

Grant Number: 2005-1-002

Grantee : National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore  
Grant amount : Rs 6,44,000  
Grant period : Eighteen months beginning June 1, 2005

### **Précis**

This grant supports a team of educationists, researchers and art educators to improve the character of classroom interactions and enhance the quality of elementary education in Chamarajnagar district, Karnataka. The project will build on the local community's understanding of the arts and the crafts economy of neighbourhood villages to generate a curriculum and develop new learning and teaching practices. In collaboration with village school teachers, the team will produce a resource book and tool kit to facilitate the introduction of the visual arts in the classroom. Grant funds will pay for honoraria, travel and living costs, material and printing costs, workshop and training costs, and communications.

## Grant Description

*“We gave children paper and crayons to draw. We found that in many of the smaller and remote schools, children were very unfamiliar with using crayons and making drawings. They were not confident, and wanted to copy from each other. Often the motifs were repetitive. Only in the larger, urban schools children used the crayons confidently and with imagination. Art and other creative activities do not have a place in the school curriculum.”*

- From Baseline Study of Elementary Education: Chamarajnar District. Summary Report, NIAS, October 2003

Since 2002, the District Quality Education Project (DQEP) of the Sociology and Social Anthropology Unit at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore, has been engaged in making “elementary education accessible, enjoyable and significant to the lives of the children and the neighbouring communities” of Chamarajnar district in south Karnataka. The DQEP team chose to work in this region because it has the lowest literacy level in south Karnataka and the largest concentration of scheduled caste and *adivasi* population in the state.

In its ‘Baseline Study of Elementary Education’ Report, the DQEP team summarised the conclusions of a field survey of 36 schools in the district. This survey helped to generate useful data on the functioning of schools, the knowledge base of teachers, and children’s learning levels in different subject areas.

The Report, published in Kannada and English simultaneously, enabled the DQEP team to design and develop a project to enhance elementary education in Chamarajnar district. The project has six main elements:

1. School Community Contact Programme
2. Strengthening Cluster and Block Resource Centres
3. Multigrade Language Curriculum Development
4. Post graduate Programme
5. Material Development and Documentation, and
6. Art in Education

The DQEP works in collaboration with the Government of Karnataka’s Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and has received financial support from the Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT), to achieve project objectives. IFA’s grant will support the ‘art-in-education’ component of the project.

The ‘Art in Education’ (AiE) programme will enhance the quality of classroom interactions by introducing art activities drawn from the student’s immediate surroundings. The Report pointed to an almost complete lack of awareness of the arts and its relevance to pedagogy.

The AiE programme will design and develop training modules that will sensitise the teacher to methods that use the arts to hone the students’ skills. The project will be especially attentive to possible connections that could be developed between the textbook and the art activities. Equally, though, the project will support and encourage individual expression.

The DQEP project will work in four district blocks: Kollegal, Hannur, Gundlupet and Yelandur. A core team of interested teachers from each block will be invited to periodic training workshops during the tenure of the project. These workshops will be facilitated by educationists and artists working in collaboration with the DQEP team.

DQEP project will directly work with 28 schools and target a total of 885 schools through onward dissemination strategies.

In turn this district-level team of teachers will develop teaching modules for the arts that are particularly sensitive to the local context, and take responsibility for training teachers from other schools within and across the four educational blocks. It will also be responsible for creating a set of 'Cluster Resource Persons' (CRP), who would undertake back-stopping work for the art-in-education project. The CRPs would be employees of the District Institute for Education and Training (DIET), and this Institute would eventually be responsible for the sustenance of the art-in-education module. The CRPs will thus be a pool of district-level resourcepersons that would help train later generations of teachers.

The DQEP team will also produce a resource book that will enable the project participants to document their learning, and help the team monitor progress on the project. Conceptualised as a working guide to teachers and other groups in the state and elsewhere, it will contain information relating to a broader understanding of art and its relation to pedagogy. It will also include a collection of activities and exercises revolving around issues from the social and cultural contexts of children, in a manner that allows teachers to actively improvise and add on to the original text.

This project will also host regular *Kala Melas* (art exhibitions) that will enable project participants to encounter the work of their colleagues from the other educational blocks, and facilitate the sharing of ideas with regard to arts pedagogy.

The DQEP team comprises researchers A R Vasavi, Padma Sarangapani, and Leena Pascal, educationist Jane Sahi, and visual artists Roshan Sahi and Shivnanja. During the grant period the team will work towards setting up a resource centre for arts education at the Regional Institution of Education (RIE), Mysore.

## Budget

Honorarium	Rs 2,40,000
Capacity building costs	2,29,000
Art resource book/tool kit	80,000
Art materials	50,000
Travel-related costs	40,000
Communications	<u>5,000</u>
Total	<u>Rs 6,44,000</u>