

Karnataka



A classroom full of joy...

Imagine a school system without the heavy bag, the vast, irrelevant syllabus, the numerous textbooks, and the rigid examination system. Imagine a classroom that has no formal system of roll calls, examinations, promotions and rankings, a classroom where there is no pressure on the child, and learning is smooth and joyful. The children learn through songs, games and activities. The classroom is handsomely decorated with colourful pictures, teaching-learning material and other pieces of arts and craft prepared by the teacher and students. The teacher's relation with children is quite intimate. There is no fear on the children's faces.

Sounds impossible? No, it is real. This is a snapshot of Janshalas in Karnataka, where the programme has introduced the Nali Kali methodology of teaching-learning.



Karnataka



Project Area

| Districts | No of blocks |
|----------------|--------------|
| Chitradurga | 2 |
| Tumkur | 3 |
| Hassan | 2 |
| Chikmangalur | 1 |
| Devengere | 1 |
| Uttara Kannada | 1 |

Major indicators (as per Census Report 2001)

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Population | 52.7 million |
| % share in total population of India | 5.14 |
| Population density (per sq. km) | 275 |
| Average annual exponential growth rate (1991-2001) | 1.59% |
| Sex ratio | 964 |
| Literacy rate (%) | |
| Persons | 67.04 |
| Males | 76.29 |
| Females | 57.45 |

Introduction

Karnataka is the eighth largest state in India. Though the literacy rate, at 67 per cent, is higher than the national average, the male-female literacy differential is quite high.

The Government of Karnataka approved the Janshala programme in October 1998. The association called Samudaya Shala Samithi was registered in 1999, but the programme took off formally in June 1998.

Janshala is a block-based programme, where block is the unit of planning and implementation. It is implemented through a state-level society, covering 10 blocks in six districts of the state. The blocks have been selected on the basis of low female literacy, high incidence of child labour and large tribal or backward populations. The literacy rate in these districts ranges from 54.48 per cent (Tumkur) to 66.7 per cent (Uttar Kannada). However, the female literacy rates are much lower, ranging between 41.9 and 56.7 per cent. The female literacy rate is even lower among SCs—as low as 23 per cent in Devengere. There are nearly 40,000 out-of-school children in the 10 Janshala blocks, including dropouts and non-enrolled.



The main features of the project include community mobilisation, stress on quality improvement, mainly through innovations like Nali Kali, and improving access to primary education through various initiatives like Vidya Chetana and Chinnara Angala.

Programme implementation

Pre-project activities included a baseline survey, selection of programme personnel, establishment of Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres, and constitution of Core Team and management structure.

ORG-Marg, Bangalore, conducted a baseline study and social assessment of 81 blocks, in which 21 blocks across six districts fulfilled the criteria of low female literacy, inaccessibility, large tribal population and areas with special problems. Ten of these blocks were chosen for implementing the Janshala programme.

Janshala's field functionaries were selected through an elaborate screening test. Keeping in mind the requirements of the programme, Block Education Officers (BEOs) sifted through a list of probable candidates with specific abilities and skills in communication, interpersonal relations, management, content mastery, decision making, quick thinking and readiness to take on challenges.

Block Resource Centres (BRCs) were set up with Block Resource Coordinator and three resource persons, to provide in-service teachers' training on a regular basis.

Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) were set up for a group of 12 to 15 schools, covering nearly 50-60 teachers in each cluster. These centres were envisaged to provide technical resource support to teachers on a day-to-day basis and reinforce in-service training at the block level, largely through peer group interaction.

Core teams were constituted at the block level, having strong linkages with teacher trainers in DIETs. The core team therefore consists of the Principal, DIET and trainers from DIETs, called nodal officers; Block Education Officers; Block Resource Coordinator and three Block Resource Persons.

This was done to bring in cohesion and allow free flow of work at all levels and to prevent any lack of communication and comprehension in implementing the programme. It also ensured ownership of the programme by the entire team. The core team was expected to participate in all the activities of the programme in the blocks, including the training sessions.

Community mobilisation and micro-planning

Janshala organised various community-level activities to ensure community participation in the school functioning.

Enrolment drive

A mobilisation campaign was launched in each block at the beginning of every academic year to ensure universal enrolment. In such a campaign, block officials, teachers of local schools, village leaders and people from all walks of life went from house to house and spread the message of primary education, especially for girls and SC/ST children.

