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## Aid for teachers in rural areas

ANWESHA AMBALY | Aug 18, 2018 00:00 IST

**Bhubaneswar:** Zeenat Tinwala proves to be a boon for schoolchildren in the rural areas of Ganjam district.

Zeenat, an SBI Youth for India fellow working with gram vikas in Odisha, has developed low-cost teaching learning materials to aid the teachers in clearing the fundamentals of basic subjects.

During her yearlong stay in the district as a part of the fellowship, she has reached out to a number of government-run schools to formulate a practical teacher training and capacity-building programme that takes into consideration the on-ground limitations.

Talking about the practical issues in the schools, she says: "There are around 150 students jammed into five classes with only five teachers trying to reach out to everyone. Hence, when a child encounters a problem, it becomes difficult to put it across."

"The aim was to create alternate and innovative teaching structure which improves the traditional practice of classroom teaching," said Zeenat hailing from Pune.

She conducted a test along with the voluntary organisation and found out that only 41 per cent of students could read three-letter words, despite their syllabus content being even more complex. The same was the situation in mathematics where students could not recognise numbers from 10 to 99.

So, they began to develop the teaching learning materials and train the teachers on its implementation.

"Rationale behind choosing to work with teachers was that through the teacher training programme I wanted to focus on strengthening the fundamentals in English and mathematics and it would be more sustainable and impactful instead working only with students," she said.

She also worked with the local school managing committees to explain the importance of education to the parents of the students through public education campaigns and enactment of plays by the students. Before her project concludes this month, she aims to document the entire process and pass it onto the local administration to reach out other schools.

"There is no Odia related content related to teaching learning materials online. So, apart from coming out with aid, the aim is also to create audio and visual techniques of learning," she said.

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