



Teaching and Learning Practices Survey - Maharashtra

A study to strengthen FLN teaching and
learning practices in India

2025

SUMMARY

Implemented with



TLPS 2025

Teaching and Learning Practices Survey 2025. Maharashtra

December 2025

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Executive Summary

Introduction

India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 positioned Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) as the country's highest priority for education. This renewed focus was further strengthened by the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS, 2022). To operationalise this vision, the Government of India (GoI) launched the NIPUN Bharat Mission with a clear national mandate: Achieve universal FLN for all children by 2026-27. This has catalysed unprecedented efforts across states to improve the teaching and learning of FLN.



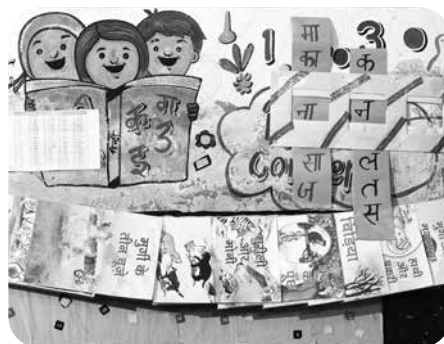
The Government of Maharashtra is tracking progress in student learning through a range of large-scale assessments of FLN learning outcomes, via the NIPUN Maharashtra Mission. Launched in 2021, this initiative is a welcome step towards qualitative improvements in early primary school education in the state.

Similarly, several states have developed and implemented classroom observation tools for observing teaching and learning in Grades 1 to 3. The quality and utilisation of this extensive classroom observation-based data has been somewhat limited for a variety of reasons. More importantly, there is no reliable large-scale survey in the country that documents how teaching and learning are taking place in early-grade classrooms.

About TLPS 2025

Recognising this critical gap, the Teaching Learning Practices Survey (TLPS), 2025 was conceptualised to provide systematic, large-scale evidence on teaching practices for language and mathematics in Grades 1 and 2. By examining these practices in early-grade classrooms across diverse contexts, the Survey provides a direct lens into how teacher and children's learning materials, teacher training programmes and on-site academic support are getting translated into classroom teaching and learning. It serves as a status report on the current state of teaching and learning practices—informing how system-level efforts translate into classroom-level pedagogical change and where further improvement is needed.

The Survey was conducted between November 2024 and March 2025 in nine states—Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh—covering 21 districts and 1050 classrooms. By capturing a wide range of contexts, the Survey provides a rich snapshot of the current teaching and learning practices for FLN.

