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Corporation's venture yields good results

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V. Vimalarani, mother of first grader V. Sanjusri, is a proud parent today. She is exalted that her daughter is able to communicate in English and has improved her vocabulary. "I am proud of my daughter."

Joyous

And she has every reason to be proud and feel joyous because she least expected the Coimbatore Corporation's primary school at Kallimadai to help her daughter improve her English vocabulary and communication skills.

Ms. Vimalarani is just not alone. She is one among the hundreds of mothers who had sent their children to the Corporation's primary schools in R.S. Puram (P.V.P.), Pappanaickenpudur, K.K. Pudur, Rathinapuri and Kallimadai, where the Corporation on an experimental basis attempted imparting communication skills and English.

Private firm

Former Commissioner Anshul Mishra told *The Hindu* that the civic body partnered with idiscoveri, a private company, to provide 'additional foundation skills' to the students of the five schools.

"The Corporation wanted to study the outcome of the implementation of the programme before extending it to all schools."

The Corporation sent the five schools' heads to a programme on how to monitor the teachers when they provided foundation skills training and followed it up by sending the teachers for a three-day training programme on how to impart the skills.

Teaching faculty

Even as idiscoveri representatives monitored the implementation of the programme, the Corporation formed an independent body to gauge the progress and study the improvement in students' performance, if any.

Teaching faculty from the Government College of Education, Faculty of Education of Avinashilingam Deemed University for Women and a private school in the city were the members of the committee.

P. Poonkodi, Headmistress, Corporation primary school, Kallimadai, says as per the training, the teachers provided opportunity to speak in front of the class to each student, used a positive approach, encouraged students to have a positive outlook, ensured classroom participation and asked students to complete the worksheets with little help from teachers.

Foundation

The additional foundation skills programme was for an hour in the mornings and went on for about three months – January to March 2011.

And the result was for everybody to see.

"There has been a remarkable change in the students approach. Their use of English at home has brought joy to parents," the teacher says.

The result of the three-month experiment has been successful, says R. Kalyanasundaram, Chairman, Corporation Committee on Education, Playgrounds and Parks.

Matriculation

"The reason the Corporation went in for the programme was to help the students at the college level, where they were at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their counterparts from matriculation schools.

The civic body wanted its students to be able to communicate well and perform well in academics."

Enrolment

He said that the Committee had recommended the extension of the programme to all the 41 primary schools. The experiment has an unexpected outcome as well. The overwhelming reception among parents for the programme has led to an increase in enrolment as well.

"The five schools have admitted more than 80 students," says S. Somasundari, Corporation Education Officer. If the admissions were to continue the Corporation will not be forced to shut down its primary schools, adds Mr. Kalyanasundaram.

The programme was for an hour in the mornings

Committee recommends extension of programme to all 41 primary schools