected to continue as usual during the teacher training they have to conduct. Further, teacher training is frequent and lengthy. This significantly increases their workload, as they must juggle the two responsibilities.

Since ARP led teacher training functions alongside their usual everyday tasks, there might be a high opportunity cost of training for ARPs. Attending and focusing on training means they take time away from their everyday tasks, which might pile up significantly during their training periods, increasing their workload later.

3.2.2.2. Levers

a. Providing ARP workload management suggestions during weekly meetings

Weekly meetings with the BEOs provide the ideal opportunity to share time management techniques and tools with the ARPs to help balance teacher training with their everyday tasks.

3.2.3. Skills and Qualifications

3.2.3.1. Barriers

a. Misalignment of subject matter expertise and job responsibility

BACs mentioned that when an ARP holds specific subject expertise (say in math), they cannot provide adequate feedback to classes of different subjects (such as language). This leads to them giving generic, non-academic related feedback to teachers. This can lead to poor perception of ARPs' skills and qualifications by teachers

ARPs also believe that subject knowledge expertise is essential to give tailored feedback to teachers. ARPs expressed in interviews that although they had been appointed as ARPs of a specific subject, they were expected to support other subjects as well. This, perhaps, begins to explain the discrepancy between ARPs recognising generic feedback in a sample vignette and strongly stating specific feedback is needed during IDIs and they themselves giving such feedback that was observed during shadowing.

"Humara chayan toh science ARP ke liye hua tha, lekin saal bhar

***mai, 1 ya 2 hi occasion hota hai jab hum science par focus karke kaam kar paate hai.*" (ARP 2, Bhadohi District)**

b. Inadequate Soft Skills

Some common soft skills an ideal ARP candidate should possess, according to the ARPs, are communication skills, social skills, and team spirit.

Communication and social skills are important because the job involves interacting with various stakeholders like teachers, headmasters, principals, BACs, etc. Good communication skills allow ARPs to provide supportive written and verbal feedback.

ARPs have conveyed in the IDIs and FGDs that they struggle to build rapport with teachers due to Inadequate interpersonal skills. Even if they possess the necessary skills and qualifications, they often face resistance from teachers, especially those with seniority and more experience. As pointed out by some ARPs, they need to give feedback positively so that teachers accept teachers and there is the least resistance. If ARPs lack communication skills, it might come in the way of them developing good relationships with the teachers.

c. Infrequent and theoretical training content

ARPs report having received training only once. There has been no subsequent training since then, which affects their recall value of learned materials and resources. Their training does not cover practical on-ground situations, so ARPs often resort to quick decision-making on the field. In cases when they are not appropriately trained to do this or are less experienced, it can lead to faulty decisions being made. ARPs also shared during IDIs and FGDs that their training has been only theoretical, and they would like to receive more practical training to prepare them better for the challenges they face on the field.

3.2.3.2. Levers

a. ARPs demos to showcase how they can support/aid teachers

Both BACs and ARPs confirmed that some teachers have also responded positively to the demonstrations, which has led the teachers to view the ARPs as credible and helpful. Adequate practical training in soft skills, confidence building, and subject-based effective pedagogical practices will help them provide high-quality demonstrations to teachers.

3.2.4. Relationship with Teachers

3.2.4.1. Barriers

a. Status quo bias in teachers causing skepticism

During the initial days of the ARP program, there was general resistance from the teachers to accept the ARPs, as reported by ARPs and BACs. They often questioned the ARPs about their role and why they were here to monitor them.

***"10-20% aise bhi teachers milenge jinke liye aap ek zabardasti nuks nikalne wale vyakti hai."* (ARP 4, Fatehpur District)**

"Bahut teachers ARP se puchhte hai, 'Aap kaun hai? Kaunsa cadre hai? Yeh cadre hamesha rahega kya?'" (BAC Discussion)

Teachers might face status quo bias, which is a preference to maintain one's current state of affairs. In this case, it is difficult to accept changes. This might be because teachers might attribute superior value to their teaching methods rather than the ones suggested by ARPs. There also might be higher costs of switching to newer teaching methods – teachers often perceive that government educational programs are constantly changing and new resources and strategies are continually being introduced. In this case, switching to a new behaviour is futile because it might become redundant in a few months. Lastly, it might be difficult for teachers to switch to newer teaching methods because of a lack of time or skills needed for the new ways of teaching.

Because of limited awareness of ARPs' expertise and credibility, teachers might be hesitant about the efficacy of their suggestions.

