

Delta Study Kindergarten adopts Aruna Raghavan's teaching method

Express News Service
Kochi, Jan 30

"If kindergarten is joy, high school is bliss," that's the message the Delta Study Kindergarten, Fort Kochi, has for the kids of today.

The KG section of the school has adopted the unique educational system popularised in India by the noted

educationist Aruna Raghavan.

The system was introduced in the school last June. It draws strength from the fact that children learn to speak before they start reading and writing. In the KG section of Delta Study these two skills are honed using picture books, audio-visual materials and flash cards, school authorities said. The system relies in stimulating the brain to augment its

capabilities. Physical exercises, especially 'creeping' and 'crawling' on soft mattresses are introduced at the start of the day to invigorate the children physically and mentally.

Learning takes place at a relaxed pace under the watchful eyes of the teachers, Delta Study officials said. Audio-visual aids transports the child to a world of music, song and stories.

Delta Study also has a well-stocked library in its KG section with colourful books, memory games, puzzles and CDs. The KG Park has games equipment, which also help to sharpen their skills. The children also acquire map reading skills at school. They are taught to identify States, cities and capitals.

The annual day celebrations of Delta Study will be held on Saturday at the school auditorium. Indra Kumar, commissioner of Income Tax, Kochi, will preside over the function, which will commence at 5.30 p.m. Saroja Muralikrishnan, acting principal, will present the report.



A map reading session in progress at the Delta Study Kindergarten.

Delta Study Kindergarten adopts Aruna Raghavan's teaching method-City Express(Kochi)Jan31,2004.

CityExpress
Chennai, Saturday, December 13, 2003

NEWS

Express launches programme for city schools

Express News Service
Chennai, Dec 12

A NEWSPAPER in education programme for city schools was launched on Friday by The New Indian Express (TNIE) in association with educational NGO Integrated National Development In Action (INDIA) Trust.

On the inaugural day of the programme, called 'Express in Education' (EIE), a seminar on Human Resource Development was conducted for principals and teachers of city schools.

Stressing the need for value-based learning, TNIE business consultant Garry Jacobs said that education connected generations of people. "Knowledge and skills learnt at school may be forgotten by a student, but values learnt can never be lost," he said. Values were spiritual skills that direct energy into positive action, Jacobs added.

He said the most important value for students was self-reliance. Another value that schools must necessarily inculcate in students was punctuality, as time lost could never be gained, he added.

Jacobs underscored the role of personal attention by teachers for the development of students through an anecdote. A group of psychologists in the USA asked principals to administer a 'Late Bloomers' test for students, saying that the test would identify students with latent potential. The psychologists put away answer sheets in the waste paper basket and randomly selected a few names and prepared a list. When the psychologists evaluated the school students later, it was found that the randomly-chosen students had indeed done better than their counterparts, simply because teachers invested more time and attention on those students with promised potential!

The EIE programme seeks to bring out the best in students, said INDIA Trust President S K A Vijaya Kumar. The EIE programme would be offered to 200 students in each school. The registration fee per school is Rs 5,000. INDIA Trust would offer training and counselling for teachers and students, he said. The core group of 200 students would comprise the Class Fellowship Unit, he added.

Each school can nominate one teaching staff member or the Principal of the institution for a Cambridge International Diploma costing Rs 66,000, which would be extended to them as a 100 percent fellowship.

Vijaya Kumar said that EIE would inculcate the newspaper reading habit in students, as each of the 200 students would get a copy of The New Indian Express on all working days.

Manuals on parenting, audio cassettes on personality management and coupons for counselling would also be provided to the Class Fellowship members. Educationist Aruna Raghavan said that learning could be explored in fun ways. TNIE Editor (Tamil Nadu) Kamalendra Kanwar also participated in the seminar.

Representatives of schools at the launch of the Express in Education programme in the city on Friday. (Right) Educationist Aruna Raghavan shows that learning can be fun as NGO INDIA President S K A Vijaya Kumar and TNIE Business Consultant Garry Jacobs look on - Express photos by P Jawahar

Express Launches Programme for City Schools - City Express(Chennai) Dec13,2003.

"Your Child can be a Genius" (Book
Advertisement) -
The New Indian Express Jan
28,2003.

CityExpress
Chennai, India, January 31, 2003 With The New Indian Express

Presented by **മുഖമുഖം**

Madras High Court Chief Justice B Subrahmanyan meets with parents of honour award winner Sumanika Raghavan, daughter of Padma Subrahmanyan, social worker Sumanika Raghavan, who is the recipient of the award at the inauguration of Women's World at the YMCA Grounds in Royapettah on Thursday. All women were felicitated. — Express Photo

'In woman lies the responsibility of bringing bliss'

Express News Service
Chennai, Jan 30

The greatest responsibility of bringing bliss to a home lies with the woman who brings power to the entire family. Padma Subrahmanyan said today at the inauguration of Women's World — a first-of-its-kind long-term project of the Women's World at the YMCA Grounds in Royapettah, Chennai, which is aimed at bringing the need for gender equality and women's empowerment to the fore.

