

Let's entrust adolescents with responsibility of teaching juniors



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The problems concerning adolescents above class 6, particularly those above class 9, are staring in our face starkly as questions defying answers. The tender-hearted children are losing themselves, addicted as they are to violence, online games and gambling and other self-destructive/anti-social activities. The educational institutions and parents are puzzled over this issue, unable to figure out what to do.

If the adolescents are entrusted with the work of executing socially constructive schemes, they will cultivate the qualities of sense of responsibility and maturity of attitude. Such initiatives will free them from the clutches of craze for consumerist culture, glossy world's enticements, jealousy towards other people and self-pity and mould them as responsible persons.

I would like to put forward a plan towards the goal.

Tamil Nadu with a reading habit

The adolescent students above 10 years of age can teach primary school students how to read. Students from middle schools or high or higher secondary schools or classmates who know better how to read can be roped in for the task of teaching the primary class students the skill of reading. The work of teaching children who are juniors and less capable of reading will give the adolescent students the joy of teaching, make them happy and proud. As a result, they will find the life meaningful and interesting.

It's been proved beyond doubt the world over that children learn faster when they are taught by the same-age students or the seniors by a few years rather than by the teachers. So, this scheme will prove beneficial not only to the learning children but also to the teaching adolescents.

The format of the scheme is as follows:

- The scheme can be introduced in all government and government-aided schools simultaneously.
- Teachers should identify the students endowed with fast reading skill studying in classes from 6 to 12.
- Teachers or Head-Masters can invite such skilled willing students to teach the primary school students the art of reading. The benefits and greatness of the work should be explained to them.
- The scheme can be implemented twice a week.
- Each student-teacher can take care of about 10-15 junior students.
- The best student-teachers can be honoured with commendation certificates.
- This work can be executed after school hours.

- As both student-teacher and student are residents of the locality near the school, there will be no glitches in conducting classes after school hours. The classes can be held on the lines of the 'Illam Thedi Kalvi' scheme model.
- Classes should be conducted on the school campus which can be used to hone the skills of the students. All must be made to realize that the school campus is an asset of the society.
- Both student-teachers and students can go home in the evening and come back to these classes.
- In case primary schools have no students from the higher classes, students from the middle/high/higher secondary schools nearby can be roped in to teach the children.
- Teachers/librarians can choose books and send them to the students, which are appropriate to the age of the learners. The teachers are surely qualified to do this task. Besides, the School Education Department has done a commendable job- the catalogues of books in the libraries in all government schools have been computerized and linked to the head office of the department. So, now it is easy to monitor from the head office itself which book has been lent from which library to whom.
- This scheme can be implemented under the supervision of the school management committee. The great initiative taken by the Tamil Nadu government is the constitution of school management committees in which the parents and the local bodies have a greater say. Who else will be more interested in the welfare of our children than the parents and the people of the town?
- A member of the school management committee can take the responsibility in this regard. Or an educationist of the committee or a volunteer of the 'Illam Thedi Kalvi' scheme can supervise the implementation of the scheme. If a librarian or a teacher volunteers to be part of the scheme, it will be better.

• The scheme will not entail any additional expenditure to the government. The learning students, the teaching students and the supervising management committee member are probably from the same area in the vicinity of the school. Books come from the school library or the town's library. Hence, there will be no expenses whereas the benefits of the scheme will be much more valuable than money. Above all our children will enhance their skills and will be saved from the lures of destructive practices. In the long run, they will be headed for a bright future.

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