

## School Leadership: Involving parents

### English

When we arrange parent/teacher meetings, very few parents turn up.

Most parents in rural areas don't appreciate the importance of parent/teacher meetings.

They didn't come for the first meeting, but they came for the second one.

We talked to them about the children's school work and their attendance, but they'd tell us their children had other work to do at home, so they couldn't send their children to school.

We also explained to the parents the importance of school to their children.

Most of our parents understand the importance of education, but because they are uneducated, they don't realise there is a role that they can play themselves, so we have to explain this to them.

We have identified some of the parents who can bring about change in the community, so we regularly talk to them over the phone.

Suppose a child has not come into school for several days and his parents are not responding.

We send a message through one of the children in school that the child has been absent for a long time and a leave of application has not been submitted, and we ask, 'What's the problem?'

If the child's friends or neighbours give us a reason, then we contact the parents to confirm this.

We generally keep in touch with a couple of parents in each village.

They will then go to the child's house and give them our message.

Then we invite that child's parents to school.

If they come, this is OK. But it's a huge challenge to get parents to come to school. They just don't turn up.

But now they have started to come, because I welcome them respectfully.

When they arrive, we offer them a seat. We talk to them for a while.

If you ask the villagers about their personal problems, they do talk a bit about them. Then we try to solve their problems.

For example, there is a girl in the tenth standard. Her mother came here. She wanted to take the girl home early to go wedding shopping. She said that she needed two days' leave as well.

She said that the wedding was at a relative's place in a nearby village.

The girl had asked her mother to request leave from school.

I asked her why she wanted her daughter to be absent for two days to attend a wedding just four or five kilometres away.

'She is in the tenth standard. She will miss whatever is taught. And then you won't be able to help her at home.

'If it's just four kilometres away, you can go in the evening and get back in the night.'

The girl came to school both days and she didn't take any leave.