Kalajathas and Chinnara melas

Kalajatha is a street drama interspersed with cultural programme to generate awareness among people. It is an important strategy for capacity building of the community, as well as for community mobilisation. The premier theatre groups of Karnataka, Rangayana and Mysore, are the driving force behind the kalajathas. Kalajathas have also provided a forum for discussion, and encouraged people to express their views. So far, a total of 512 kalajathas have been conducted in Janshala blocks of Karnataka.

Chinnara melas, where children and teachers of different schools stay together for a week, is another intervention for community involvement. They are organised for interactive participation and cooperation of the schoolchildren and their guardians and generating interest in the community towards education. Having several activity corners, including language, story telling, singing, drama and maths, these melas expose children and teachers to forms of joyful child-centred teaching and learning.

Kalajathas: A success story

Kalajathas have not only resulted in bringing back out-of-school children but they have also been instrumental in securing infrastructure for the schools. In Koppa, the villagers of Halagodu donated two acres of land to the local school. The villages have also pooled Rs 25,000 to provide drinking water facilities in the school. In Hiriyur, 200 schoolchildren from poor families have been adopted by their relatively better off neighbours. In Sira, the schools of Kyakamaruvu and Vaajarahalli have received furniture from the villagers.



Kalajatha in progress



A rally for enrolment

Village mapping

Village mapping included social mapping and resource mapping. The village map is the replica of the village. The social or physical map presents the boundaries and landmarks like temples, houses and water bodies. The resource map indicates locations of workplaces, ranging from factories to grazing land.

Micro-planning

Micro-planning is an exercise and process for mobilising communities, assessing their contextual needs, improving access and facilitating retention and participation in schools. Generally, it is carried out with the help of teachers, who conduct surveys in villages. The mapping exercises include social mapping and resource mapping.

Micro-planning involves participation of the community, as well as of parents and children, through the process of discussions. The role of Panchayati Raj institutions (local governments) and significant participation of women are salient features of this exercise.

The mini micro-plan strategy was devised to cover all villages in the blocks within a span of three to four months. It is a four-day intensive process, in which a team of trained teachers goes around the village with relevant messages. The villagers are requested to assemble at a convenient pre-designated place. The second day is devoted to meeting and training of neighbourhood women leaders (NHLs) and conveners, and preparation of questionnaires. The NHLs, with the help of local teachers and children, conduct house-to-house survey on the third day. On the fourth day, all the information gathered is consolidated in the presence of villagers. The village map gets translated into a cloth map and is the basis of all village level plans too.

Neighbourhood women leaders

Neighbourhood women leaders (NHLs) are elected democratically by the grama sabha. The main aim of NHLs is to work in the areas of community mobilisation and convergence with social sector departments. They help in coordinating with anganwadi workers in the fields of health and hygiene and early childhood care and development.

NHLs actively participate in the micro-planning process. They attend the school management committee meetings as special invitees in case they are not already members. NHLs meet twice a month.

NHLs are taught to use the micro-planning data for out-of-school children and children below five years. In case of out-of-school children, they convince parents to send the children to school and indicate the need for opening alternate schools. They also decide on the need for kalajathas. For children below 5 years they determine the need for anganwadis and liaise with the Department of Women & Child Development. They also participate in health camps conducted by the Health & Family Welfare Department.

The village education register is prepared in the process and displayed in the village school. Once this is done, the gram sabha discusses the issue of children who are out of school. The responsibility of villagers in bringing them back to school is stressed.

Decentralisation

Janshala programme is based on decentralised management. Thus, a Block Implementation Committee (BIC) has been constituted at the block level for planning and implementing the programme. BICs meet at least once a month to review the programme with reference to annual work plan and budget. They also provide academic and technical support to the programme in micro-planning, community mobilisation, etc.



Training of teachers

In the block programme management unit, the Block Education Officer (BEO) is the chief executive and the ex officio block officer. He is assisted by the Assistant Education Officer, who is the ex officio deputy programme officer.

The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments have provided a statutory base for decentralised educational planning. These amendments have created a congenial ambience for Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) to play a more dynamic role. These institutions now provide a greater voice to women, SC, STs and minorities.

The Karnataka government has set up the School Development and Management Committee (SDMC). This is meant to ensure proper participation of parents in school activities. SDMC consist of three bodies—the executive body, which consists of parent representatives, teachers and headmasters; the ex officio member body, which consists of members from gram and taluka panchayats, anganwadi staff and health officials; and a third body of all those who are interested in school activities.

