

OVERALL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT BY CHILD FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES

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Ruheed Gul Baldev, hailing from Anantnag Kashmir joined Department of School Education Kashmir in the year 2003-04 as a Para Teacher (Rehber-e-Taleem Teacher) in Government Middle School Ruhu, Anantnag. He found that student enrolment in the school was quite meagre and the teaching process not up to the mark. The biggest hurdle in the success of the school was student absenteeism. Shri Gul began visiting children's homes to talk to them and their parents. He even went to the extent of helping them to bathe, wear their uniform and then escort them to school. The school started at 10 in the morning, and so he would reach the village about 2 hour in advance to motivate the students to attend their classes.

He initiated child-friendly activities and voluntary groups comprising of both students and teachers such as maintaining discipline, environment, school time table, and lawns; serving Mid- Day Meals (MDM); spreading awareness in the community on the need to safeguard the environment, eliminate social evils, etc. He came up with a unique MDM menu in consultation with dietitians. This menu became a success story in the entire district and all schools followed it. Not



School Community

only this, the school has initiated a disciplined way of serving and taking meals, according to the local tradition.

Shri Ruheed then invited the children to articulate one demand each that they would like to make. All the children unanimously voiced that they wanted beautiful uniform and identity cards like the children of the nearby private school. Since these children belonged to the Economically Weaker Section they could not afford uniforms. Shri Gul then launched a donation contribution drive, beginning with his own contribution for the cause. As para teachers were paid only Rs. 1500 per month, they could not contribute large amounts. The contributions were also in kind—cloth for the uniforms and I-cards from a stationery shop. He was thus able to secure uniforms and ID cards for all the 120 students enrolled in the school. So enamoured were some of the parents by his enthusiasm and the changes they were witnessing that they re-admitted their wards from the private school to this government school.

The children too began to take more interest in the studies and their attendance greatly increased. He also introduced the concept of hands-on activities, outdoor activities, play-based learning to make learning, fun, easy and relevant for the students. Students began to stay back beyond 4 p.m. and also even come on Sundays to enjoy the school environment.

Subsequently, shri Gul was transferred to the Government Girls Higher Secondary School Anantnag, for a temporary period to teach Botany to classes 11th & 12th. The children of Government Middle School went to the Chief Education Officer to lobby for the cancellation of the order, but the Administration did not listen to them.

In 2007, Shri Gul cleared the J&K State Service Recruitment Board exam and was selected as General Line Teacher and so he resigned



Teachers and children than experimenting in school

as a para teacher. He was placed in the District Resource Group as District coordinator, Girls Education. He pushed for the implementation of KGBV (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya) scheme for out-of-school girls belonging to the ST/SC/Minority category. He went from habitation to habitation mobilizing girls belonging to the ST community to enrol in the KGBVs, and organized a number of preparatory camps for mainstreaming them. He was then posted to DIET Anantnag to organise teacher trainings in the district. He has also been involved as resource person for UNICEF, Save the Children, and CHINAR International. He helped CHINAR International adopt a village in far flung areas such as Zampathri Shopian. Shri Gul was then made part of the Innovation Cell of the Directorate of School Education Kashmir, where he has introduced a number of projects, as follows:

- SUPER-50: free coaching for NEET, JEE & Civil Services;
- Winter Tutorials for classes 8th to 12th:

- free Tuition & Remedial Education;
- Winter Camps for classes 3rd to 7th: free Tuition & Remedial Education;
- Draft for SCERT: Initial Draft for SCERT for J&K formulated by a state group in which Shri Gul was a lead;
- Draft for restructuring of DIETs;
- Academic Planners for the schools of Kashmir Division;
- Online Monitoring Academic Support to Teachers & Schools;
- Establishment of Lab District and Zonal Schools;
- Idea of Model KG Classes (Nanhay Qadam);
- Proposal & concept note on School Readiness programme (KG for all Schools);
- Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) Manual for Teachers;
- Draft on Integrated Model Schools for J&K;
- Concept Note on Reduction of School bag weight and homework burden;
- Contributed in development of Peace Module;
- Mental Health Programme in Pilot Schools.

During these COVID times, the Innovation Cell, District Resource Group & Zonal Resource, Groups under the guidance of Shri Gul, trained teachers on digital platforms and provided all the necessary support to teachers, schools and children to adopt online education. Almost 40,000 teachers were trained to use digital platforms and about 2.50 lakh students were linked for online classes.



QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. What should be done to encourage children to come to school?
2. What programs can be organized for parents to enroll their children in government schools?
3. What skills do project work develop in children?

QUESTIONS FOR TRAINEES

1. What are the things to keep in mind while making a lunch list?
2. Whose help can be sought to fund a school work?
3. Under KGBV (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya) scheme, parents can send their daughters to school, what can be done to explain that?