

Street kids to students, the Parikrma purpose

This is just another story showing up the need to change the current approach to education, the Parikrma Founder Shukla Bose explained.

BANGALORE, DHNS:

This school took precisely one-and-a-half years to change street children and slum children, who did not know their ABCs, into fluent English speaking ICSE-standard students. They come to school wearing neat denim-and-fluorescent green uniforms, learn football from a professional footballer and can speak with aplomb. But just about 18 months ago, they were street children begging or working for survival, some of them sold off to brothels at a tender age. Today, they get excited at the sight of a computer and ooze self-confidence in everything they do.

The complete metamorphosis is just another success story showing up the need to change the current approach to education, feels Parikrma Humanity Foundation Founder Shukla Bose, who has brought into the mainstream over 500 children in the three Parikrma centres in Bangalore - Jayanagar, Kodigehalli and Koramangala.

"These children did not even know letters of the alphabet before they came here. We taught them how to eat, work together and play together. It's only that remedial approach is different. They don't realise they are learning anything, because they are having fun right through the entire exercise. But when 32 of them were sent for an inter-school competition on art and public speaking, we came back with 24 prizes," said Ms Bose.

Computer centre

The Foundation's school in Kodigehalli, opened a new computer centre, funded by Dell International Services, on Wednesday.

The children presented a play in English at the launch, besides playing a football match against employees of Dell.

"We identify children from the streets and slums, find them a rehab home sometimes, and educate them here. They are given breakfast, lunch and a protein drink. We spend almost Rs 15,000 on each child every year. Funds come by asking corporates to donate -- we ask employees of private companies to contribute just half-a-day's salary of their employees every year. If we get that contribution from 10,000 people, we can run the school, complete with teachers' salaries for a year," said Ms Bose.

The school teaches up to class VI now, with syllabus as prescribed by the ICSE board. The students' performance is on par with that of other ICSE schools and the centre plans to scale up till class XII with every batch of students, said its founder. With a new computer centre, computer education will be introduced from class II.

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