***"Sabse pehle, humlogo ko teacher sveekar karne ke liye tayyar nahi tha. Ab inlogo ne jaan liya hai ki hum academic support ke liye aate hai, humari kamiya ka dhindora nahi peetenge, uska solution denge."* (FGD 2, Fatehpur)**

However, to a large extent, this perception changed as ARPs developed friendly relations with teachers and school management. Some teachers are excited about incorporating ARPs' feedback into their teaching. They

proactively contact them outside the classroom observation sessions to seek help and advice. ARPs reported that building rapport with new teachers and schools can be a challenging aspect of their role, especially for new ARPs.

b. Peer resistance from teachers

Since ARPs have served as teachers before their current posts, the relationship dynamics are complicated when they provide feedback to teachers who were earlier their colleagues. Teachers might show resistance as they believe that once their contract is over, ARPs will resume being teachers in the same school. This has been emphasised in our discussions with ARPs.

Because ARPs have no power to impose their suggestions on teachers, and there are no consequences attached to a teacher not following their feedback, their relationship as a teacher mentor might not be as successful.

The profile of the ARP also plays a role in their relationship with the teachers. When ARPs are working with teachers who are more experienced than them, they have reported that these teachers are often dismissive of their position.

"Woh khud bhi shikshak rahe hai, woh unhi shikshak ke beech mai se aaye huye hai. Baaki jo teachers hai woh abhi itna accept nahi karte hai ARP ko. ARP bhi khud hesitate hote hai teachers ko batane mai, taaki koi virodh na ho." **(BAC Discussion)**

"Adhyapaako ke beech se nikal ke gaye the, toh adhyapak chahte nahi the ki koi humari monitoring kare, humare beech ka. Woh sveekar nahi kar pa rahe the. Yeh nazariya ab badal gaya hai." **(FGD 2, Bhadoi)**

"Kai baar bahut anubhavi teacher hote hai vidyalay mai toh woh ARP ka mazaak udda dete hai." **(FGD 1, Fatehpur District)**

"Kuchh teacher jaana hi nahi jati class mai, kehte hai ki aap kaun

***check karna aa gaye class mai."* (ARP 4, Fatehpur District)**

c. Ambiguous hierarchy and authority between teachers and ARPs

During discussions, BACs pointed out that some teachers were not enthusiastic about classroom observations and feedback practice. Instead, they perceived it as a task to finish quickly. In this case, they would teach only for 15-20 minutes and ask the ARP if they had any feedback. Ideally, ARPs should observe a 30-to-40-minute classroom session to give helpful feedback. This resistance to ARPs feedback is further heightened because ARPs have no real power to enforce teacher feedback. ARPs' feedback is mere suggestions, and there are no consequences for not following them. The ARPs believe this is a leading factor for why teachers might not accept their feedback positively.

***"Teacheron ka yeh maane hai ki agar ARP nahi hote, toh yeh saare kaam nahi karne hote."* (ARP 3, Fatehpur District)**

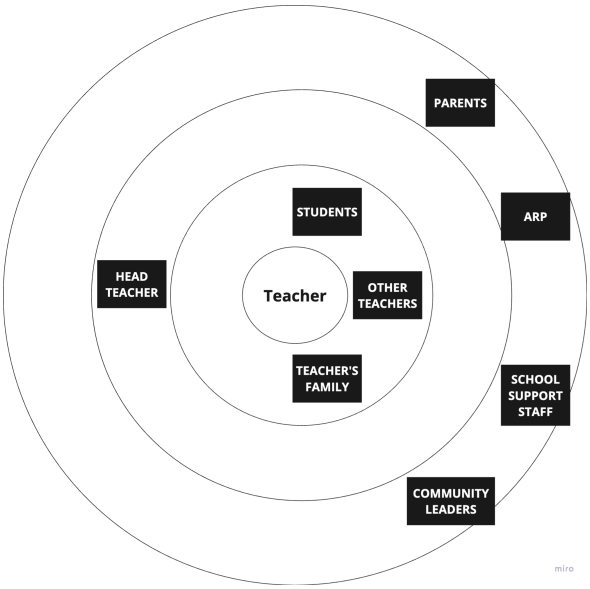
Providing feedback to schools with low NIPUN rankings can be challenging for ARPs. Teachers are already demotivated by their school rankings and might not be inspired to take feedback and incorporate changes into their teaching.

