

Alumni bring English education to government schools



A Makkala Mane in Tumakuru district.

Took the initiative after two schools in Tumakuru district were closed two years ago due to poor enrolments

In the midst of talks of government schools with low admissions running the risk of being closed down, a group of youngsters, who are government school alumni, have started 'Makkala Mane' in Chikkanayakanahalli taluk of Tumakuru district.

They — alumni of government schools in Kallenahalli — came up with the plan after two government schools in neighbouring Ranganakere and Marathipalya villages in Chikkanayakanahalli taluk were closed two years ago due to poor enrolments.

They decided to establish 'Suvarna Vidya Chethana', an organisation to save government schools by improving their student strength and offering English education in the pre-school years. The organisation, with the help of gram panchayat members, and old students of government schools, parents and friends, raised funds and started Makkala Mane — LKG and UKG — in Huliya, Hoysalakatte, Dabbagunte, Chikkanayakanahalli town in 2016-17 and at Kallenahalli in 2018-19.

"We have appointed a total of nine teachers who teach in English for LKG and UKG students in the five Makkala Mane in these places. Closing government schools amounts to depriving the poor of education," said Shivakumar K.G., vice president of Suvarna Vidya Chethana.

His daughter goes to the Makkala Mane at Kallenahalli.

A room of the government school is turned into a Makkala Mane, which has small chairs, charts of English and Kannada alphabets, charts of vegetables, flowers, numbers and fruits, where the children get free English education.

An annual fee of ₹3,500 per student is collected from parents who can afford to pay, but the fees is not compulsory. The amount is used to buy uniforms and books for students.

Devaraj, who owns a small mobile repair shop at Hoysalakatte, said, "It is difficult for me to send my daughter to a private English medium school. So, I am sending her to Makkala Mane, as the text books given in private schools are given to students here too, and the children are taught in English."

Govindaraju, a farmer from Dabbagunte, said, " When getting two meals a day is difficult for me in this drought-hit region, it is not possible for me to send my son to a private school by paying hefty fees. That is why I am sending him to Makkala Mane."