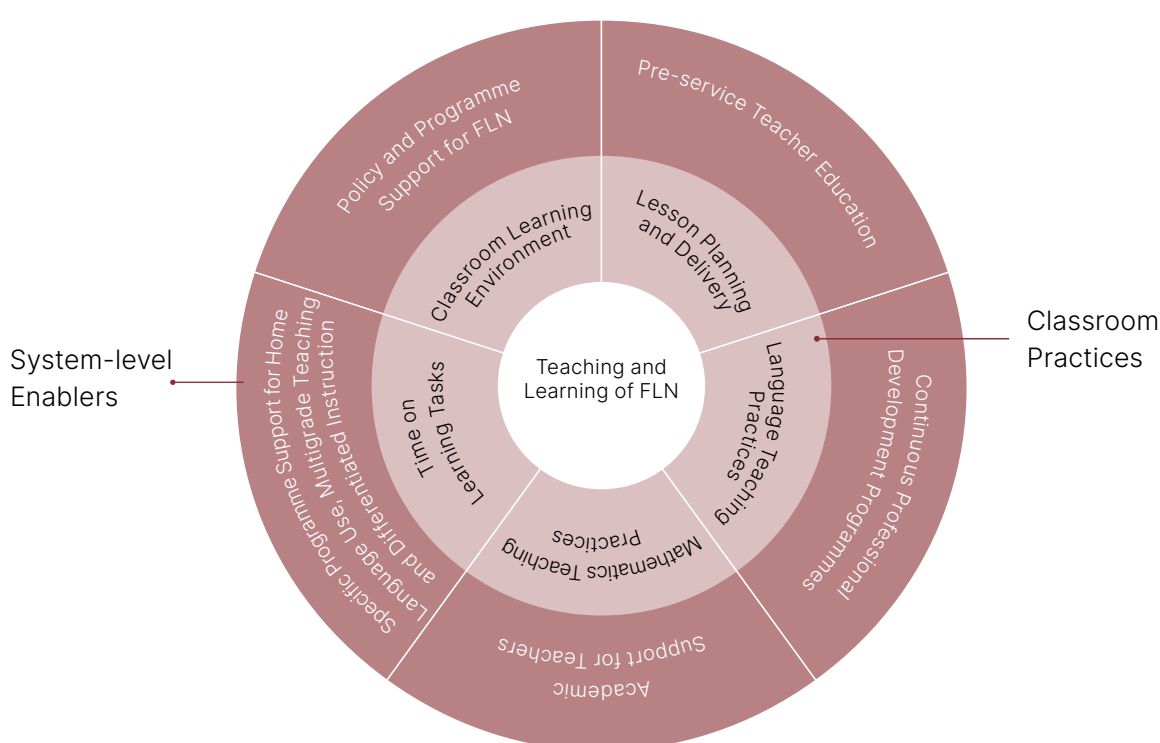


This document serves as a status report on the current state of teaching and learning practices in Maharashtra, informing how system-level efforts translate into classroom-level pedagogical change and where further improvement is needed. A total of 150 classrooms were surveyed across the Nashik, Parbhani and Gadchiroli districts of the state.

Findings and recommendations

The Survey presents findings under the following themes: classroom learning environment, lesson planning and delivery, language teaching practices, mathematics teaching practices, and time distribution across different classroom activities for both teachers and children. It also presents teachers' perceptions on some aspects of FLN and their professional development.

Priorities for classroom practices and system-level enablers



TLPS 2025 includes two types of recommendations:

- > Recommendations for strengthening classroom teaching practices, drawing directly on the Survey's main findings. These are presented in the following section along with the related classroom-level findings.
- > Recommendations for system-level changes that will enable and sustain effective teaching practices. These are presented in the section after the one on classroom teaching practices.

Findings and recommendations for classroom practices

Classroom learning environment

The Survey examined the following: classroom physical environment, teacher-child relationship, opportunities for children to participate, and the use of children's home languages.

Main findings

Most early-grade classrooms had a functional blackboard, but only a fifth displayed print-rich materials. In most of those cases, the material was displayed at children's eye level.

In nearly half of the classrooms, children were seated in rows and columns, and the arrangement changed in only 17% classrooms during the observation.

In almost two-thirds of the classrooms, children were mostly quiet and had few opportunities to speak freely, engage in conversation with the teacher, or learn from one another. Nearly three-fourths of the teachers asked questions to individual children.

Children in the surveyed classrooms of Maharashtra speak a wide array of home languages and dialects. In two-thirds of the cases, teachers did not encourage the use of home language in the classroom.

Recommendations

There is a need to ensure that print materials are thoughtfully placed and actively used during instruction to support learning.

Teachers should be encouraged to adopt flexible seating and grouping arrangements to foster more interaction and collaboration among children.

There is a pressing need to strengthen teacher-child relationship in early-grade classrooms to help children become more confident, participate in discussions, and engage meaningfully in learning.

Using children's home or most familiar languages consistently and strategically is a critical practice for improving children's self-confidence, participation, and comprehension.

Lesson planning and delivery

The Survey examined the following: teachers' use of clear instructions with children, observation and monitoring of children's independent work, feedback on writing tasks, use of check-for-understanding (CFU) strategies, and use of differentiated instruction for different learning levels in the classroom.

Main findings

Most teachers plan their lessons in advance. However, teachers did not have documented lesson plans in over half of the classrooms.

Teachers in three-fourths of the classrooms did not check whether children understood the instructions.

While some teachers checked the children's written work, nearly a third also provided feedback or guidance to help children improve.

Recommendations

Through regular and purposeful observation, teachers need to identify errors, adjust instruction, and provide timely support.

Feedback practices need strengthening through regular checking of children's work, clear explanations of mistakes, and simple steps for improvement.

During lessons, teachers need to use simple and varied checks for understanding, such as asking individual children to explain their thinking or giving children a quick task to demonstrate their learning.

Over half the teachers relied on asking questions to the whole class, which elicited a choral response from the children. Very few teachers checked for individual children's understanding through varied methods.

During the limited observation period, very few teachers used differentiated teaching strategies to support children at different learning levels.

Multigrade teaching was observed in 59% of the classrooms.