Padma Subrahmanyan, a noted spiritual leader, said women are the backbone of the family and the most important role of a woman is to bring bliss to the entire family. "And if every woman then should be able to work with you on whatever you choose to spend your time," she said.

She thought for a moment and said, "Today's crying need is health, food and education. Perhaps more in education. Besides, it is fun being with children," she smiled. She had already been teaching children as part of her NSS activities in Mumbai's Orissa municipal schools and had a track record of helping children in math and science. Even today she feels the greatest task faced is college students whose time can be spent to take them where she has to go.

And so, when she was twenty-two, three years before she got married, she decided to turn her attention to education.

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Falicitation of Weman's World - City Express(chennai)Jan 31,2003.

LAUNCH OF **Your Child can be a Genius**
- a guide to better parenting and child education

Education made joyous
The compendium is our first attempt to set the stage for a wider dissemination, an attempt to reach out to the mother to use an agency to address the perceptions of learning concerns in its broadest implications; an attempt to provide first-hand solutions in grappling with these issues; an attempt to create a school in every home. The best teachers for a child are his own parents. It is imperative that we instill a caring, providing it with a flavour of professionalism. This book seeks to draw out of the inherent and latent qualities of a teacher in every parent.

Children are the greatest preoccupation today. We only have to see the advertisements aimed at them, how they for chocolate or for healthy growth or saving for a bright future. Yet, there is a general feeling that we would do even more for them. That their learning be not a chore, that their schooling should mean education not literacy, that they grow into persons whom we would look up to. There is a growing concern that our children lose their childhood even before they ought to.

We begin documenting your work and that has become our as a Sunday feature "Alternative Schooling" in the New Sunday Express. The collection can be viewed in two parts: focus with experiments on bringing up children and those that directly deal with approaches in teaching subjects.

A fair share of the blame is placed at the doors of schools: the syllabi they follow, the highly competitive atmosphere and the rote learning that is instilled upon.

For about two decades now my husband and I have been experimenting with working with children outside the home work of regular school curriculum. We wrote our own curriculum, syllabus, texts and workbooks. When we found ourselves successful, we looked into the cause. Why were we successful? Smaller teacher-student ratio and the methods we use. We decided to return to the mainstream armed with our techniques of teaching and find that the children continued to do well. The findings are joyous, confident, curious children who learn at an incredible pace.

With reference to teaching, we have assumed that the experiments are based on curriculum for primary school which is common everywhere. It is an attempt to offer simple experiments and projects that may be conducted at home. We have assumed that they are not time consuming and that no experiment requires running off to the bazaar to buy things. The first two paragraphs of every essay deal with a thought and the last few are hands-on experiments to complete the thought.

Experiments with bringing up children consistently keep us aware of what all we need to work on, if our children must continue to remain secure and feel loved. "Joyous Education" is the aim of every parent. We share our experiences, both as parents and teachers, with you.

(Aruna Raghavan on 'Your Child can be a Genius')

Your Child can be a Genius
By Aruna Raghavan
brought out by
New Indian Express
To be released at 5 p.m. on 28th January, 2003
Venue: Hotel Cochin Towers, Kochi
Mr. Garry Jacobs (Consultant, Mira International, USA)
will deliver the introductory remarks.

His Eminence
Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil
(Major Archbishop of Syro Malabar Church)
will hand over the first copy to
Dr D M Vasudevan
(Principal, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences)

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Aruna Raghavan on "Your Child can be a Genius" - The New Indian Express(Kochi) Jan 28,2003.

Where Walt Disney meets Sri Aurobindo

A yuppie Mumbai couple has set up an unusual school for poor children in rural Tamil Nadu.

Aditya Advani reports

ONCE they were just another Mumbai couple. He, Raghavan, a chartered accountant-turned-software engineer and she, Aruna, a school teacher. Like everyone else, they too were busy climbing the social ladder.

What, then, are they now doing in an unpronounceable Arasavanangakadu (AVK), a village best described as Nowhere, in Tamil Nadu? "I like to think that we are at the centre of all things," jokes Raghavan. "And the world revolves around AVK!" Located in Thiruvavur District, AVK is four hours from Madurai, seven from Pondicherry and eleven from Bangalore: you could whiz past it with not a milestone to herald its existence. Four hundred kilometres from the state capital, it's light years away from modernity. To date, one has to take off one's shoes to walk down the Brahmins' street.

But now, a tenuous bridge spans the age-old divide between the village's upper and lower caste quarters: everywhere, children greet each other with squeals of 'Good Evening!' The source of this English-speaking miracle is Shikshayatan, an unusual school in an unusual locale.

What motivated this thirty-something couple to move to deep, rural Tamil Nadu, to set up a completely free school for the children of the poorest of poor? Quite simply, while many of us articulate a deeply felt intention to help society, Aruna and Raghavan decided

to just do it.

