Powering The Future With Better Education
Case Study from eRRF Bihar

It is a bright, sunny day in Rajpur, Patna. Blue uniforms gleam on top of lush green fields surrounding Bihar Public School. It is recess time.

Remembering the time that was, around 15-17 years ago, Mr. Shivshankar Yadav, the Principal of Bihar Public School, recalls a serial called “Krishna” that used to air on the television at 9 o’clock every Sunday for an hour. That is the exact same hour when the power was cut off, every Sunday. He remembers fidgeting around to arrange for a battery to run the television, because they did not want to miss the program. Back then, it was common to bend your lifestyle in accordance with the shortcomings of the power supply.

But today, a smiling Mr. Yadav is looking at the children as if he can vividly imagine their future that now seemed imaginable outside the door-less bricked walls of the school. The school was now a launching pad for young dreamers.

The e-RRF programme is Smart Power India’s initiative in partnership with the state electricity distribution utility in Bihar to improve metering, billing and connection services for the customers.
For the longest time, dark, foul smelling smoke filled the breaths of young children at BPS while they barely managed to function on a diesel generator. The thudding of the generator would overpower even the strongest voices and made communication between the students and teachers nearly ineffective. The students couldn’t hear what the teacher taught, and the students’ questions were not audible to the teacher. Parents and guardians in the neighbourhood grew apprehensive to sending their children here, and for all the valid concerns.

The picture we see here today is far from where this story began.

The dark cement hallways lit up as Mr. Yadav got an electricity connection for the school earlier this Feb year. Wires run over walls inside insulated pipelines, classrooms are now installed with LED bulbs, and fans that came as a boon in the rugged hot summers of July.

The diesel generator would easily cost Mr. Yadav a hefty 17,000 to 20,000 rupees every month, in a run-time of 6 to 7 hours per day. This sum has now fractioned to 2000-2200 rupees with electricity. The switch was so beneficial monetarily with the impact showing almost instantaneously, that the school could not only afford many more fans and lights, but they could also set up a computer laboratory, all with the money saved because of the connection.

Word has spread around the village. People are now more willing to admit their children to the school. There has been significant improvement in their academic and holistic learning, they can now concentrate better and are more likely to attend school regularly.