To support all learners, teachers need to use targeted strategies such as flexible grouping, guided practice in level-based groups, and scaffolded tasks during regular lessons. It is essential to provide extra attention and support—after proper identification—to children who are struggling to learn, after proper identification.

Language teaching practices

The Survey examined the following: the use of children's prior knowledge in discussions, asking open-ended questions, employing a variety of strategies for teaching decoding, using comprehension strategies during read-alouds, providing opportunities to practise reading independently, and providing clear prompts for expressive writing.

Main findings

The use of children's real-life experiences and open-ended questions to encourage them to think and express themselves during oral language activities was observed in 24% and 21% classrooms respectively.

The teaching of decoding was not systematic and relied either on writing letters and words or on just one activity to reinforce sound-symbol association and blending.

While some classrooms saw children getting the opportunity to practise independent reading, teachers offered feedback for these tasks in only a few (17%) of them.

Independent writing tasks were seldom observed.

Recommendations

Oral language activities need to encourage active engagement by connecting content and discussions to familiar contexts and experiences, asking children to predict, think, and infer, and giving them opportunities to respond more fully to open-ended questions.

Decoding needs to be taught more systematically and should include multiple activities that reinforce sound-symbol associations in different ways, including the use of simple teaching-learning materials (TLMs).

Children need adequate time to practise reading in small groups or pairs, as well as independently, with guidance from the teacher.

Writing activities should move beyond copying exercises to include meaningful opportunities for children to compose their own texts and express ideas and emotions.

Mathematics teaching practices

The Survey examined the following: use of TLMs by teachers and children, opportunities to practise mathematics tasks independently, use of children's real-life experiences to understand mathematics concepts, and use of 'why and how' questions by teachers.

Main findings

In over two-thirds of the classrooms, teachers used TLMs, though mostly unplanned. Children also used TLMs in two-thirds of the classrooms.

A majority (65%) of teachers did not use real-life examples to contextualise mathematical concepts and processes.

Teachers rarely posed 'why and how' questions to children.

Teachers in three-fourths of the classrooms gave independent tasks to children and many (39%) classrooms saw teachers observing and providing feedback.

Recommendations

There is a pressing need for teachers to use TLMs more consistently and in learner-centred ways. This will ensure that children have regular opportunities to explore concepts hands-on and build conceptual understanding, rather than only observing demonstrations.

Integrating familiar, everyday contexts when introducing and practising mathematical ideas can help children see the relevance of mathematics in their daily lives and develop practical problem-solving skills.

Teachers need to ask more 'why' and 'how' questions that prompt children to explain their thinking, justify their answers, and reflect on strategies, helping shift learning from rote procedures to deeper reasoning and conceptual understanding.

During independent practice, teachers need to actively monitor children's work and provide timely guidance and feedback so that practice goes beyond mechanical repetition and strengthens conceptual understanding and fluency.



Time on learning tasks

The Survey examined the time teachers and children spent on different classroom activities.

Main finding

Children remained 'off-task' for 33% of the total class time. When they were 'on-task', mechanical, repetitive type activities consumed most of their time.

Recommendation

Teachers need to create a better balance between teacher-centred instruction and learner-centred practices to enhance children's engagement with learning.

Teachers also need to plan and manage independent and group tasks more deliberately, particularly in multigrade/multilevel contexts where their attention is divided.

Other findings

- > There is strong awareness among teachers (92%) about FLN goals and learning outcomes.
- > Nearly 65% teachers reported that they have attended an in-person training on FLN in the past year.
- > Almost all teachers believe that the NIPUN/FLN Mission is having some positive impact.
- > 71% teachers reported receiving academic support at least sometimes.



Recommendations for system-level changes

Continue and extend policy support to FLN

It is vital that policy support for FLN must continue beyond the current NIPUN Bharat Mission timeframe, viz., up to 2026-2027. While Grades 1 and 2 must remain the primary focus, the policy and programme focus on consolidating on of foundational skills also needs to extend to Grades 3 to 5 (preparatory stage). As this support is extended, there is also a need to broaden the vision of foundational learning to include critical thinking and reasoning, strong oral expression, and independent writing in language, as well as problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics. Such a shift helps move classroom practice beyond mechanical skill acquisition towards meaningful application to real-life situations.