Often, ARPs' feedback might not be related to the teacher. Instead, it is more generic and might be related to infrastructural issues rather than academic issues. This can be seen especially when ARPs have to observe a class on a subject they are not experts in. BACs, through the ARP shadowing exercise, reported that most gave positive feedback in a supportive tone. Only 5 ARPs included some sort of negative feedback and delivered it in a supportive tone. roughly 50% were able to provide some context-specific feedback based on areas of improvement identified. Almost 40% gave generic feedback. Only 50%

ARPs nudged teachers to share their reflections on the teaching process and student engagement. ARPs are also hesitant to provide written feedback, with one of the reasons for this being fear of damaging relationships with the teachers and facing opposition.

ARPs' interpersonal skills might hinder the development of effective relationships with teachers. As pointed out by some ARPs, they need to give feedback positively so that teachers accept teachers and there is the least resistance. If ARPs lack communication skills, it might come in the way of them developing good relationships with the teachers.

Note: These findings are consistent with our previous study (report can be found here) that studied teacher behaviours and their relationship with ARPs, titled *Improving Teacher Uptake of Effective FLN Instruction - Diagnostic Report*. As we observe in a social mapping activity conducted with teachers for this study (image on the right), the likelihood of teachers approaching ARPs with their problems in low. Our insights from that study also shows *"teachers do not reach out to ARPs or BEOs for solutions as they perceive their problems to be context dependent. Even if they do, it is mostly for seeking administrative support and not for teaching-related or academic issues."* This study also spoke with school leaders who said that while ARP presence is consistent, the perceived utility of ARP visits varies. While some school leaders found the supervision and feedback from the ARP helpful, others found it to be just another compliance check.



3.2.4.2. Levers

a. Appreciating and recognising ARP contributions during trainings

BEOs report that ARPs sometimes get recognised at the district level and are also presented with tokens of appreciation during training. If ARP contributions can be highlighted in such platforms, it will increase their credibility among the teachers, who will then be more receptive to their feedback and suggestions.

3.2.5. Motivation

3.2.5.1. Barriers

a. Reduced motivation due to anchoring bias

ARPs are driven by their primary motivation to help as many schools and teachers as possible. They see this role as having a more extensive scope for impact than being a teacher in a single school. They are inspired to provide their academic support to help teachers improve their quality of teaching and better student learning outcomes. They expressed that they are pleased to see when teachers incorporate and use their feedback in their classroom teaching.

***"Jab hum teacher ke saath sahyog ke saath kam kar paa rahe hai, toh achha lagta hai."* (ARP 4, Fatehpur District)**

Yet, some aspects of ARPs' roles differ from what they had expected.

In this case, ARPs might undergo anchoring bias, where they anchor their beliefs about their job based on the information they first received during their application process. However, this belief differs from reality because of additional tasks and an uncertain structure. This can lead to reduced motivation towards one's role and a failure to update one's plans and behaviour for the future.

b. Lack of clarity about job future

There is a lack of clarity about the future of this role, the routes to promotion, and salary increments. Although most ARPs wanted to continue this role and have their contracts, they did not know whether their contract would be renewed. Although they have been in the role for 3-4 years, they haven't received salary increments. ARPs were inspired to apply for higher positions, such as that of BEOs.

A lack of clarity about their duties and expectations and an uncertain promotion trajectory and contract renewal can discourage ARPs from continuing their roles. This can lead to decreased motivation in the long term, affecting their performance.

***"Yeh shashwat rehne wala padd nahi hai ki hume yahi rehna hai. Laut kar teacher hi banna hai. Yeh aaj hai, kal nahi hai."* (ARP 1, Fatehpur District)**

***"Agar school mai wapis na jana hota toh humare andar kshamtaye dusri hoti. Ya toh humara dusra cadre bana diya jaye, jo shashwat rahe."* (ARP 1, Fatehpur District)**

"ARP ki pehchan bahut problem hai. Humara jitna kaam hai, uss

***hisab se pehchan nahi hai.*" (ARP 2, Chandauli District)**

c. High workload affecting ARP motivation and work-life balance

ARPs' role involves more than academic duties, so their workload increases significantly, affecting their work-life balance. Some ARPs expressed that their role involved more administrative work than academic support-related work, and hence, they would not want to continue with the position further.

ARPs have to commute long distances to visit school. As mentioned earlier, ARPs are often overburdened with additional tasks that take time, affecting their work-life balance and overall motivation.

