

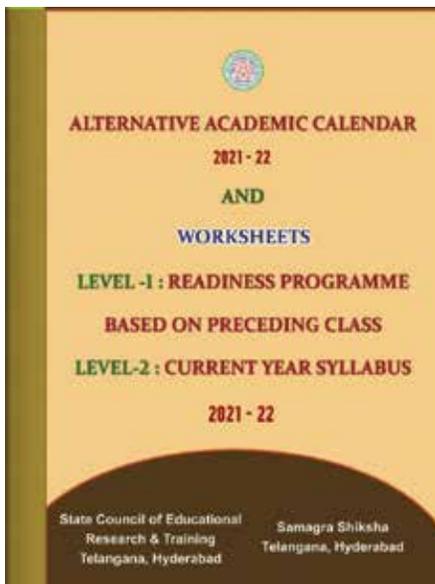
SCERT Telangana's Journey Towards Educational Equity

A. Venkata Ramnamma*

Once the students fall behind during the critical learning stage, they struggle to catch up, hindering their learning potential. Covid gave many challenges including the challenges related to learning loss and learning gaps besides the change in interpersonal relationships and emotional balance. Students found it extremely hard to catch up during

Covid, and the post-covid scenario wasn't different either. The social situation during Covid and beyond led to psychological detachment of the child towards learning thereby posing various challenges to the teachers. It's paramount to attract students towards learning and create an environment to nurture the curiosity of the child.

At the moment of crisis, State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT) Telangana shouldered a huge responsibility to string all the possibilities keeping the students engaged in one way or the other and ensuring a feasible learning environment. The education system must cope with the challenges and come up with resources that must be accessible to the child and corroborate learning. The Curriculum and Textbooks department at SCERT designed a two-tier programme wherein a team of educators and teachers were involved in preparing worksheets to be distributed among the students following the Covid regulations and another team was



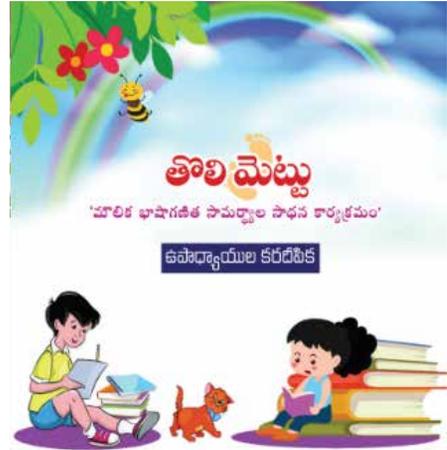
*Team member, State Resource Group for English, Telangana

involved in designing, recording, and telecasting the digital lessons.

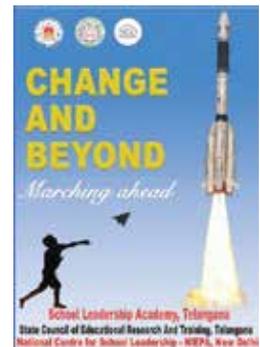
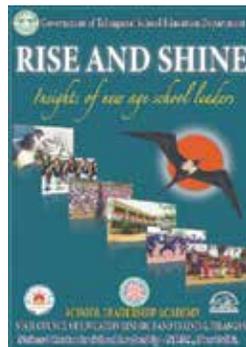
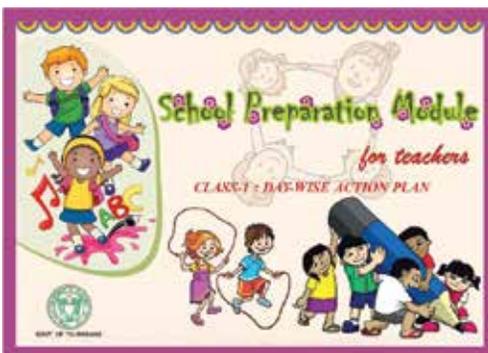
The motivation was highly pivotal to appreciate the good work of the teachers who went out of their comfort zones, took risks, and came up with innovative ways to ensure that there was no hiatus in providing learning opportunities for the children. The School Leadership Academy (SLA) at Telangana SCERT, an extended arm of National Centre for School Leadership (NCSL)-National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) documented the remarkable journeys of the teachers and released the book 'Impact Influence Inspiration' to boost the morale of the teachers during the tough times and beyond. The SLA continued the same in the consecutive academic years continuing documentation of the success stories of teachers and publishing books to inspire further.

After the schools reopened, various studies on the learning loss among the students were staggering ringing alarming bells. In sync with the Vidya Pravesh guideline of

NCERT, Telangana SCERT developed the 'School Preparation Module' prescribing activities for Class I and II students that can address the needs of the students who came to school without pre-primary instruction.



Going further, in the next academic year, to address the low learning levels and growing gap in primary grades, the Department of School Education has launched a comprehensive programme named "Tholimettu" (First Step), Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Mission extended to Classes III, IV and V as well. This flagship mission focuses on equipping



primary school children with foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

Implementation of 'Tholimettu' initiative began with a diagnostic study of the system (what are the major issues, gaps, and necessity for focusing on primary grades to ensure that we reduce learning poverty and learning losses) and a large-scale sample baseline study to understand the learning levels of students and further set appropriate goals and targets to be achieved.

Based on the study, the curriculum department took up the responsibility of creating resources for both teachers and students. Handbooks for teachers aligning the classroom processes with the learning outcomes were developed and simultaneously, workbooks for telugu, english, and mathematics were prepared for the use of the students of Classes I to V. Orientations were planned and executed at different levels to ensure that the processes given in the handbooks and the material in the workbooks aligned with the learning outcomes expected from the transaction of the textbooks, especially in bridging the learning gaps.

Further, a team of experts constituted the monitoring system by SCERT to equip and continuously support the teachers regarding the

classroom processes mentioned in the handbooks and the activities in the workbooks. The apex body of education of Telangana also saw the importance of developing appropriate teaching-learning materials to guarantee the participation of the child in the classroom process. Teachers were given specific guidelines to prepare TLM that align with the class-wise learning outcomes and conducted Teaching Learning Material melas at mandal (block) level and district levels.

The education system of Telangana has created a mobile app and has been successfully using the dashboards at the state and district levels, enabling an effective monitoring system. Being resourceful is crucial to keep up the momentum of Tholimettu. At the end of the day, the resources must help and ensure 100 per cent participation of the child and nurture the curiosity of the child by actively engaging the child in various interactions with peers and material. Completion of the syllabus is not the criterion, but the achievement of the class-specific and subject-specific learning outcomes was given priority for languages giving the freedom for teachers to plan classroom activities based on the learning pace of the children keeping in mind the individual differences of learning.