Integrate FLN focus within pre-service teacher education programmes

In many states, pre-service teacher education requires curricular revision to include a clear focus on FLN, play-based pedagogy, teaching in linguistically and culturally diverse situations, and practical classroom strategies for multigrade and multilevel teaching. The Survey findings also show that basic pedagogical practices—such as building respectful teacher-child relationships,

encouraging children's participation, giving clear instructions, and monitoring learning to provide feedback—are weak or inconsistently applied and therefore need explicit emphasis in teacher education. There is a strong need to move from lecture-based instruction towards practice-oriented, and experience-based teacher preparation.

Build a coherent and practice-focused system of continuous teacher professional development

There is a need to reimagine teacher training as continuous professional development (CPD) rather than as isolated events. Effective CPD should offer multiple pathways for learning, including structured courses, blended and online programmes, in-person workshops, and simple digital support such as WhatsApp nudges and short, on-demand learning resources.

During training sessions, a greater emphasis should be placed on practice-oriented designs—prioritising demonstrations, guided practice, collaboration among teachers, and reflection—so that teachers can apply new strategies confidently in their classrooms.

Finally, peer learning should be strengthened as a core CPD strategy. Creating opportunities for teachers to learn from one another through learning circles, peer observations, joint planning, and sharing of effective practices can help reinforce training messages and support sustained change in classroom practice.

Strengthen academic coaching and on-site support for teachers

Teacher interviews reveal that academic support for teachers is often irregular and limited in depth. There is a strong need to strengthen on-site academic coaching through regular classroom visits by academic resource persons (ARPs), cluster resource coordinators (CRCs), or equivalent roles. These visits should focus on observing classroom practices, demonstrating effective strategies, and providing concrete, actionable feedback tailored to each teacher's context. Such support is vital for helping teachers translate training inputs into day-to-day practice.

Mid-tier academic functionaries need to be relieved of excessive non-academic responsibilities so that they can focus on instructional support. They also require targeted technical training to develop a strong understanding of FLN concepts, active-learning classroom pedagogy, and the principles of supportive supervision. In addition, cluster-level meetings should be reoriented as structured academic forums rather than administrative gatherings.

Address home language use, multigrade teaching, and differentiated instruction in a systematic manner

These challenges require planned and systematic programme support, not just general suggestions or brief training efforts alone.

Use of home language

There is a strong need to develop and support systematic multilingual approaches to foundational learning that respond to the linguistic realities of local communities and regions. States need to create clear curricular and pedagogical frameworks to formally include children's most familiar languages in teaching and learning in the foundational years, supported by

high-quality multilingual materials and assessments. Multilingual pedagogy also needs to be embedded across pre-service and in-service teacher education. Teachers who don't understand and speak the children's home languages need to be encouraged and supported to develop basic conversational skills in these languages.

Multigrade teaching

Multigrade teaching and multigrade classrooms are a widespread reality in government schools, with nearly two-thirds of classrooms in the Survey sample falling into this category. Teachers working in multigrade settings need specific curricular guidance and pedagogical tools to manage multiple groups effectively. This includes support for planning parallel activities, organising independent work, using flexible grouping, and managing time across grades.

Differentiated instruction

Teacher guides, training modules, and academic support systems should explicitly model how differentiated instruction strategies—such as flexible grouping, scaffolded tasks, and guided practice for small groups, especially for children who are struggling to learn—can be planned and implemented within everyday classroom routines. Providing extra attention and support to such children is key to reducing learning gaps within the classroom.



About TLPS 2025

The Teaching and Learning Practices Survey (TLPS) 2025 provides systematic, large-scale evidence on teaching practices for language and mathematics in Grades 1 and 2. The Survey was conducted between November 2024 and March 2025 in nine states—Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh—covering 21 districts and 1,050 classrooms. By capturing a wide range of contexts, TLPS provides a rich snapshot of the current teaching and learning practices for foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN).

Anchored by Language and Learning Foundation (LLF) and supported by Tata Trusts, the survey has been implemented in collaboration with a consortium of organisations: Centre for microFinance, Educational Initiatives, Madhi Foundation, QUEST, and Vikramshila Education Resource Society.

The TLPS 2025 Report presents findings that describe and analyse the classroom learning environment, lesson planning and delivery, selected teaching practices for language and mathematics, and time on learning tasks for both teachers and children. It also explores teachers' perceptions of some aspects of FLN and their professional development. The recommendations of TLPS suggest how classroom teaching practices can be improved and the system-level changes that can enable and sustain this change in FLN teaching and learning practices.



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Tools for TLPS 2025 and grade-wise data-tables can be accessed from the QR Code above