ARPs have less control over how they can plan and design their day. Additional tasks and meetings are allotted at the last minute to their schedule, affecting their already planned school visit schedule.

"Main kaam ke alawa bhi aur bhi cheeze aati hai jo zabardasti lagti hai, yeh hume peeche rakhte hai." (FGD 1, Fatehpur District)

d. NIPUN rankings can be demotivating for ARPs

Low NIPUN rankings can often demotivate ARPs to perform their responsibilities and provide adequate school support. In this case, giving feedback to teachers also becomes challenging because the teachers are already discouraged by the rankings and do not have much hope and motivation for change. ARPs often select NIPUN students to secure higher rankings for the spot assessment tests.

3.2.5.2. Levers

a. Enthusiasm about reaching a large number of children

Fostering a positive identity around ARPs' roles can increase their motivation towards their job. Since ARPs are already intrinsically motivated about their role and the opportunity to create an impact, creating a positive identity can be leveraged to sustain their motivation.

3.2.6. Use of Technology

3.2.6.1. Barriers

a. Discomfort with using personal devices for work purposes

ARPs reported using their mobile devices for all duty-related tasks, such as data recording. They mentioned that using personal tasks for professional duties can be difficult. Almost all ARPs expressed that providing a tablet for these tasks would be highly beneficial. They additionally have to incur mobile data costs to fulfil their responsibilities.

Reliance on personal devices can make it challenging to manage professional work. There are often additional costs that ARPs have to incur.

***"Hume apne personal phone ka istmaal karne mai dikkate aati hai, har samay power bank lekar chalna padta hai."* (ARP 2, Fatehpur District)**

b. Challenges with the app

The ARPs' app for recording data during their school visits is counterproductive in most cases. The app prompts for real-time data during their classroom observation sessions, causing interruptions and diverting attention from their primary duties. Additionally, the app requires data on numerous infrastructural indicators.

3.2.6.2. Levers

a. Motivating ARPs about data collection by sharing vision/big picture

ARPs can be shown why they must undergo lengthy data collection tasks to motivate them. During meetings, details of how the data collected by ARPs is being used to inform decisions and strategies will encourage ARPs to complete their data collection duties with focus and enthusiasm. On the hand, steamlining these data collection duties and decreasing their frequency will help.

SECTION 04:

DISCUSSION

4.1. Discussion Table

The following table is a discussion summary of the aforementioned insights. The table consists of three central columns, Knowledge, Skills and Attitude, which can be mapped to the tools used by the LLF. It is important to note that not all Barrier Clusters can be mapped across all three columns. This is followed by a Recommendations column, which includes low-touch interventions that the LLF team itself can levy. Following the table are two sets of recommendations, one from the field and the other from the CSBC team, which may be at a higher level or be more system-oriented.

	Knowledge	Skills	Attitude	Recommendations
BARRIER CLUSTERS	Low knowledge provided by the system	Impact on ARPs' skills	Impact on ARPs' attitudes/motivation	LLF Driven System Driven
1. Cognitive overload and reduced productivity due to multitasking and tedious data collection 2. Mechanical compliance of tasks to meet requirements 3. High workload affecting ARP motivation and work-life balance	When ARPs are expected to multitask, they should also be provided with adequate training on time management and other soft skills, such as negotiation, prioritisation, etc, to manage their workload better.	Because of this overload, ARPs cannot focus on their tasks, leaving them falling short and unable to spend the required time on a given task.	When the task is not completed to one's own satisfaction, there is a drop in intrinsic motivation because the ARP is no longer enjoying the task but rather following mechanical compliance.	**Avoid Mechanical Compliance** We repeatedly observed that ARPs were not spending the required amount of time on activities. We see merit in giving the ARPs agency in letting them decide how much time they should spend on each activity, prefaced by time management training, tips and tricks.
1. Misalignment of subject matter expertise and job responsibility 2. Infrequent and theoretical training content	Very low training provided by the government to help ARPs develop the required skills. They are expected to carry out their responsibilities solely relying on their teaching experience.	ARPs are not appointed to schools and classrooms based on their subject expertise, and because of that, they find it difficult to deliver pointed feedback, including tips and tricks they may have been using in their classrooms. This is then reflected as a lack of skill in the subject, causing teachers to view ARPs as poorly skilled.	N/A	**Increase Knowledge Sharing amongst ARPs** The ARPs must be provided with cross-learning platforms (at trainings, workshops, etc.) wherein they can troubleshoot problems with other ARPs who may be subject experts.