Convergence

Two types of convergence are envisaged--convergence with existing schemes of the Education Department, and convergence with other social sector departments and agencies, such as the Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Department of Women & Child Development and Department of Labour Welfare.

Most habitations are now served by anganwadis. This convergence between the anganwadi networks and the Education Department is benefiting the programme, as CRPs and headmasters of schools visit the anganwadi and provide guidance. The headmasters also ensure that all children from the anganwadi enter primary school at the right age.

Coordination with the Health Department has ensured that all children are given health check-ups, the disabled are identified and suitably integrated and, where necessary, proper referral is made to the PHC or higher level facilities.



Children learning to write on slates

The Health Department will also supply health cards to all schools.

The Panchayati Raj (PR) Department has schemes for the supply of drinking water through bore wells, as well as the mini water supply and piped water supply schemes. The Education Department maintains close liaison with the PR Department to ensure that the benefit of these schemes reaches the maximum number of schools. Similarly, the department benefits from the existing schemes for construction of toilets and providing sanitation facilities.

NGOs are instrumental in mobilising social support for the Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), development of socially relevant curriculum, contextual teaching learning material, innovative teacher training, pedagogic renewal, review and evaluation of educational experiments, action results for UEE and designing of alternative education programmes. An NGO called Jagruthi is entrusted with the task of empowering the block teams and heads of schools by imparting training on educational administration, which includes management, administration and leadership skills. Another NGO, called Seva in Action is entrusted with the task of training in inclusive education.

Quality improvement

Quality improvement is mainly being brought about through development of teaching pedagogy appropriate to multi-grade, multi-level situations, and imparting training to teachers in activity-based child-centred pedagogy. Competency-based material has also been developed. In translating this pedagogy into the classroom, the role of a teacher is a dominant one and the importance of training can hardly be overstated.

Teacher training and pedagogy

Two types of training are in practice in Karnataka—Nali Kali and Chaithanya.

Nali Kali

The concept of Nali Kali developed when a team of teachers from H.D. Kote block went on an exploratory visit to the satellite schools at Rishi Valley. This group was invited to observe the multi-grade classrooms of the satellite schools and encouraged to evaluate them, see their positive and negative aspects and then adapt what was suitable in their own context. Eventually, the group from H.D. Kote developed their own self-learning material in Kannada sometime in 1995, which was named Nali Kali.

Under Nali Kali, learning takes place systematically in accordance with age-wise competency in an interactive situation. Children are grouped, and they master the competency and move on to another group to learn the next competency. Children learn at their own pace, and moving from one competency to another is not dependent on the whole group's learning. The

child is free to move at his/her natural pace of learning. The tools here are competency cards, and achievement and evaluation ladders. The cards indicate the mastery of any particular skill or competency. All teaching-learning processes take place through songs, games, surveys, story telling and use of educational toys. The teachers make these themselves. Evaluation is a continuous process and is in-built into the card and ladder system.

This method effectively eliminates the formal system of roll calls, examinations, promotions and ranking—all these now deemed unhealthy—at least between the tender ages of 5 and 14. In keeping with the decision to implement Nali Kali in the blocks from the academic year starting June 1999, training of teachers began in the month of January itself. Teachers underwent a 12-day intensive material preparation workshop, which laid emphasis on internalising the entire Nali Kali teaching mechanism, whereby the teacher's role becomes that of a facilitator.

The programme has been able to convince teachers and parents that real education is taking place in schools using these materials and that even though textbooks are not used, better learning is taking place in the classroom. A total of 5635 teachers have been trained in the Nali Kali system.

Chaithanya

It is an in-service training for teachers, designed by the Director of State Council of Educational Research and Training (DSCERT). The training module includes the concept of theatre in classroom transaction. A three-day training was given to the project personnel on theatre in teaching and learning language, mathematics and environmental science. Chaithanya is a child-specific but textbook-oriented method of teaching.

Breaking the convention

Hiliyur is one of the blocks where Nali Kali has been introduced in privately managed schools. After hearing reports from the public, media and parents of students who are undergoing Nali Kali methodology of schooling, parents of children in other private schools also want their management to adopt this fabulous teaching method. Viswewara LP School and Assumption HPS were the first to introduce Nali Kali method. Many more are planning to do the same.

