

WE SHALL OVERCOME...

A CASE STUDY ABOUT HOW QUALITY EDUCATION CAN BE ENSURED IN A VILLAGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

NAME OF THE SCHOOL: GLPS CHULLIMADA

ADDRESS: KANJIKODE POST, PALAKKAD, KERALA-678621

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Location: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/z6q7LfBrtiVDG1Zj9>

Established 1932, this school caters to the elementary educational needs of the villagers and a small tribal colony nearby. The school is under the General education department of Kerala. It comes under Chittur Block and Pudussery grama panchayath.

Located in 3.5 acres of land, the school has basic infrastructure sufficient for an elementary school. The ambience is suitable for child friendly learning activities. Just 1 Km away from National Highway 544, it is easily accessible by road.

Total no: of students:70

Total no: of teaching staff: 4

Medium of instruction - Malayalam

Non-teaching staff: 1

Cook :1

Supporting staff (By PTA for Pre-primary class) :1

No: of classrooms used: 5

Office cum staff room: 1

Additional rooms: 2

Kitchen cum store room-1

Auditorium- (under construction)

Toilets: 4

Urinals: 2

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Teaching and non-teaching staff lead this school to tremendous efficiency by way of their dedication, talents, aptitude, cooperation and collaborative work. As the headmistress of this school, I have been enjoying a peaceful, energetic, ever improving and efficient work atmosphere, the credit of which totally goes to my staff. They have always shown great enthusiasm

in trying out innovative teaching methods and conducting extracurricular activities. SRG meetings are enriched with their creative suggestions. We could provide our students with many out of school academic exposure with the sincere efforts of these staff. Our students' performance in science fair and youth festivals were commendable which would not have been possible without these young dedicated teachers.

- A supportive PTA is the most motivational element of this school. Gentle and progressive suggestions by the PTA is considered as a good guidance system, especially when it comes to the academic development of the students. They cooperate with the events conducted in the school, supports from the planning level till the final stage, and suggests improvement.
- The role of Pudussery grama panchayath in the general development of Government schools in this area is remarkable. Buildings, drinking water facilities, toilets, furniture, laptops, and printers are being provided by them. Ward member and Panchayat president are always receptive to our demands and they make it sure that schools are running with enough facilities.
- Assistant education office, Chittur is our reporting office. We are always given enough guidance and support by the Assistant education officer through monthly offline conferences, google meets and email communications. The support from the Block resource center, Chittur also adds to the constant academic improvement of schools. The implementation of Nipun Bharath program in this school has resulted in wonderful improvement in the reading and writing skills of students.

- Besides these, the CSR funds from some companies in this area has been helping us to provide breakfast and study materials to our students. School Support Group members are also supporting us in this regard.



Abundance of greenery

Weaknesses

- At a glance, one wouldn't be able to point at any weakness of this school. When we refer to the past enrollment of students, we can note a significant reduction in the students' number. The reason is mainly because of the change of location of this school. It was located adjacent to the National Highway till 2011, in a rented building and got shifted to an interior place where there are no houses in the vicinity. Students have to travel by auto rickshaws, which is not affordable for many parents. Moreover, neighboring private schools and some government schools provide English medium classes which the parents find more attractive. In addition, the headmistress has to manage both the office and her classroom, which affects the quality of service.

- Another challenging area is teaching the wards of Hindi speaking migrant laborers' children. They find it very tough to understand the concepts, at least till the end of Std-1. Class teachers have to find extra time to focus more on such students.

Similarly, Tamil speaking students also appear to be bit slow in achieving the learning objectives. Teachers have to device different strategies to help these students. Students Under the Scheduled Tribes find it very hard to comprehend the textbook contents.

Opportunities

- ✓ With an educated and supportive parent community as the beneficiaries, opportunities for improvement and excellence are aplenty. Fulfilling their expectations by focusing more on English proficiency development, Math skills development and extracurricular activities, we can bring in more quality and progress to this school, thereby increasing the enrollment.
- ✓ With a nature rich environment at hand, the area can be transformed into nature-filled spaces for learning and play, which in turn, will make learning more pleasant and effective.
- ✓ Enriching the skills of teaching staff by providing them with the state-of-



Opportunities for all



Community participation

Threats

- As for threats, an attitudinal change in the parents' expectation is the only one I anticipate. Some of them compare our students with the nearby private schools. Commercialization of education has a damaging effect on the all-round development of the students. While our students enjoy every minute that they spend in this school, certain parents do not find it positive. They insist on textbook oriented, no-extracurricular activity style of learning.
- Another threat is the transfer of teaching staff. The students' bond with their teachers, which is a boosting element in the learning process. Frequent transfer of teachers really upset the students, especially in elementary schools.

The community

Chullimada village consists of multi religious, multi lingual people who are mostly employed at various factories, thanks to KINFRA industrial park which is closer by. Some are either self-employed or farmers and belong

to low-income group. Majority of the villagers are literate. However, they value education much and understand the need to improve steadily. They have an open attitude to changes and support innovative ideas.

People are aware about the options in higher studies and career paths. They expect quality service from government educational institutions. They take part in parents' meetings and express their concerns clearly. They help and support the teachers in academic as well as extracurricular activities. Majority of them are aware about their rights and responsibilities as parents.

Parents are mostly low-income group and are employed in various factories in the surroundings. Wards of migrant laborers also enroll here. 10% of the students belong to the Irula tribe (ST). Some of the students speak Tamil at home.

Working knowledge in English is the most stressed demand that they unanimously raise at each and every meeting. Academic excellence is given more focus.