1. Discomfort in using personal devices for work purposes 2. Expectation to use personal devices for work	N/A	N/A	The ARP is often asked to invest a lot of their personal time and resources towards their job, including petrol and phones. This causes the ARPs to feel overwhelmed with no separation between work and life, causing burnout, which results in poor performance in their job.	**Increase Budgeting and Planning Behaviours** Ideally, the government should increase its budget to provide work phones for the ARPs or mobile recharges at the very least. However, it may be beneficial to provide budget and financial planning for ARPs to help draw clear boundaries for the amount of money they are likely to spend out-of-pocket and work with trainers to see how this can be minimised.
1. Inadequate soft skills (rapport-building) 2. Time constraints and discomfort leading to inefficient feedback delivery 3. Ambiguous hierarchy and authority between teachers and ARPs	Due to a low number of ARP trainings, the required soft skills for the job are not taught, and the ARPs carry out the tasks heuristically. This causes a lot of back and forth between ARPs and teachers, which breaks down the intended process	Since the ARPs are not adequately trained, they lack the skill to provide diagnostic feedback, and this lack effectively is further exacerbated by the discomfort in the newly introduced hierarchy, which places low power in ARPs (this is explored in the upcoming sections)	Given the aforementioned structural factors, the ARPs are anchored to the teachers' negative reaction or reluctance and hence get demotivated to carry out their tasks effectively.	**Active Listening and Empathy** Add elements in the ARP-teacher interaction template that allow teachers to first vent about issues, and ARPs listen with a sympathetic ear. Then, follow that with recommendations on teaching, and positive feedback. This step-by-step practice should be imparted during ARP trainings.
4. Peer resistance from teachers 5. Status Quo Bias in Teachers	The ARPs' previous roles as teachers complicate their dynamics with current teachers, who may resist feedback due to potential future colleague status and lack of consequences for not following ARP suggestions. Teachers, especially those more	N/A	This demotivates the ARPs since they know that no real consequences will be instilled and that the teachers don't accept their authority, Hence, the ARPs feel little to no motivation to carry out their duties adequately.	**Improving Teacher-ARP Relations** Teachers and ARPs should be encouraged to communicate. This can be initiated by making changes in the feedback template where the ARPs fill in pointed, constructive feedback in a language

	experienced, may dismiss ARPs' feedback. The lack of nuanced information on how ARPs are chosen are chosen to create this hierarchy is a part of the problem.			that will help the teacher so they feel like the ARP is an additional support rather than a supervisor.
6. Reduced motivation and low awareness of job responsibility 7. Lack of clarity about job future	The system provides low clarity to the ARPs or potential ARP candidates, allowing them to plan for their future and immediate next steps. In addition to this, the dynamic nature of their job, accompanied by little to no training, often leaves the ARPs in the dark.	N/A	The ARPs often have a resigned attitude because they feel like they have no real power, and their intrinsic motivation, which came through teaching students, seems to be fading.	**Clear Job Descriptions and key performance indicators** Having clear JDs and performance indicators for the ARPs can increase clarity and motivation while accurately portraying performance indicators for future job prospects.

4.2. Behavioural Recommendations Through Research

1. LLF Driven

a. Healthy competition

Due to an absence of mechanisms that have teachers abide by ARPs' suggestions, creating a space for healthy competition among teachers might motivate them to improve their quality of teaching and look to ARPs' guidance. This will help in developing the essence of mentor-mentee relations

b. Trust-building exercises

Trust-building exercises among teachers and ARPs, such as recognising ARPs' contributions and expertise or demonstrating how ARPs can help teachers, can be beneficial for reducing peer resistance and improving their relationship.

c. Feedback delivery training

Developing interpersonal skills is crucial for improving the feedback delivery of ARPs and strengthening their relationship with teachers. ARPs should have standard feedback templates focused on specific and actionable feedback. The template should specifically ask for one constructive/improvement-related suggestion from ARPs.

d. **Peer Learning Sessions**

Conducting peer learning sessions as part of ARPs' training can promote mutual learning and lead to better feedback-giving practices, especially for subjects with which the ARPs might not be familiar. Since ARPs meet regularly for presentations and share best practices, this opportunity can be further leveraged to brainstorm on individual challenges that the ARPs are facing collectively.

e. **Case Study-Based Training**

Having case study-based or situational training to help ARPs think on their feet when encountering unique challenges.

f. **Providing time and workload management resources to ARPs**

Time management tools and resources should be shared with ARPs during meetings and training. Consistent and routine information sharing regarding additional ARP tasks could be maintained. ARPs could be provided flexibility in uploading app-related data, which would not hinder their classroom observation sessions. Workload and time management strategies should be incorporated to help ARPs reduce work stress and manage different tasks better.