"When in 1982 Aruna and I resolved to start a school in rural India, we gave ourselves 10 years to reach the goal," reminisces Raghavan. Aruna spent the interim period teaching at alternative schools. In Mumbai, she set up Primrose Institute, a primary school. "But teaching the child of a landless labourer from a backward caste in an obscure village is far more difficult than teaching any city kid, even one off the streets," says Aruna. "The children of AVK lack self-confidence, and for them, our rigid system of formal education is far too harsh." So Aruna had to devise a new system, practically from scratch.

Shikshayatan's child-centric education draws from the spiritual writings of Sri Aurobindo. Aruna believes that for any topic a child covers, ultimately he or she must see the link between "himself or herself, that topic, and the Divine.



ENGLISH WITHOUT TEARS:
A child from Shikshayatan tries his hand at the Queen's lingo

In simpler terms, a child has to be educated in entirety, and not in terms of individual subjects." At Shikshayatan, pupils are taught to recognise the interconnections between everything they learn, linking Disney's *The Lion King* to their lesson on Africa.

Another input is the Doman method used to teach the mentally impaired, from the school of the same name in Philadelphia, USA. Its principles of learning through 'visual association' help teach students through stories, charts, CD-ROMs and flash cards.

A testimonial to the worth of the school is their daughter Niru, who has been schooled completely at Shikshayatan. Growing up among village kids is not keeping her from attempting her 'O' levels next year. Seeing her example, five children from Mumbai, fed up with formal academics, now board at Shikshayatan. The local children move on after the fifth standard to the village municipal schools.

Today, with over 80 children enrolled in the school, Raghavan dreams of increasing the number to a hundred and fifty.

The school's funding methods are equally unique. Every so often, Raghavan will dash off to Chennai or Mumbai to work on a software assignment, ploughing back his earnings into the corpus, kicked off with their own life savings. "In this part of the world, it's amazing how much you can do with small sums," he explains. "In fact, I feel having too much money inhibits inventiveness."

Any visitor to Shikshayatan is taken aback at the profound

COMMUNITY SERVICE

knowledge of its English-proficient students, including some aspiring doctors and engineers. Its free access to computers, videos and library of 50,000 child-friendly books is hard to find even in urban settings. Raghavan's philosophy: "We follow a world-class standard of excellence in anything we do. Our village children get the exposure to the world that we would want for our own daughter."

Shikshayatan is beginning to inspire others: an affiliate has already been set up in Pondicherry. "We are working on a school in neighbouring Kadallur and one in Madavli, near Lonavla," says Raghavan, his eyes lighting up at the prospect. "In the next 10 years, we hope to nurture 10 schools based on our model."

Report from Aditya Advani about Shishayatan.

The New Indian Express

Woman's World

The Complete Woman's Exhibition

November 22-24, 2002 RAJIV GANDHI INDOOR STADIUM, KOCHI

The New Indian Express ♦ Kochi ♦ Sunday, November 24, 2002 ♦ P 12 B

Eager Kochiites mob Aruna, Raghavan for parenting counsel

Express News Service
Kochi, Nov 23

By the time the couple managed to get down from the dais after fielding an unceasing volley of questions, they had convinced a few hundred parents and teachers that they could easily make a difference to a child's world.

Aruna and Raghavan from Tamil Nadu, who advocate alternative schooling, made Kochiites realise the importance of empathising with children.

The couple were speaking at the conference being organised in conjunction with the Woman's World Exhibition.

"What they start learning at the age of two forms the basis of their education all through life. So make it a happy experience that both the parents and children enjoy," said Aruna, prefacing her interaction with the audience. "A child can learn anything, master many languages, do maths or be a gymnast. It is the adults who can't do things on their own and need coaching classes even for learning a new language," said Aruna and Raghavan, highlighting the

child's potential to develop genius. "Parents and teachers should create conditions that enable the child to discover and express their full potential," they added.

The Raghavans have set up a school at Arasavangadu village near Thiruvartur, Tamil Nadu. "In our school, the children do not bring text books or note books, they come and go as free as birds. There is no homework or examinations," says Aruna. It is boredom that makes children rest-

less and mothers irritated, opined the Raghavans. "Engage them in some activity they like. Read to them, show them pictures, make them learn words and spellings, and education would turn into a pleasant experience for the child."

After her brief introduction, Aruna and Raghavan faced a barrage of queries. While some mothers wanted to know how to make the children sit still and concentrate, others were concerned more about the fact

that modern schools are not giving much attention to developing the child's inherent talents. "Teachers should take care not to mark the wrong answers in red ink, as it will make the children focus more on the wrong word, than the right one. Make the children write with pencils and erase the wrong words," Aruna advised school authorities.

"Reading is the best way to cultivate vocabulary and knowledge, but don't underestimate the powers of the television. It can also serve as a medium to improve the potential of the children," Raghavan said, responding to a question on the influence of TV on children's studies.