The headmaster of a private school recalls that initially, many parents were against the idea of a new teaching methodology. The school management started the programme on an experimental basis along with the conventional method in class I. There was some doubt about the success of the programme during the initial days. But as the days progressed, the response was tremendous. "Now we are planning to introduce this method in class II, not simultaneously but as a substitute to the traditional method," says the headmaster.



Nali Kali and its reach

| Schools | Teachers | NK teachers | | | NK children | | |
|---------|----------|-------------|------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|
| | | I | II | III | I | II | III |
| 1834 | 9508 | 2473 | 1974 | 11883 | 34353 | 26122 | 14647 |



Teachers being trained in activity-based learning

Headmasters' training

Headmasters play a crucial role in education management. In addition to the training of teachers, it is therefore necessary that headmasters of all primary schools are properly oriented not only to the child-centered pedagogy but also to the concept of *samudaya shala* (community school). Headmasters are also imparted training in management aspects. A Bangalore-based NGO called Jagruthi develops their training module. A total of 1087 headmasters have been trained so far.

TLM grants to teachers

Teaching-learning materials (TLMs) constitute an important component in the facilitation of learning.

In Karnataka, the materials are developed by DSERT. At school-level, teachers develop TLMs. There has been a long-standing complaint that teachers do not have the financial resources to create interesting low-cost material to improve classroom practices. Teachers will now be provided a sum of Rs 500/- each for the purchase of materials to develop TLM.

Inter-State Teacher Exchange Programme

The Inter-State Teacher Exchange Programme—the first of its kind—was held in September 1999. Participants came from Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and host state Karnataka. Visits to various schools that practice multi-grade and multi-level teaching were organised.

External evaluation of classroom processes

Bodh Shiksha Samiti (BSS), an NGO in the area of education, conducted a study of classroom processes in Janshala blocks. The BSS team visited six schools in Hiriyur block of Devengere district in Karnataka. The team's report states, "There is no pressure on the child, and learning is smooth and joyful. Evaluation of competency is done by the child himself/herself, who moves from one group to another generally on his/her own. The teacher's role is to see that such a move is indeed based on the acquisition of the expected competency. The classrooms are handsomely decorated with colourful pictures, teaching-learning material and other pieces of arts and craft prepared by the teacher. The teacher's relation with children is quite intimate. There is no fear on the children's faces. There is no hesitation among children in responding to the teacher whenever he/she asks them any question and wants to discuss.

Innovations

Rote learning and "chalk and talk" teaching, rampant in our primary education set-up, go against the psychological and intellectual needs of children. The activity-based method of teaching and learning puts a premium on the child's desire to explore, experiment and think in concrete terms, and is more suited to this stage of development. Keeping this in mind, Janshala in Karnataka has taken up some serious activities other than curriculum to empower the student community. These include the school parliament and self-attendance register.

School parliament

The idea of a school parliament emerged in a workshop on teacher development in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, organised with the technical support of UNESCO in September 1998. A "government" consisting of capable students is elected from among the students, and assigned to look after various school and cultural activities, such as prayer, class cleanliness and decoration, availability of drinking water, maintenance

of TLMs prepared by teachers, library and games, art, sports activities, etc. A chief minister, who is elected by the students, heads the school cabinet. The chief minister selects cabinet ministers among the class representatives. The cabinet consists of 10 members, out of whom three would be girls and three from SC/ST communities. Apart from chief minister the major ministries are home, culture, finance, revenue, sports, health, and transport.

Self-attendance register

To reduce the time spent on taking attendance, a self-attendance card is used, where each student marks his attendance on the card. The monitor writes down the total number of students present in the previous period and hands over the card to the teacher at the end of the day.

Reaching the unreached

Educating children who are out of school is the biggest challenge for the state. There are two major programmes for children who are dropouts and those who were never enrolled.

Chinnara Angala

Designed as a school readiness programme, Chinnara Angala intends to enable eligible dropouts and non-enrolled children in the age group of 6-14 years to enroll into regular schools. Chinnara Angala is a course conducted in summer to mainstream out-of-school children. A para-teacher, appointed from the village youth, teaches the children. An intensive, condensed form of the curriculum (bridge course) is taught, at the end of which the children are enrolled in appropriate classes. The duration of the intervention was initially 60 days. Later, it was decided to continue till all children were enrolled into formal school.