2. Government or System Driven

a. **Recognising ARP contributions**

Publicly recognising ARPs' contributions and expertise can boost teachers' confidence in them, leading to greater acceptance of their feedback and suggestions.

b. **Dissociating ARP performance/impact from NIPUN school rankings**

Distancing personal performance from individual school rankings will help ARPs stay motivated in their roles regardless of the output. It is important to help ARPs rethink the definition of impact and think of it in ways that are attainable. Communication highlighting that ARPs' success will not depend on the school rankings must be promoted. ARP promotions would also not be dependent on school rankings. It needs to be communicated that there would be no burden of alienating the schools that would fall on the ARPs to motivate them to give honest feedback to teachers. It is important to inspire ARPs to fulfil their roles and responsibilities rather than fixating on the rankings.

4.3. Anecdotal Recommendations from Actors on the Field

1. Government or System Driven

a. Reducing documentation procedures

During our conversations with BACs in the FGDs, they affirmed that the data collection process should be shortened and only the most important indicators should be asked for. Some indicators on school infrastructure could be asked for every 3 to 6 months instead of every visit.

b. Alignment of ARPs' subject matter expertise and job responsibilities

ARPs during the IDIs and BACs during the FGDs suggested that ARPs' subject matter expertise should align with the classes they are supposed to observe. This would result in improved and specific feedback for the teachers.

c. Providing ARPs with tablets for fulfilling data tasks

Almost all ARPs from across blocks expressed that having a tablet for their job duties would be helpful.

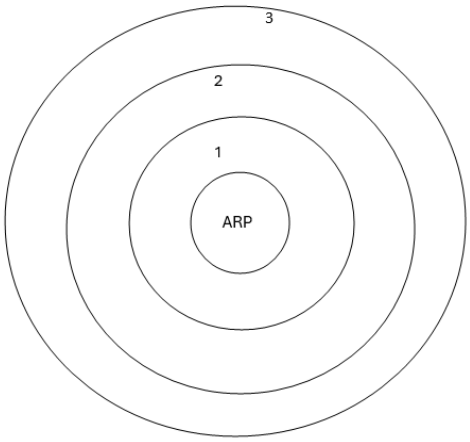
d. Providing temporary substitutes for classroom observation during ARP-led teacher training

Providing temporary substitutes for some duties during training might help ARPs relieve their additional workload and focus solely on the training.

"Humara chayan toh science ARP ke liye hua tha, lekin saal bhar mai, 1 ya 2 hi occasion hota hai jab hum science par focus karke kaam kar paate hai. Humara focus science par hi rakhna chahiye." (ARP 2, Bhadohi District)

Appendix

Figure 1: Social Mapping Tool



List of Stakeholders to be slotted in the circles:

1. Fellow ARPs
2. BEOs
3. BSA
4. BAC (LLF)
5. Teachers
6. ARP's family
7. Students
8. Head teacher
9. Community Leaders
10. Any other stakeholder

Table 2: List of selected blocks and the number of ARPs (ARP Shadowing)

District	No. of Blocks	ARPs per Block	Total ARPs
Chandauli	4	2	8
Bhadohi	4	2	8
Fatehpur	4	2	8
Shravasti	4	2	8
Varanasi	4	2	8
Total	**20**		**40**

Table 3: Number of blocks and ARPs selected for Interviews

District	No. of Blocks	No. of ARPs in
Chandauli	3	14
Bhadohi	3	14
Fatehpur	3	14
Total	8	42

Table 4: JD Activity

District		Remuneration	Roles and Responsibilities	Qualifications			Skills
				Minimum Qual.	Teaching Exp.	Other	
Fatehpur	A	10,000		Masters	10 years		Mutual Respect Follow Orders Subject matter knowledge Communication skills Good behaviours with teachers (*achha vyavhar*) Motivation to complete tasks