Talk to them, read them stories, encourage them to read and write and enjoy what it feels to be with the children."

Aruna is a secondary school teacher by profession and Raghavan was a Chartered Accountant.

In their teaching, they follow the techniques developed by Dr Glenn Doman of USA, combining it with ideas on education expounded by The Mother, of Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Raghavans' DON'Ts

- Don't ask the child to sit down and do something alone. Sit with him and make him want to do what you want him to do.
- Don't test whether he has learnt anything from you. Believe in your child.
- Don't expect him/her to play with a toy for hours. Children get bored easily.
- Don't feel that you are obliged to do something for the child. Enjoy the time with children because you will never get a second chance.
- Don't force the children to do anything. Initiate them into activities and let them have fun.

For more don'ts and clarifications mail to actrust@vsnl.com

Report from The New Indian Express - Kochi On Nov 24, 2002.

The New Indian Express

Woman's World

The Complete Woman's Exhibition

November 22-24, 2002 RAJIV GANDHI INDOOR STADIUM, KOCHI

City Express ♦ With The New Indian Express ♦ Kochi ♦

Could your child be a genius?

Most of us believe that geniuses are a very rare breed and only a few children are born with that potential. Not according to the Raghavans! "Many children have the potential of developing into a genius," according to them. "Every child has to be nurtured, that comes to the surface under certain circumstances. The secret is to create conditions that enable the child to discover and express her full potential."

"Young children have an incredible capacity for learning," says Aruna Raghavan. "They can learn to read multiple languages with ease at a very young age, even before entering school."

"They can absorb a wide range of general knowledge just as a form of recreation," her husband Raghavan adds. "Children can learn at least twice as fast as they normally do in traditional schools without homework, cramming or strain. Learning can be fun for the kids and a way for parents to relate to them positively."

The facts of their daughter, Nishi, made them search for new methods. They stumbled on the techniques developed by Dr Glenn Doman in the USA, combined them with ideas on education taught by The Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and found they worked miraculously with their own child, who began reading

vocally and learning on her own at a very young age.

Doman concluded that the first six years of life are a time when children learn naturally, spontaneously, effortlessly and joyously as a form of play and that the more opportunities the child has for learning during this period, the more rapidly he learns and the greater the capacity to learn.

Because the child, the greater the capacity to learn. Every child's natural ability to learn far exceeds what we are teaching, because of the methods in our teaching methods. Our present educational methods lag and develop only a very small portion of the child's human capacity. Each child is a potential genius, with unique

capabilities. The system should be flexible in recognizing this and allowing it out. The present system is inflexible. It begins with three-week letters and goes on till the child is five years. By then, the child is with rote learning, which is beyond his level. But it is understood that the future is very bright.

The Raghavans are not just talking through their hats. They are working creatively applying advanced methods of early childhood education to help several children develop their fully innate potential.

Aruna and her husband first became interested in early childhood education in the late 1980s when they, as Mumbai, started a secondary school teacher. She was a chartered accountant and with a highly successful company was enjoying success. Eight years ago the Raghavans left Mumbai to set up their own school at Arasavangadu village near Thiruvartur, Tamil Nadu.

Three years ago Aruna joined the launch of Panchajanya in Pondicherry and several other cities. Then, all the schools are applying the same basic approach. "The methods we apply in our schools enable even average children to perform way above average. In secure self-confidence and individuality."

In case, you are feeling wary that the Raghavans do not operate a school in Kerala, do not fear. According to Aruna, these methods can be applied by every parent in his own home! If you are interested you can read about their methods in Aruna's twice-monthly column on alternative education in The Sunday Express. Better yet, visit the Woman's World Exhibition in Kerala on Saturday where you can meet and interact with the Raghavans in person.

Express Features

Report from City Express - Kochi on Nov 24, 2002.

Barefoot teachers, brave new methods

The system of formal education in this country is far too much a matter of learning by rote, of shovelling information down children's throats. There is very little fun in it. C.S.U. BRAMANTIA, however has discovered an innovative method of teaching - developed in the U.S. but already tested here - which might revolutionise primary education in India.



Poorly qualified teachers, inadequate teaching materials and out-moded teaching methods result in low quality of education in rural schools.



Children in urban schools are subjected to extreme competitive pressures from a very early age.

Between these two extreme positions, lies a wide array of mostly mediocre practices. Hardly do we find the educational system fostering the natural process of spontaneous, self-constructed education in which children learn just as they play and as a form of play out of their innate curiosity and urge to acquire knowledge of the environment. Internationally, there have been many efforts to find a "third way" that, while neither from the end neglect of the curriculum in low quality public education or the competitive pressure exerted even on very young children by expensive, career-oriented school systems.

