

Initiative Towards Quality Education

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Education is a prime concern of society. Naturally both as individuals and as a society we always think about a better education for all round growth and development of the individual and, ultimately, society. Today the term quality education has gained pace and is a matter of concern and debate among educationists and even common people. In fact education itself is qualitative in nature and outcome. The matter of discussion or concern should be the process, the contents etc. Anyway many interventions and innovative ideas are being implemented and practised at different levels to ensure quality education, particularly in the field of elementary education.

In our state more than twenty-five areas have been identified for continuous professional development of teachers involved in elementary education, to meet their professional requirements and challenges to ensure quality education. Further, the aim is to make the classroom attractive, bring effectiveness and vibrancy in classroom transactions and, importantly, to provide children with a conducive environment where they can construct their knowledge.

Continuous professional development programmes like Art-Integrated learning, School Readiness Programmes related to literacy, early literacy, numeracy, English as fun, etc. are being implemented and have proved to be quite effective and helpful in meeting the quality education requirements.

The Art-Integrated Learning Programme (AIL) is one of the flagship programmes of NCERT. It was introduced in Bihar in 2013 with initiative of SCERT Bihar and support of UNICEF. Batches of master trainers were trained by the NCERT expert resource team. Since then the AIL programme was ramped up and now it is an important part of CPD. Initially it was started in 200 schools in 20 districts, each having 10 schools, with full support and enthusiasm. The teachers, CRCC, BRPs imparted training in pedagogy of AIL. The result is quite positive in a real time situation. In fact integration of art in learning process has not only created a friendly and joyful

environment in schools, but has also become established as a dynamic and pedagogical process to bring back vibrancy and attractiveness in classroom transactions. The attendance, involvement and participation of children has increased manifold, the first and foremost change evident in school environment is the vibrant Chetana Satra (morning assembly).



Under the able leadership of *Bal Sansad* and trained teachers, children are making different shapes in different style in a regular rhythmic fashion. Besides the State prayer and National Anthem, in the *chetna satra* they enthusiastically sing devotional and local folk songs, the essence of their culture. News reading, creating and collecting local news, poetry recitation, motivational talks, birthday and auspicious days, social and cultural celebrations have all become regular feature in morning assembly. Interestingly, the activities of *chetna satra* are so designed that they could easily be integrated with different subjects, concepts and classroom activities.

For example, if the children are standing in a particular shape or design on any particular day, it may be a point of discussion and understanding regarding shape, size and dimension for class 1 to 8. For primary classes it may be a matter of observation, identification, assimilation, classification, etc. whereas for higher classes it is a matter of dimension, area, measurement and so on.

AIL provides ample scope and opportunity to integrate local art and cultural component with abundant local resources. Colours and crayons, sand and clay, paper and leaves, cloths and costumes, everything included in this programme provides a natural feeling. The programme helps in creating teaching learning materials for better understanding of different concepts. Importantly, with their active participation in all these processes children get fully involved. The use of visual and performing art forms at different level with proper identification and integration with different subject matters creates a vibrant environment, full of interest and joy. Pedagogically, too, AIL provides opportunities



to children to imagine and express, show their creativity and expression, grasp and understand concepts, develop relevant skills and many more. Now the pedagogy of AIL is being practiced in most schools throughout the state with proper training, academic input and support by SCERT and DIETs to create an environment for quality education.

Another interesting and innovative intervention in quality education is School Readiness Program - CHAHAK. Children coming to school for the first time must get space and identity. They should feel school to be as comfortable as their homes. The school environment must be conducive, friendly and joyful, making the children intimately involved. The programme is based on the theme 'Ready Children and Ready School to ensure learning'. CHAHAK is breaking the myth that only the teacher can ensure learning. This programme strongly establishes the fact that each and every child has the potential to learn and is ready to learn. This 24-day programme starts at the beginning of the new session, mostly with new entrants. Keeping in mind the context, background and previous experiences of children, the programme has been designed to acquaint them with the school environment without any hesitation.



The activities of CHAHAK intends to ensure that the school is a warm, welcoming and fear-free place for the children, specially for those who are coming for the first time. It tries to bridge the gap for those children who had never been a part of pre schooling, are from marginalised backgrounds and may not have the required psychological support necessary at the tender age of five or six.

CHAHAK also eases the process of the school and its teachers to understand and own the children. The programme includes sessions on storytelling, games and sports, chanting and recitation of poems with proper gestures, acting, singing, dance and drama, playing with clay, sand, crayons and colours, sketching, painting, observing and identifying their environment and surroundings through nature walks, etc.



CHAHAK is being implemented in all the schools of state with the support of Bihar Bal Bhawan Kilkari, Bihar Education Project, SCERT Bihar and UNICEF. Teachers of classes 1 and 2 have been imparted training. The teachers are not only enjoying the training but are also creating a joyful, playful and friendly environment in their respective schools to bring in the change.

Another quality initiative programme is the Sports Based Learning- *Khele Paddhe Badhe Bihar*. It is very true that every child has lot of potential and is full

of creative energy and vigour. Children are curious and inquisitive by nature, natural leaders with cooperative and helping attitudes. They try to do the things the way they think and want, with their full strength and capacity. One can see and realise it by watching their involvement and activity, particularly while they are playing. With this realisation it is felt that their such potential and qualities may be channelised effectively for the enhancement of learning.



It is sports and games which provide every opportunity to show the full capacity of their zeal, enthusiasm and involvement. With this notion the sports-based learning program has been initiated in state as *Khele Padhe Badhe Bihar*. The beauty of this programme is the inclusion of different child-friendly games properly integrated with the concepts in mathematics, science and language skills. The theme of sports-based learning is ‘Sports for Development’. In it, almost all the games and sporting activities of different categories are included. The games are so designed and modified that outdoor games can easily be played indoors in a small place, even inside the classroom. It also includes health and hygiene, cleanliness, physical literacy. There is wide scope and understanding for

the selection of local specific games so that children may show their interest, creativity and learn in the playway style.

These are a few initiatives which are in place to meet the demand and challenges of quality education in the state. The cost effective and local resource based nature of these programmes has increased the ownership and involvement of the schools, the teachers, the children and even the parents.

Most importantly all these programmes are inclusive in nature, providing ample scope for involvement and participation of all, irrespective of any barrier. Of course, these programmes are



easy, interesting and effortless as they provide opportunity to involve all. Their impact is more situational and real time that cannot be compared even with empirical data.

Each and every day opens a new horizon, full of new hope, expectation and experiences. The children are playing a pivotal role in furthering the effectiveness of these programmes with input of their experiences and resources of their context. All these programmes provide opportunities to bring the community closer and are happening at many places.

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