	B	6,000	Help/support to schools Suggestions/Solutions	Bachelors	5 years	Computer Skills	Driving Working Overtime Good behavior towards teachers *(achha vyavhar)* Subject matter knowledge Punctual
	C	10,000	Makes all schools *nipun* Academic support to schools FLN training for teachers Participate in meetings Disemminate information about *nipun* mission	B.A./B.Ed./ DLED	5 years		Innovative Knowledgable Skilled speaker
	D	6,000	Demo for teachers Giving sufficient time in schools	B.A.,B.Sc.+ B.Ed./DLED	10 years	Computer Skills	Helpful Positive Mindset Friendly/Amicable Working positively in team spirit Continuous learner
Bhadohi	**A**	10,000		M.A./M.Sc.	5 years		Helpful
	B	10,000	Supervising and supporting 30 schools monthly Participate in cluster and BEO meetings	B.Ed.	10 years		Subject Knowledge
	C	3,500	Visiting schools on time	Masters	5 years		Teaching Experience Subject knowledge (Math and language) Responsible Being empathetic and cordial with teachers Oration skills
	D	10,000	Teaching processes - TLM, PRM Learner-centric and joyful learning	Masters	7 years	Innovative and tech-savvy	Social skills Being expressive

			Training schools and teachers about new methodologies Being the link between the education dept and schools				
Chandauli	A	5,000	Supportive Supervision Trainings NPRC Meetings District Level Meetings	Masters + Training	5 years		Communication Skills Learner
	B	10,000		Bachelors	5 years	Language Skills	Supportive Self-disciplined Confident Curious Pedagogical skill Good human being Likes travelling
	C	200 per visit (6000)	Up to date with relevant government programmes Reporting learning outcomes of students Participating in meetings with teachers and community	Masters, B.Ed.	5 years	Using past training experience (as teachers)	Subject matter expertise Polite Work skills (capacity/ability to work)
	D	500	Reporting	B.A., B.Ed.	5 years		Speaking Skills Subject Knowledge

A	1st IDI
B	2nd IDI
C	3rd IDI
D	4th IDI

Table 4: ARP Shadowing Activity

Demographics	
Average Age	43.9
Average Years of exp as ARP	3.83
Average Years of Exp as Teacher	15.4
No of Male ARP	38
No of Female ARP	2

ARP Shadow Indicator	Observations			Interpretations/Discussion
Are the schools appointed or self-selected by ARPs?	Appointed	Self-selected	Total	Need to further explore whether allowing ARPs to choose their own schools would lead to greater agency or create a perverse incentive for them to select nearby or successful schools
	16	**24**	**40**	
Classroom Observation				
	No	Yes	Total	
Informed principal before visit	14	26	40	
Able to complete 30 schools per month	4	36	40	Typically, they manage to cover around 30 schools but as reported by BACs often get sidetracked by other responsibilities like training sessions, departmental tasks, and various events.
Conducted classroom observation		40	40	All conducted CO indicating compliance to the protocol.
Conducted a 30-minute classroom observation	22	18	40	More than 50% did it for less than 30 mins. If not 30 mins, most observed for 15-20 mins. In the interview with BACs, some mentioned that while the protocol recommends 30-40 mis of

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>observation, a good ARP would ideally be able to assess teachers' classroom instructions and identify areas of support within 15-20 minutes. This suggests that the quality of observation might be more crucial than the duration.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Disrupted class during the classroom observation.</td><td>26</td><td>14</td><td>40</td><td rowspan="2">According to BACs, the preferred practice is to minimize disruptions and provide feedback or demonstrations after the class. However, there's a deviation from this with 35% ARPs observed disrupting the class and failing to sit quietly. This highlights the need for increased awareness among ARPs about the ideal practices and addressing app-related issues to minimize disruptions.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cause of Disruptions</td><td colspan="3">- Asking questions to students
- Correcting teachers or giving on the spot feedback
- Interacting with teachers to address data-related queries for inputting into the app or stepping out to improve network connectivity for the app.</td></tr>
<tr><td>How did ARP record data?</td><td colspan="3">29 recorded in app

14 took separate notes</td><td>BACs noted that ARPs tend to solely focus on app data, potentially overlooking crucial teaching aspects.
They also recommended decreasing the frequency of entering school-level indicators such as number of books, speakers, toys etc. from every observation to quarterly or half-yearly intervals, enabling more focused time for observations.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Quality of recorded data and discrepancies from BAC observations</td><td>No discrepancies</td><td>Discrepancies</td><td>Don’t know</td><td rowspan="3">There appears to be more focus on monitoring activities rather than mentoring, potentially acting as a barrier to provide effective support to teachers.</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td>28</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Discrepancies in recorded data reported in 70% instances. A significant portion of BACs (approximately 50%) also noted that information in the app was inflated to enhance the block and school rankings</td></tr>
</table>

