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Getting them groomed

Using the medium of love Parikrama works to impart education to children who have never been to school before.

One cannot but take notice of the walls that are resplendent with multi-coloured patterns of everything from the bullock cart to the sun, the stars and the goldsmith. Add to that the look on the faces of its creators and you have a bunch of cheerful students of Parikrama - a school that has been working for the upliftment of the underprivileged children of Bangalore City.

With three branches in Koramangala, Sahakaranagar and Jayanagar, Parikrama has been trying to impart quality education to those children who have never been to a school before.

One year after its inception, the school at Koramangala boasts of a student strength of nearly 200 with 90 percent attendance in all its classes (class 1 to 6).

"This is easily the lowest drop-out rate as compared to any other such school-government or NGO run," says Ms Shukla Bose, Founder-CEO.

"To achieve what we have is easier said than done, because the children who come to us do not even have a basic sense of hygiene let alone an idea of books.

"To mould them into students who can talk, read and write English in a period of a few months has been possible also because the children are enthusiastic learners."

Students at Parikrama are taught the ICSE curriculum in English medium. They are given daily assignments and projects. Tests and examination schedules followed by Parikrama are similar to that in any other regular school. A typical Parikrama day begins with prayer, followed by academic sessions and then games, art, craft and music. In addition to the free uniform and stationery, students are also provided with breakfast and lunch.

What is also unique about Parikrama is the conspicuous absence of any form of punishment. Says Marketing

Manager Vivek Raju, "We believe children can be won over by love and affection rather than punishment. We therefore work to ensure that the school is a place where learning is fun and not terrorising."

Vocational training

Now on the lookout to start class seven, Parikrma in addition to academics, imparts vocational training to siblings of its students under the *Unnathi Shikshan* programme. The team at Parikrma has also been part of several other activities that involve the spread of education.

In the recent past, educators trained by Parikrama were part of a government project whereby they conducted a four-month tutorial to class ten students of select BMP schools in the city. Through their efforts, they managed to raise the pass percentage of the students to 30 per cent from what was below 10 percent.

As for future plans, Ms Shukla Bose says, "We hope to make a qualitative difference to the lives of more youngsters so that they emerge as citizens who can contribute effectively to societal growth. Towards that end we will make all possible efforts from our side."