A highly successful alternative approach has been evolved in the U.S. - the *Primrose* for Development of Human Potential, founded by Dr. Glen Doman, educationist. Doman's work is based upon the conviction that learning is a natural instinctive urge in young children. Often curbed or distorted either by neglect and lack of exposure or by compulsory teaching. During more than three decades of work with both normal and brain-damaged children, Doman has shown that exposing the young to interesting pictures of information for very brief periods each day stimulates the development of the brain cells during early years and fosters a spontaneous curiosity and natural love of learning in children. Doman's methods have been practised for more than 20 years at the Institute's school in Philadelphia and more recently in similar institutions established in South America, Western Europe and Japan. The same methods have been applied successfully by more than one million parents around the world.

Another approach has been evolved and practised for the past 43 years at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, in Pondicherry. Here too, the emphasis has been on fostering a conducive atmosphere for the children's curiosity to emerge and express itself so that they acquire a natural inclination towards learning and self-development.

What would happen if the Government of Maharashtra, it was brought to my notice that

a couple, Mr. Raghavani and Mrs. Aruna Raghavani, had established an institute called the *Primrose* Institute where they were conducting courses for parents on how to utilize alternative educational methods as developed by Glen Doman to foster a love of learning in their own children. Raghavani is a chartered accountant and Aruna is an M.Phil. in English, a former sub-culture of a reputed English magazine and she also worked as a teacher in the Bharatiya Vidya Peeth school in a Bombay high school. I sent for them to find out what they were attempting. They told me that they had spent the last decade exploring and experimenting with new methods of children's education which had produced remarkable results in educating young children. While I was thinking of visiting the Raghavanis to work out an educational project based on their experience, I found that they had left Bombay.

Recently I learnt that the couple had come over to their own village, Arona, in Maharashtra, a village of 2,000 people, ten kilometres from Kolhapur in the Western Ghats. I decided to visit the village and see for myself. I found a primary school called Shishu established by a trust called the Anandashri Charitable Trust to continue their experiment in child education. Recently, a friend brought Raghavani to meet me and he told me that the school in the village had been functioning for mid-1970s, educating 15 children aged 3 to 12 in the first class. The children came from the poorest section in the village. Now more than 100 children have been admitted and he gave an interesting and exciting account of the progress the poor children made in learning various subjects. I requested him to give me a report about the new approach in education and the results achieved so far. He was good enough to forward the report through a friend in Pondicherry. The report is reproduced here.

The system of education practised at the Anandashri Charitable School is based on the following approach:

The most important aspect of the approach is attitude of the teacher, which should be that learning is a form of play which fosters the blossoming of the child's natural development. Learning should, and can, be made interesting, enjoyable, fun.

Most of the teaching materials are produced at the school by the teachers, who, during their teaching, also suit the interests and knowledge levels of the students. First attention is given to the health and nutrition of the children to ensure that they have the physical energy and natural attention span needed for learning. Nutritional and medical supplements are provided to under-nourished children. Physical exercises and games are encouraged to build strength and stamina.

Children learn spontaneously when their interest and curiosity are awakened. Teaching is confined to brief periods according to the natural attention span of each child, which is normally 15-30 minutes daily during the first two years. It is never extended beyond the child's span of interest.

The student teacher ratio is kept very low to enable the teacher to work with small groups of 5-8 children at a time while the others are absorbed in learning games or recreational play. The most effective ratio is five students per teacher during pre-school, LKG and LKG and twenty students per teacher during standards I to V. However, since the teaching methods are intense, each student actually needs attention only 2-3 or 3 hours of class a day, enabling a teacher to effectively handle double the number of students.

The act of teaching consists primarily of presenting sensory images, objects and information to the child in a pleasant and interesting manner and permitting the child to observe and inquire about the subject, without compelling the child to memorize. Coloured flash cards with large images are of great convenience, are cost-effective aids.

Rapid acquisition of basic reading and verbal skills as multiple languages occurs naturally

by exposing the child to whole words as objects repetitively for very brief periods. In this manner at a young age even children of illiterate parents learn several languages as effortlessly as they normally learn to speak their mother tongue.

Story telling is used to make learning fun and to communicate basic values of goodness, honesty, harmony, responsibility and civil conduct.

Information on people and other living things, places, history, geography, and other cultures are presented to the child in the form of concrete pictorial information and reinforcement combined together to present facts as a living, integrated content rather than a series of separate divorced subjects.

Rapid acquisition of basic math skills is achieved through the use of number line method which enables the child to physically experiment and act out different combinations in addition and subtraction.

Most of the children come to the school so underdeveloped and undernourished that almost exclusive emphasis is placed during the first 3-6 months on providing nutritional supplements and free exercise to develop motor skills.

At the children gained health and strength, their attention span and curiosity have increased to the point where they happily explore new learning areas for periods from 15 to 30 minutes a day.

Despite the very brief time exposure, very average children are able to read simple Hindi and English stories by the end of 15 months. During the same period, they also learn to recognise all the states of India, the geography of the country, the continents, people of the world and a wide range of plants and animals.

