

## A Field Worker's Diary - Part 27

At the Foundation I am working in, we have been implementing a number of initiatives to improve student learning levels in government schools. In schools with a shortage of



teachers, Vidya Volunteers who have been trained by our organization start working full-time. Our volunteers not only take daily classes, but also take special classes after school hours and during holidays for students who are not performing well in studies. All the volunteers receive special training on various types of teaching methods, including

joyful teaching methodologies.

One day, we had gone to observe the summer classes being conducted for slow learners by one such volunteer. Mathematics class was in progress when we went there. They were doing additions. But rather than the regular method of teaching additions, the teacher had used a new method of doing additions (not really a new method, however, this method isn't generally used in classes). The teacher drew a circle on the floor and another circle inside it in which the numbers were drawn, and then she taught them how to add the numbers.

A little while later, I gave some digits to a couple of students who were practicing that manner and asked them to add the numbers and tell me the answer. Whatever numbers I gave, they gave the correct answer without fail. The children here seem so sharp, why were they placed in the slow learners batch, I asked the teacher confusedly.

She explained that these children learnt quickly when they were taught this new method, but were unable to understand the concepts using the regular method during normal classes. I immediately wondered why such a method couldn't be taught in the classes along with the regular method.

Human beings learn in various ways. Some people can hear and learn. While some read and learn. Some others can learn quickly when they see something.

Each and every one learns best at different times of the day. Some find it easier to learn during early morning hours, while some prefer late night study hours.

How can we put different types of children in a single classroom at a fixed time and teach them lessons in a single, rigid method? And more importantly - how can we justify labelling those children who are not able to understand the regular methods as "slow learners"?

It might seem logical at first to put fast learners in advanced classes and slow learners in remedial classes. But doesn't this classification have a lasting impression both intellectually and socially on these children?

In fact, this is something that is well-known to teachers and educationists. However, the real tragedy of our education system is the lack of its ability to address the diverse needs of the children and provide personalized education to them.

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