The problem situation

The inability to read textbooks and do basic Mathematics was found in more than 60% of the students upon school reopening after COVID-19. It remained as a challenging situation even after a year. The long break in classroom learning had made a rift in their ability to understand concepts. The influence of smart phones has also affected the focus of the children.

Plan of Action

1. SRG meeting: - The issue was discussed in SRG extensively and regularly.

The following areas were focused

- Getting to know the child and his family
- Confidence building
- Maintaining regular attendance
- Ensure that enough study materials are there for all
- Conducting field trips

- Use of morning assembly as a stage for shedding inhibition
- Preparation of special, need based reading materials for different levels of students.
- Ensuring basic Mathematical skills.
- Regular communication with parents.

2.PTA-SSG meeting: - The issue was discussed with the parents and SSG members and suggestions were elicited. The main points are: -

- Focus more on reading of Malayalam and English.
- Conduct special classes, if necessary.
- Conduct class tests
- Save learning hours by observing only very important day observations like Independence Day, Environment Day etc.

3. Preparation of reading materials: -

- Reading cards for various levels of students- word cards, sentence cards both in chart paper as well as digital.
- Picture description work sheets, both in Malayalam and English.
- Worksheets to fill in words and letters.
- Worksheets to form sentences.
- Collection of simple songs and rhymes.
- Preparation of small stories with the students as characters in it.

4. Classroom strategy: -

- Students are encouraged to do verbal expression, like a tiny speech about small topics such as mango tree, my pet, my house and the like.
- Students are given ample opportunities to express their ideas.
- Digital devices are used widely in the classroom for the benefit of all.
- Games and tasks are given to locate a particular word from the charts displayed in the classroom.
- Frequent tests and dictations are given and found to be a success.
- Reading competitions are conducted and their performances are graded as gold, silver and iron according to their level.

- Students are made to read texts with very little help from others.
- Teachers make it sure that students do not copy others, and do their homework on their own, i.e., without parental help.
- Mistakes are never treated as a big issue, enough time is given to rectify the mistakes on their own.

5. Best use of morning assembly: -

- All the students are encouraged to sing, read news, count numbers or ask small math problems, ask riddles, read proverbs, ask quiz, read textbooks etc. in the morning assembly.

6. Keeping connected with the parents: -

- Classroom activities are shared through class WhatsApp groups and problem areas are discussed over phone.
- CPTA s are conducted regularly and the issues are sorted out.

7. Field trips: -

- Visits were conducted to Ahalia heritage village, farm lands and ponds nearby. Students were encouraged to note down whatever they could without bothering about the spelling mistakes. It brought in some positive changes in those students who had shown hesitation before.

8. Need based reading materials: -

- At times, it was necessary to categorize the students into various levels and make them read step by step. Different words and sentences are written in their notebooks by the teacher and are asked to read them without any help. They found it very challenging as well accomplishing. This is one of the best strategies to make them read with enthusiasm and they ask for more.

9. Mathematical skills.

- Compared to language skills, Mathematics was bit easy, at least with numerical concepts and addition. Those who were poor in reading showed interest in Mathematics activities. Simple tasks are given according to each

students' comprehension level and encouraged to solve more. They asked Math questions (mental Arithmetic) in the morning assembly.

Outcome

From a mere 40 % of students capable of reading Malayalam and English, it began to increase gradually. By the end of July-2023, significant progress could be seen in the level of learning. It gave us hope and we discussed further in SRG s, specifically focusing on each student. The teachers' understanding of the students also increased and parental support was also more meaningful. Teachers shared their experiences in the learning process in the SRGs which gave new ideas to the team. It was highly inspirational and they showed more dedication.

The progress was more evident among the students towards the beginning of September. They showed more involvement in studies, parents also closely monitored their progress, cleared their doubts with the class teachers and the number rose.

90% of the students in std 3 and 4 are able to read simple sentences in Malayalam and English. Most of them can read textbooks, do addition and subtraction, write simple descriptions and speak about simple topics.

In std 1, 60% can read text books. Except for 5% of the students, others can identify alphabets and numbers. They do verbal expression very well. Students in std-2 are showing remarkable progress in English and Malayalam reading skill. 70% of them can read textbooks, do simple math and speak about simple topics.

The process is still continuing and the results are encouraging. We focus more on updating and preparing the students to face the ever-changing technology. Teachers are also updating themselves and incorporating them in their classroom activities.

Turning points.

Ever since I took charge as the Headmistress of this school in July 2022, I was faced with many challenges like

- non-cooperation from the parents
- unorganized classrooms
- loss of learning hours
- inadequate learning materials
- lack of proper communication between the HM and staff
- unkempt school premises
- huge expenses involved in keeping the school safe

The only positive element I observed was the energy and enthusiasm of the students. They were receptive and ready to be challenged with learning new things. This, along with the rapport with the parents and teachers, slowly brought in some cheerful atmosphere. Then, day observations, Onam/Christmas celebrations, Science fair and Youth festivals etc. were made more joyful with the active participation of parents and other well-wishers. Teachers supported me in these programs wholeheartedly. They themselves identified their potentials in organizing events successfully.

Financial support from Pudussery Grama Panchayath and the active involvement of Ward member Sri Girish and PTA president Sri Kaja Hussain are really commendable. Mother PTA president Smt. Rujubana was also instrumental in making things happen.

School is foreducation; it reflects the society surrounding it. Child has every right to get quality education from his nearest school. Teachers have to ensure it by strictly focusing on the individual students' progress. Parental expectations have to be satisfied through learning evidences. Utilizing the available resources effectively is enough to achieve most of it.

My mantra for change is "Challenges are agents of positive development, face them one at a time."

Prepared by

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Please click on the link to see the videos

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LuXFS27Kbxhz-YwrjLpuKarwSfh9wv8x?usp=sharing>