In addition to teaching the children, the school engaged five unemployed women from the village with teaching materials and successfully trained in these methods. The trainees have learned and now regularly apply these methods for teaching our children and they also actively participate in the design of lessons and production of the teaching materials.

Although there was initial skepticism and suspicion from the village community, including the families of the first year children, parents have become proud of their children and the village as a whole has come to embrace the school. Requests for admission are coming from villages in a ten km radius.

These results can be compared with the learning of children from comparable backgrounds attending the local public school, most of whom are unable to read and understand even a half sentence at the end of six years of primary education.

I asked a small group to study the report and to find out how to implement the results achieved by the Raghavanis on a wider scale as a national project. I give below the report of this group:

Over the past two decades, similar methods have been used and proven effective in homes and schools in many different countries and social environments around the world. The effort at Shishu Charitable demonstrates that these

same methods can be successfully applied even in the most challenging context of working with undernourished children of undernourished, illiterate poor parents, many of whom question the value of any education whose source is based on the experience of children attending public schools in the area.

The trust plans to expand the school each year to take in new students at pre-school level and progressively add classes up to and through the eighth standard. This will require a gradual expansion of the teaching staff and addition of new classrooms each year.

The school has demonstrated that it is possible to teach this educational method to suit able-bodied young adults from the rural community and that once taught they display very positive attitudes and good teaching skill in working with the children.

The aim of this proposal is to outline effective strategies by which the educational system practised at Shishu Charitable can be tested and extended to all parts of India.

This aim can be achieved provided the following conditions are met:

The pioneering work of the Anandashri Charitable School has to be extended to the 25th standard over the next five years to demonstrate that even disadvantaged children from rural families can acquire educational level that normally require ten years or more of study, even in urban schools, and that this can be accomplished by encouraging the natural curiosity of the child rather than through the pressure and fear of learning patterns common in highly competitive urban schools. This will require expansion of the existing school to accept larger numbers of students and add additional classes, so that total student enrolment at Shishu Charitable reaches 50,000 by the end of five years.

A training institute will be established to train teachers and trainers in the methods employed at the school, so that those trained can serve as a nucleus for establishing new schools and as a means of inducing these teaching methods into existing schools in the country.

It is essential to build public awareness and acceptance of this approach to early child education, so that existing schools will be willing to experiment with the new methods and so that new schools will be favourably received by the community. This can be achieved through a combination of media educational programmes and demonstration projects carried out in established schools around the country.

Financial resources will need to be raised to support expansion of the Anandashri Charitable School and for establishment of the training institute.

The special teaching and course material employed by these methods must be reproduced on a sufficiently large and economical scale to support widespread dissemination.

Shishu Charitable and new pre- and primary schools willing to incorporate these teaching methods as part of their normal education programme and new pre- and primary schools should be established.

Three alternative strategies for widespread

dissemination of the new teaching methods are outlined below:

Government training institute with training in the U.S.

The Government of India should send five experienced teachers to the U.S. for one year's training in the Institute for the Development of Human Potential in the U.S. A Government teachers' training institute should be established in each state or an existing training institute should be converted to these methods by the trained trainers. Each State Institute should be able to train 50 to 100 teachers per year in the new methods.

Each of the trained teachers should be allocated to one government school and provide with a class the use of all teaching materials required to utilize the methods effectively.

In five years, 250 to 500 teachers can be established in each State through this approach.

The Government would also arrange for the design and production of teaching materials to be utilized at the training institute and in the schools where the trained teachers are employed.

The demonstrated benefits of utilizing the new methods in this extensive demonstration programme should be sufficient to convince the Government to convert more and more schools to the new methods.

Government training institute with training in India

This option involves the same steps as Option A, except that instead of sending a large number of teachers to the U.S. for the initial training sessions, the Government could bring one experienced trainer to India from the U.S. as a teacher for the Development of Human Potential, to conduct a one year training programme here. Since the training could only be done in a rural school setting, this would require identifying at least one school which would consent to accepting these educational methods for several classes of children.

Non-Government training institute at Anandashri Charitable

This option does not require the full consent and support of Government for establishment of the training institute or adoption of the teaching methods by Government schools. Instead, a private training institute can be established at Anandashri Charitable in connection with Shishu Charitable at a new location in Pondicherry. The institute would train 15 to 20 new instructors per year. The institute should also have the equipment and facilities needed to produce appropriate teaching materials for use during the training programme and to send to other schools.

Trainers would be selected by leading schools such as those operated by Shishu Charitable, Anandashri Charitable and the Kailash International School as well as schools operated by industrial houses and other self-financing primary institutions for six-month training courses.

After training, the teachers would be provided by their sponsoring institutions with the class materials and teaching materials required to effectively utilize the new educational methods.