The programme targeted 3265 children in the 10 identified blocks, of which 3100 were enrolled in the programme. Out of this, as many as 2633 children were mainstreamed to formal schools. However, even though Chinnara Angala has been successful so far, there is an urgent need to increase its reach, as only around 3200 children were targeted out of the 40,000 non-enrolled/dropout children.

Vidya Chetana

Vidya Chetana is a mop-up programme for children who were not enrolled in schools even after Chinnara Angala. The out-of-school children fall into two categories: (a) the never enrolled and (b) those who have dropped out of school.

The location of Vidya Chetana Centres is selected keeping in mind the students' convenience, and the timings for instruction are flexible. Classroom transactions start with books prepared for Chinnara Angala. Once the students master this, they are tested and given regular books prescribed by the Department as per their level of achievement. They are also provided with notebooks, pencils, pens, geometry boxes and textbooks. At the end of the year, they have the option to choose between regular schools or to continue in the Vidya Chetana Centre. The programme covers working children, girls who

Total beneficiaries from different trainings

| | |
|---------------|------|
| Nali Kali | 5635 |
| Chaithanya | 2906 |
| HM's training | 1087 |
| IED | 154 |
| MBO | 20 |



have to take care of siblings, girls who find it difficult to attend school after a certain age, children of minority communities, children of migrant families, children of disadvantaged groups, children with special needs, and children who do not have access to any school.

Vidya Sahayak

The local neighbourhood woman leader, headmaster, CRP and BRC of a village choose a local volunteer from NGOs, retired teachers and local youth leaders to teach out-of-school children. This volunteer is called the Vidya Sahayak (VS). The volunteer is given a 10-day training at the block level before he/she begins work.

The child goes through a test to determine his/her competency level. The VS teaches the child for a minimum of four hours each day. Each volunteer teaches not more than 10 children. The VS records the child's daily progress. The children are brought to the local school every month for a test, which is administered by the headmaster in the presence of the BRC/BRP and a School Development Management Committee (SDMC) member. Payment to the VS is based on the progress of the children and is on a per child count. They are purely honorary workers and are not entitled to any service benefits.

This programme has been taken up as a pilot project in two Janshala blocks—Arkalgud in Hassan district and Pavagada in Tumkur district.

Other child-based interventions

Inclusive education

Inclusive education in Janshala blocks aims at education for all and equal educational opportunities for every child. The main objectives of the programme are to identify and enrol children with disabilities in regular schools and to provide them with academic support. It also provides support in curriculum adoption and teaching aids.

Implementation of this programme started in 2000-01. An NGO called Seva in Action took up the task of training Master Resource Persons at cluster level in November 2000. BRCs and CRCs underwent orientation courses. Regular teachers were also provided with orientation to suit inclusive education set-up. The training was conducted for seven weeks in a phased manner.

The trainees identify children with disabilities in their clusters using the resource kit and identification checklist provided to them. They perform street plays in selected villages of their clusters to create awareness in the community about inclusive education.

Bridging a gap

Vidya Chetana often targets child labourers. Hundreds of child labourers are undergoing schooling in Vidya Chetana Centres in rural Arkalgud and Pavaguda, which can be considered as havens of child labour.

Krishnaprasad (10) is one among them. His family consists of an ailing father, working mother and three brothers. Even though he wanted to attend school, poverty made his life difficult and forced him into work at the age of eight.

Krishnaprasad is now undergoing a bridge course to pick up what he missed. Now his days are meticulously divided. He never misses his morning and evening classes at the Vidya Chetana Centre. Once back from the class, he is engaged in an arecanut cutting shed, where he has to spend nearly five hours for a paltry sum of Rs 10/- per day.

Sanitation and environment protection

The promotion of personal hygiene and environmental sanitation within schools can help children adopt good habits during the formative years of childhood. The rural school system offers a vast infrastructure, which can be used to exert profound influence, not just on children but also on the community at large. The students can help in bringing about behavioural changes among other children and can influence their parents and other adult members of the community.

Environmental studies in the school syllabus give ample scope to introduce and develop healthy habits and environment-friendly behaviour among children.

Hiriyur and Challakera, which follow the Nali Kali approach, were selected as pilot blocks for the implementation of this programme in schools. Various social sector departments and UNICEF are working in tandem to converge their programmes to focus on developing and implementing an integrated programme for the survival, growth, development and protection of children.



Health check-up of school children