

# Parents shun private schools to revive 69-year-old alma mater

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Trichy: The prospect of one's alma mater closing down due to lack of patronage is disturbing. It was nostalgia that promoted a group of village elders to try and revive a 69-year-old panchayat union primary school in Pudukottai district that was closed last week.

Parents of more than a dozen children enrolled in private schools in the district have decided to pull out their wards to revive the school at Kolathur village. As of now, 13 people from the village in Aranthangi taluk have ex-



R Baskar

**PRESERVING MEMORIES:** Around 13 people have agreed to enroll their wards in the panchayat school in Kolathur village, Pudukottai

pressed willingness to admit their children to the school. It was closed on Friday to give way for a library in the village as no student was admitted this year. People in the village

have fond memories of their school which was started in 1950. The last thing they wanted to see was it being closed.

► English fluency, P 4

## Fluency in English became a prestige issue: Villagers

► From P 1

That was how village heads met on Sunday and passed a unanimous resolution urging the school education department to reopen the school. "In the first stage, 13 parents came forward to withdraw their children from private schools to get them admitted to PUPS Kolathur. The number is expected to rise to 25, which is enough to revive the school," said D Durairaj, village head.

Marketing by private schools with the promise of making children speak fluent English that caught parents' fancy first, became a prestige issue, said the villagers. A Vasanthi, who taught for a decade at PUPS before being transferred to another school in the district, felt the villagers could have done this earlier and saved the school from closure.

Pudukottai district chief educational officer T Vijayalakshmi said she would take up the matter with the director of school education. "A decision on closure was taken after looking for students who can be admitted. We will verify the list of students submitted by the villagers, check if they belong to the same village and recommend reopening it."