Trainers could also be recruited from the ranks of qualified teachers from the capacity and motivation to establish their own schools and to encourage other parents to provide quality education for their children. After completion of the course these trainers would be needed to find employment in self-financing private schools or to establish their own satellite schools to small towns and rural communities focusing initially on pre-school, LKG and UKG.

By this approach, approximately 100 teachers would be trained during the first five years and sent out to practice the new methods. During this time, Shishu Charitable have been expanded to demonstrate the effectiveness of these methods for students up to the 5th standard. Based on the success of these demonstrations, the new methods could then be propagated rapidly on a large scale.

The third option would be a limited approach. The best is the second option where a number of State Governments may be persuaded to adopt this scheme.

It would be necessary for the Ministry of Human Resource Development to take interest in the scheme and takes steps to organize a national drive to popularize the new method in education. I hope the new Government would consider this proposal seriously. This scheme is best suited to improve the standard of education particularly of the underprivileged children.

Barefoot teachers, brave new methods - The Hindu Jun 9, 1996.

लीक से हट कर

शिक्षायतन : घर जैसा स्कूल

सुयमा बशी

अरुणा राघवन पत्रकार रह चुकी हैं। अब वे अपने पति के साथ मिलकर एक ऐसा स्कूल खोलने जा रही हैं जो कई मायनों में बहुत ही विशिष्ट होगा। वहां एक टीचर केवल तीन से पांच बच्चों को ही पढ़ाएगा। पहले सिर्फ ग्रामीण इलाकों के बच्चों को ही वहां प्रवेश दिया जाएगा

निरुपमा सिर्फ चार साल की हैं, पर अभी से उसे चार भाषाएं आती हैं। पढ़ना भी और बोलना भी। माया के साथ-साथ वह गणित भी जानती है। अगर आप उसको $8 + 4 = 90$ और $8 = 4$ यह बताएं तो वह आपको हा और प का मूल्य निकालकर बता सकती है। त्रिभुज के तीन कोण होते हैं और इसीलिए उसे त्रिभुज कहते हैं, यह बात भी वह जानती है। एक चार साल की बच्ची के लिए यह सब बातें जानना कुछ असामान्य-सा लग पड़ता है न?

मगर आपको जानकर खुशी होगी कि निरुपमा कोई 'सुपर चाइल्ड' नहीं है। वह एक साधारण लड़की है। असामान्य तो उसकी मां की शिक्षा की पद्धति है।

निरुपमा की मां, अरुणा राघवन, एक पब्लिशर रह चुकी हैं। उसके बाद उन्होंने शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में काम रखा। तब वह सिनिगर कोलेज की टीचर बनना चाहती थी। उन्हें सबसे पहले गोपी विद्याभारत स्कूल, कोडाकनाल में शिक्षक की मौकरी मिली, उसके बाद कोडाकनाल इंटरनेशनल स्कूल में। यहीं उन्होंने जाना कि बच्चों की शिक्षा में रस निर्माण के लिए क्या-क्या किया जा सकता है।

वैसी तो पहले वह सिनिगर बगी को पढ़ाने की इच्छा रखती थी पर ज्यो-ज्यो वह छोटे बच्चों के नजदीक आती गई उन्होंने पाया कि बच्चों की तुलना में बच्चों के गहनमनस्स ज्यादा होती है और बचपन से ही बच्चों के मन में पढ़ाई की लगन पैदा करे तो आगे चल कर सुविधा होती है।

अरुण का कहना है, "हर बच्चा जिनियस होता है पर स्कूलों में शिक्षक और घर पर मा-बाप बच्चों की जिज्ञासा को मारकर उन्हें 'जो कहा जाए वही करो' के ताल के अनुसार मशीन बना देने हैं, जो अपने विभाग से सोच ही नहीं पाता।"

इसी सब कारणों से अरुणा ने तब किया कि वह निरुपमा को स्कूल नहीं



अरुणा राघवन: नयी शिक्षा-यात्रा की तैयारी

भेजेगी। उसे घर पर ही पढ़ाएंगी। निरुपमा का स्कूल उम्र के दूतरे वर्ष से ही शुरू हुआ। स्कूल वाली घर का ही एक कमरा। अरुणा कमरे का दरवाजा बंद कर लेती। निरुपमा की दादी उसे कमरे तक ले जाती। दरवाजा खटखटाती। अरुणा दरवाजा खोलकर निरुपमा को स्कूल में ले लेती। अरुणा तब मा का बोला उतावकर शिक्षक का बोला पढ़न होती।

जब कोई चीज देखकर निरुपमा सवाल करती, तो अरुणा उसे कहती, "फल स्कूल में अपनी टीचर से पूछना।" फिर स्कूल के समय तक अरुणा कोई जवाब तैयार करती जिससे निरुपमा की शंका तो खत्म हो जाए, पर जिज्ञासा नहीं मरे। इस तरह स्कूल के लिए कोई विषय अपने आप निकलता और स्कूल में अरुणा उसे सिखाते वक्त किसी चीज का