Spot Assessment				
	No	Yes	Total	
Conducted spot assessment with 3-5 students.	4	36	40	
Students picked randomly	13	23	36	There seems to be a significant deviation from the ideal practice primarily to avoid negative impacts on school rankings. This observation was reaffirmed by BACs during the FGD again indicating a need to reduce emphasis on performing the activity solely for school rankings.
Reasons for non-random selection of students.	More than 35% ARPs did not choose the students randomly. Either the students were selected by the teacher or ARPs chose students who were performing well. In a few instances, ARPs were observed filling in answers themselves, assisting students with answers, or marking answers as correct even if answered incorrectly.			
How much time (in minutes) did the ARP spend on spot assessment?	30% ARPs (11/36) spent more than 30 mins. 25% spent less than 20 mins.			
Feedback				
	No	**Yes**	**Total**	
ARP conversed with the teacher after observation.	1	39	40	
Duration of the conversation	24% spent more than 20 minutes (but not more than 30 minutes) Rest spent less than 20 minutes			It appears that ARPs are not dedicating sufficient time to many activities. Granting ARPs the autonomy to decide the suitable duration for each activity could enhance their sense of agency
	No	**Yes**	**Total**	
Teacher was asked to share their reflections on the teaching process and student engagement.	20	20	38	Nearly 30% of the feedback provided was unrelated to the classroom content. While the majority of feedback was positive, only 5 ARPs highlighted negative

ARP shared their reflection on the teaching process and student engagement.	6	34	40	aspects, and almost 40% gave generic feedback. This indicates that while feedback is being provided there are gaps in the quality again signaling a need to shift the focus away from mere compliance.
Feedback provided to the teacher?	1	39	40	
Feedback related to what the teacher taught.	11	28	39	
ARPs attitude during feedback	**Started with positive and then moved to negative but in supportive tone**	**Positive Feedback in Supportive Tone**	**Total**	
	5	33	38	
Quality of feedback	- 50% provided context-specific feedback based on areas of improvement identified - 40% gave generic feedback			
Did ARP do a demo?	Of 32 instances where the demo was felt needed by BAC, it was provided in only 9 instances (i.e. less than 30%)			This suggests that confident and capable ARPs are willing to conduct demos. BAC discussion also highlighted instances where ARPs requested demos from BACs. This emphasizes the importance of enhancing ARP training or providing tools and resources to help them deliver demonstrations to teachers more effectively.
Quality of demo	Among those who conducted demonstrations, the quality of demo was deemed good and seemed to be beneficial for teachers			
	No	**Yes**	**Total**	Less than 50% used student assessment as a guideline for providing feedback, and only 31% created an action plan for teachers. This emphasizes the necessity for prompts to encourage ARPs to offer feedback based on student assessment and to provide actionable steps for teachers.
ARP used student assessment for feedback	19	14	33	
ARP came up with an action plan for teacher	26	12	38	
Wrote Feedback	12	28	40	30% did not provide written

Reasons for no written feedback	Time constraints, Discomfort with the process Selective feedback provision (i.e only provide written feedback where it's necessary) Opposition faced from teachers			feedback. ARPs need a framework for delivering constructive written feedback that avoids negative perceptions and opposition from teachers.
Interaction with School Leader (SL)				
Communication with SL	All communicated with a few exceptions due to the principal's unavailability			The data indicates that ARPs are engaging in constructive conversations with school leaders.
Time spent with SL	More than 80% (28/34) interacted for at least 15 mins.			
Topics of discussions	Over 70% discussed about academic programme implementation			
	15 asked about SL's last CO			
	7 asked about When did SL last check WBs?			
	10 asked about SL's last review of learning levels of students			
	16 asked SLs feedback on TLM and other materials			
Engagement of ARP in other tasks during school visit	Majority engaged in checking records, data collection etc. specifically to fill in the app. Some appeared to have dedicated a significant amount of time, exceeding 30 minutes, to these activities.			Extensive data entry can lead to fatigue and impact the quality time available for COs or teacher interactions. This highlights the need to rationalize app-based data collection and introduce greater flexibility.
BAC perceptions	**Very**	**Somewhat**	**Not**	
How confident ARP was in giving feedback	26	11	1	
How receptive teacher was to ARPs feedback	28	9	1	
How receptive SL was to ARPs feedback	22	11	0	

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