

Nali-Kali – A Recipe for Joyful Learning :

The Karnataka government and UNICEF collaborated to create a virtual revolution in education in Mysore district.

The walls in classrooms are hung with colourful charts and craftwork. Children of different ages are sitting in groups. A child mimics birdcalls. This is a classroom in a government school. And today's lesson is about 'Environment'. But there is no 'teacher' here; only a 'facilitator'. And that is not just a meaningless change of nomenclature.

Government schools normally shy away from any change in modes of teaching or learning. Nali-Kali is an exception, having created a veritable revolution in classroom transactions. Nali-Kali or 'joyful learning' was started as an experiment in classroom transaction, spearheaded by the teachers themselves.

It all began in Heggada Devana Kote taluk in Mysore district. UNICEF had prepared a micro-plan, which included a survey of in-school and out-of-school children in the taluk, a primarily SC/ST constituency. In 1995, M N Baig, Education Officer in Mysore district, along with UNICEF and the Commissioner of Public Instruction, decided to revive the micro-plan and look into activity-based learning. They held a meeting with schoolteachers in the taluk.

The local teachers isolated some problems that they could tackle themselves. These included absenteeism of children involved in farm labour, unattractive curricula and teaching methods, lack of support at home and urban bias in textbooks.

The pre-training session, consisting of 35 teachers, resource persons and other officials laid down outlines for classroom transactions, teaching-learning materials, etc. Learners' problems, especially those of first-generation learners, were discussed, the minimum level of learning scrutinized and changes suggested. The learning load was reduced to a realistic and achievable level. Language, mathematics and environmental studies were to be taught through art, craft, song, dance and other activity-oriented methods.

Nali-Kali envisions the breaking down of the traditional hierarchy that exists between teacher and student. This orientation is introduced at the level of training of the teachers itself. All the teaching-learning materials are handmade by the teachers and hands-on experimentation is encouraged.

In the first year, 1995, 257 teachers from HD Kote were trained. This number rose to 322 in 1999. It is operational in all but one block in Mysore district. In addition, five blocks across the state were also covered.

Nali-Kali has managed to penetrate the villages in unprecedented ways. In Madanpura, the private school had to close down because most of the students sought a transfer to the government school! And even the farmers were heard humming the action songs that are taught in the school.

The Nali-Kali method of classroom transaction not only gives a greater autonomy to the teacher but also creates the right atmosphere for the child to learn in a friendly and joyful way. Learning takes place systematically in groups organized according to age wise competencies in an interactive manner. When children master the competency of one group, they move on to another group to learn the next competency. The teaching takes place through songs, games, surveys, story telling, use of educational toys and improvised teaching-learning materials, all made by the teachers themselves



Nali-Kali's reach now extends to a total of over 98,000 students in over 2,400 schools covering classes 1, 2 and 3