

# Villagers chip in, make century-old govt school 'smart'

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**Erode:** The government elementary school in Kongarpalayam in Gobichettipalayam taluk, Erode, which not long ago struggled with low student enrolment, has got a makeover with four smart classrooms — thanks to the efforts of its alumni and villagers who contributed ₹10 lakh for the purpose.

The smart classrooms feature computers and projectors. Other facilities include an English lab (for spoken and written language training) and a computer lab.

E Amalanath, school headmaster, said the students now have the aid of computers for learning.

Established on December 12, 1911, the school initially had just three tiled-roof classrooms. As the student strength went up, the school education department constructed a concrete roof building. However, the student strength dropped two years ago after many parents admitted their wards to nearby private schools for want of 'quality' education.

According to assistant headmaster K Kumar, the student strength was just 140 in 2018, which dropped to a less than hundred soon. Determined to give the school a much-needed revamp to make it on par with surrounding private schools, the school authorities approached former students seeking help. "We started collecting funds with their support. The villagers also chipped in," Amalanath said.

Within a year, the school faculty managed to raise ₹10 lakh and buy necessary equ-



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**ONE STEP AHEAD:** Villagers, alumni have chipped in ₹10 lakh to set up four smart classrooms in a government elementary school in Gobichettipalayam taluk

ipment. They then approached the district education officials seeking permission to set up smart classrooms. "Chief education officer R Balamurali gave his nod immediately. Then we met school education minister K A Sengottaiyan and he inaugurated the smart classrooms a month ago," the headmaster said.

Meanwhile, the teaching faculty went on a door-to-door campaign asking parents to admit their wards to the school, highlighting the smart classrooms feature. "Many parents, including the ones who had admitted their children to private schools, enrolled their wards in our school again. Now, the student strength is 202," Kumar said.

Teachers working at the school said a part of the fund was also used to improve the school's roofing. When contacted, Balamurali thanked the entire village for helping give a facelift to the century-old school and urged volunteers to adopt such state-run schools for renovation.