

A Door to Knowledge

In the Zila Parishad Union Public School of Somwarkheda, Chikhaldara (Amravati), the children had an understanding that books existed for passing in their exams. The area mainly comprises of two tribal communities named as Korku (economically backward) and Gaudi (economically better), this village suffers from water shortage and educational backwardness.

Using library as a resource, Mr. Abdul Kadir, a fellow under the Gandhi fellowship, wanted to develop reading habit among the students so that books become much more than just sources of passing in exams alongside improving other skills related to reading and comprehending making students realize the importance of reading as a part of his Community Immersion program.

Through an *intervention*, (funded by the gram panchayat with a sum of 15 thousand rupees) reformation of the library took place and books were purchased from an organization known as *Jyotsna* that designs books for children



according to their level of learning. Another organization named '*Pratham*' also helped in supplying of the books. Teachers play a major role in influencing classroom behavior and therefore as a part of the process, all teachers were motivated to promote the use of library in free time. The books that were kept in the shelves earlier were now out on display and the children were given the freedom of choosing from those books and taking them home. A period of one hour was allotted on a daily basis for reading and borrowing books. Teachers were told not only to facilitate but to also read out stories to the children in this particular hour.

The impact of the intervention was remarkable and visible. The Library is open for children to walk in anytime with an extra support of a model library established in this school which has about 600 books for students and 200 books for the teachers. Along with enhancing the reading skills of the children, the library also helped them in developing leadership skills by taking up responsibilities to maintain the library through delegating roles such as receptionist, cleaning the library, maintaining a record of the number of books present and maintaining the opening and closing time. Through the improved level of reading amongst the children, their comprehending ability, pronunciation and learning of new words also improved at a significant level. The youth of the village also came ahead to utilize the library space to educate the younger children after their school hours.

Parents gave full support by taking interest in what their children were reading by attending parent teacher's meet held once a month. This intervention therefore has led to a stronger relationship between school administration and parents of the community. Not restricting the library only to the school premises, work is in progress to build a community library with the help of the gram panchayat funding with a sum of 1 lakh which will soon be accessible to all the villagers. In a way, the whole village today, is together in bringing about a valuable change for the school going population.

EdelGive Coalition for transforming Education (ECE) is a public- private partnership between Dept. of School Education and Sports, Govt. of Maharashtra and EdelGive Foundation for enhancing learning outcomes in local body schools in 4 SFDs of Maharashtra.

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