

KALIKA CHETARIKE – ACTIVITY BASED LEARNING IN KARNATAKA

In a nutshell: Kalika Chetarika focuses on addressing learning gaps and attaining subject-wise, grade-specific learning outcomes for all students by using an approach that does not restrict classroom interactions to mere textbooks and completion of syllabus but instead, is designed around activities to develop ‘competencies’ for all students irrespective of their existing learning levels.

Nodal agency: Department of School Education, Government of Karnataka

Kalika Chetarika or learning recovery is a programme that was designed to address the learning disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, its genesis, institutionalization, and prospects have far-reaching consequences for teaching-learning, congruent with the vision of the new National Education Policy (NEP 2020).

It evolved in its current form primarily through the educational practices of teachers during the pandemic. Faced with unprecedented academic disruptions, the Samagra Shikshana Karnataka (SSK) explored ways to continue education for students. Along with multiple means, this created a teacher-centric initiative resulting in more than 40,000 Vathara Shaalas or neighbourhood-based learning centres in the State in the academic year 2020-2021. Beyond engaging students, the teachers in these centres often relied on activity-based learning rather than chalk-and-talk method. While addressing the scale of disruption and its consequences on learning, it gradually became evident that a sole emphasis on completion of syllabus and its previous backlog would not be adequate.

It was critical to develop grade-appropriate ‘competencies’. Thus, Kalika Chetarika was designed, with the underlying belief that learning recovery may be done more effectively by developing a program that addresses academic concerns incorporating the pedagogic experiences of teachers during the pandemic.

Features

The programme aims to address the disruptions by focusing on attaining subject-wise, grade specific learning outcomes through activities for all students from grades 1 to 9.

- Its child-centric approach is fundamentally different in two ways:
 - I. It does not restrict classroom interactions to mere textbooks and syllabus completion.
 - II. It is designed around activities to develop competencies for all students irrespective of their learning levels.
- Instead of regular textbooks, activity books were specially designed by teachers through series of workshops. The Activity Books cover specific learning outcomes of previous two academic years as well as the present year, emphasizing on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, especially for early grades. Activity Banks have also been designed for teachers.

- Kalika Chetarike intrinsically addresses the bridge-courses that the State's education department conducts annually to address variabilities in learning levels among students. While doing so, Kalika Chetarike creates a programme much broader than the ambit of bridge courses. It incorporates the rationale and focus of bridge courses, and yet by universalising activity-based learning for classrooms, it makes it a continuous exercise throughout the academic year.
- Teacher training is a significant aspect for such an ambitious programme. The Department of State Education and Research Training (DSERT) has continuous programmes for teachers' professional development. Using its experience and infrastructure, the Department conducted training in cascading mode for 2 lakh teachers across the State. This massive training is also aimed at capacity building on activity-based learning envisaged in the NEP 2020.

'Kalika Habba' – A State-wide Festival on Learning

The festivals are designed around activities in sciences, mathematics, social sciences and languages. The festival and all the activities are designed by teachers, thus reflecting their experiences of classrooms. An estimated 10 lakh students will participate in these festivals, involving students from grade 4 to grade 9, with age-appropriate segregation of grades 4 to 6 and grades 7 to 9.

The festival also aims to involve the community with the education programme and academic practices of schools. There are estimated 82,000 SDMC members who will be directly part of organizing these learning festivals. Thus, these festivals will allow conversations on education with the communities.

Impact

Kalika Chetarike has received excellent feedback from stakeholders on ground, including students, teachers, parents, and education officials.

- Activity-based learning has made academics joyful for students and helped improve their learning levels.
- The activity books and handbooks developed for the program have provided materials to systematically improve competencies of students and address learning gaps.
- The program has also showcased the creativity of teachers in developing grade-specific activities using local resources, thus setting the tone for a promising future for development of teaching-learning materials (TLMs) through involvement of practitioners.



Students learning by doing activities