प्रमाण देते वकते कहती, "पर जाकर अपनी मां को दूर उधलकर बैठे फिर जाता है, वह दिखाने के लिए कहना।" इस तरह अरुणा शिक्षक और मां, दोनों भूमिकाओं में अपनी बेटी की जिज्ञासा जागृत रखने का काम करती है। पतैसा कर्कस और दूसरे साक्षि की मदद से सीखना बच्चे को खेल लगता है।

अरुणा अपने पति के साथ जो घाटई अकडेटेंट है, एक संस्था शुरू कर रही है, 'प्रिमरोज इन्स्टिट्यूट'। इस संस्था के जरिए पालकों के लिए, छात्राकर मांओं के लिए, शिक्षित किए जाएंगे जिसमें स्कूल भेजने से पूर्व अपने बच्चे को किस तरह तैयार किया जाए यह सिखाया जाएगा।

निरुपमा को कोलेज जाने के लिए किसी विद्यार्थी का प्रमाणपत्र तो लगेगा। इस बात को लेकर निरुपमा अपने आपको परेशान नहीं पाती। वह कहती है, "एक बार १६ पाठ कर लिया तो कोई भी व्यक्तिगत रूप से एस. एस. सी. की परीक्षा दे सकता है।"

पर शायद इसकी नौबत ही न आए। क्योंकि अरुणा और उसके पति श्री राघवन बहुत जल्द ही इमारतपुरी के नजदीक वैराणा गांव में एक विशेष स्कूल शुरू करने वाले हैं, उसका नाम रहेगा-शिक्षायतन।

अगले साल के सितंबर महीने तक यह स्कूल शुरू होने की संभावना है। इसमें आसपास के किसानों के बच्चे पढ़ेंगे। किसान के बच्चों को बरसात के मौसम में खेतों के काम करने में सुविधा

हो और उनका कोई नुकसान न हो, इसी विचार से अरुणा स्कूल की शुरुआत ही अक्टूबर से करना चाहती हैं। जहाँ तो होता क्या है? स्कूल शुरू होते हैं जून में और बरसात भी। बरसात के दिनों में किसानों के बच्चे खेत में काम करते हैं, स्कूल नहीं जाते। बरसात खत्म होने के बाद वे जब स्कूल जाते हैं तब पाते कि दूसरे बच्चे तो काली आंगे निकल गए हैं।

इसी शर्म की वजह से फिर वह स्कूल नहीं जाते। इसलिए अरुणा अपने स्कूल की शुरुआत ही अक्टूबर में करेगी।

पाठेचरी की अरविंद इंटरनेशनल स्कूल के सामने ही 'शिक्षायतन' की रचना होगी। यह बताते हुए अरुणा ने कहा, "मेरे पति इसके लिए बासतौर से पाठेचरी रहे हैं। वहां उन्होंने पानी का शुद्धीकरण, कम खर्चों में घर बनाना आदि के बारे में अध्ययन किया, जिसका उपयोग हमें 'शिक्षायतन' में होगा।"

'शिक्षायतन' की विशेषता बताते हुए अरुणा ने कहा, 'शिक्षायतन' में अलग-अलग कक्षाएं नहीं होंगी। हम शुरू में तो चार या पांच साल के बच्चों को ही लेंगे। फिर उन बच्चों के साथ-साथ ही हमारा स्कूल भी बढ़ेगा। यहां बच्चों को आसानी तक पढ़ाने की योजना है।"

अरुणा जब कोडाकनाल इंटरनेशनल स्कूल में पढ़ाती थी, तब उसने देखा था, कि उस स्कूल में १५ से २० बच्चों के लिए एक टीचर रहती थी। जिसकी वजह से हर विद्यार्थी की ओर ध्यान देना आसान था। पर बाकी साधारण स्कूलों की स्थिति तो बहुत ही खराब है। वहां एक शिक्षक का ६० से ७० बच्चों को सिखाना पड़ता है, परिणामस्वरूप शिक्षक किसी भी बच्चे की ओर व्यक्तिगत रूप से ध्यान नहीं दे पाती। इसलिए अरुणा शिक्षायतन में एक टीचर को सिर्फ तीन या पांच विद्यार्थियों को सौंपेगी।

अभी तो 'शिक्षायतन' में सिर्फ ग्रामीण विभाग के बच्चे ही जाएंगे। अरुणा हर बच्चे के लिए प्राप्तीयक भी देख रही है। वह चाहती है कि शिक्षायतन में पढ़नेवाले किसी एक गरीब बच्चे का पूरा खर्च कोई उठाए। अरुणा के अंदाज से हर बच्चे को रोके करीबन ८०० से १०००/- रुपया खर्च आएगा। जो भी इच्छुक है वह अरुणा राघवन से इस बात पर संपर्क करे- अरुणा राघवन, जी-२, मोहनगुज, पिपलरान रोड, विलेपार्ले (पू.), बम्बई, दूरधनी-६१३१३५४।

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