

### **Now, puppets as teaching tool in Madarsas**

*Puppetry retains student's interest in their studies when any new subject is taught*

The madarsas in Uttar Pradesh will now use puppets as a teaching tool to make learning an enjoyable experience for students .

The step is being taken as educators feel that puppetry retains student's interest in their studies when any new subject is taught.

“Teaching English to madarsa students is a bit of a problem. They don't understand the language well and find difficulty in coping with it. Puppetry will help generate interest among students for the subject,” said Mohd Ragib of Madarsa Tahira Fatima in Pilibhit who completed 15 days' training in puppetry.

Abdul Jabbar, a teacher at Madarsa Raza-e-Mustafa in the same region said, “Not just in English, puppetry will help in making even complicated lessons easier to comprehend for students. We are hopeful that this initiative will work well and the performance of the school is improved.”

Anita Vishwakarma, assistant teacher at Saidpur in Pilibhit recently trained 30 madarsa teachers in puppetry. “We trained them on different forms of puppetry ranging from finger puppet to puppet made of socks and gloves. When these teachers will go back to madarsa, we will see signs of improvement in academic performance of students,” she said.

While puppetry maybe a new teaching tool in madrasas, the practice is quite common in many of the government run primary schools across the state. Yatika Pundir, assistant teacher at Primary English Model School, Kamaalpur, Meerut has been using puppets for some time now.

“I used finger puppets to make teaching more effective. Making these puppets is very easy and children like to get involved in making it too. Teaching is fun when teacher, students and the content together generate interest. When teaching includes all these three elements, it becomes an interactive way of learning driven with activity,” Pundir said.

Iram Saba, a student said she came to primary school from a madarsa and was a shy girl. “When I got involved in puppetry, I started enjoying my lessons. I'm happy to learn things differently,” she said. Suhail added he too loves the puppet activity. He said, “I learnt several topics through this puppet activity.”

Chhavi Agrawal, assistant teacher of English medium primary school Banpurwan in Varanasi said students daily come to school and enjoy learning because here teachers don't teach only through books. “We play with them and entertaining games like puppet shows and other activities engage them in the learning process. This way they learn while playing. Different types of puppets are used for the purpose like finger puppets, socks puppets, shadow puppet, stick puppet etc,” she said.

Alpa Nigam, headmistress at primary school Tilauli, Sardar Nagar, Gorakhpur is using this art as a part of curriculum since 2015.

“We convert the chapters into a script and then a puppet show is staged in front of the students before introducing the chapter to the kids. The kids enjoy the show and after the show they are asked questions related to the story told with the help of puppets,” she said.