

Fun, games, essays: Schools find ways to make kids read

READING EVENTS HT spent a day at a Sarvodaya school to see how students are reading

A Mariyam Alavi

■ anuveetil.alavi@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Government-run schools around Delhi celebrated what they said was a successful campaign to enable students to read by Children's Day under the government's Chunnauti 2018 mission by hosting reading events on Tuesday.

Schools held special sessions for students, including fun activities, games and exercises using the 'play-way' method to teach students.

Hindustan Times visited a reading event at Sarvodaya Vidyalaya in Jor Bagh and tracked the day's activities.

"We have had a full, but fun day planned for the students. Activities started from 9 am and will last until 2 pm," said H Akhtar, vice-principal. "We tried to make the day as much fun as possible to help motivate students to study more. They should think of studying and reading as something they want to do, not something they have to do," said Vandana Jha, the mentor teacher.



■ Students Sarvodaya Vidyalaya in Jor Bagh take part in activities.

HANDOUT

For the reading event, all non-readers of VI-VIII grades were assembled in the auditorium and they were collectively assigned tasks and activities. The activities included an extempore essay writing session. "We divided the class into groups of 3-4, and gave them each a topic from their daily life. These included mobile phones, pollution, Mahatma Gandhi, gardens, etc. We asked

to write at least 10 sentences on these topics, and read them out to the class. We gave them charts and sketch pens," said Jha.

"The students did make some spelling mistakes. But they were at least able to think creatively," she said. Jha, along with the guest teachers that handle the non-reader sections -- Jitendra Ahlawat, and Pankaj Kumar Pal -- organised games and helped

choreograph a small skit that highlighted how the campaign benefited students.

Students said how they improved their reading skills. "Initially I could only read small words," said Pankaj Singh Bhandari, a VI grade student who aspires to become a soldier like his grandfather in the future. "But now I can even read the advanced stories fluently."

Students like Bhandari, who have shown great progress, were awarded at these reading events. Of the 41 students identified as non-readers at the Sarvodaya Vidyalaya in Jor Bagh, at least nine have progressed to reading advanced stories.

10 can now read short stories, nine can read and comprehend paragraphs and 11 can decipher words, as per their tally on November 5.

Manish Sisodia, education minister, who had dropped by for a 'surprise' visit, said that based on the self-reported results he is led to believe that the campaign has worked. "The extra classes have worked," he said.