

## **Students of Kerala govt school turn teachers, take classes for elderly in village**

*The class 4 students started taking the classes on October 8, which was celebrated as Vidyarambham in Kerala.*



On October 8, 97-year-old Kumaran took his first lessons on how to operate a computer. His teachers - a few nine-year-olds, who are class 4 students of Kadakkarappally Government Lower Primary School near Cherthala in Kerala's Alappuzha district.

October 8 was celebrated as Vidyarambham, a Hindu tradition observed on Vijayadashami day in Kerala and other parts of south India, where children are formally introduced to learning the alphabet, music, dance and other activities.

The formal training to Kumaran and other elderly people in Kadakkarappally village is part of an initiative called 'Nanma Veedu', started two years ago by the school. As part of this, children from class 1 to 4 engage in activities that facilitate a change in society.

The children have started organic farming in different areas of their village, they help people with disabilities, take up cleaning drives, campaign against plastic pollution, and even seek help from the district administration to intervene in pollution issues. Teaching the elderly in their village is the latest initiative.



Usually, on Vijayadashami day, the elders would make children write letters as part of welcoming them to the world of education. It was based on this tradition that the school decided to encourage the elderly to learn more.

Apart from the quality time the two generations get to spend with each other, the children can help them gain knowledge as well, school officials told TNM.

"Initially, we had asked the students to teach how to operate a computer to their parents at home. They started doing it and the programme was successful. As the next step, we selected a few elderly residents from the village for our learning programme," said James Antony, the school coordinator.



Around 100 elderly persons from Kadakkakrappally, in the age group of 60 to 100, were selected for the programme. "The children formed different groups. On holidays, these groups will visit the selected houses and teach the elderly residents there," James added.

The selected candidates will have to attend at least one class a week. Apart from computer application classes, they will be given language classes in Hindi and English. The initial classes were to help them write the letters of

both the languages.

“The candidates can decide if they would like to attend the classes at the school lab or at their houses,” the coordinator said, adding that the senior citizens are showing great interest in learning from the little ones.

“There are more than 300 students studying in this lower primary school. All the activities under Nanma Veedu have helped the children in their development as well. We want them to grow up as good human beings, nature lovers, environment protectors and socially responsible citizens,” said James.