

Inculcation of Literacy Skills in English Language Among Underprivileged Community Children

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ABSTRACT

In today's global world, English is a lingua franca, and knowledge of English is essential for people who want to participate in international communication, research and business. Many methods are adopted from childhood to youth and adulthood. Research shows that early exposure to a language-rich environment and effective instruction influences the acquisition of Literacy skills. Literacy skills encompass a person's ability to read, write, speak, and listen effectively, enabling them to understand the world and communicate clearly. These skills also include understanding the connections between letters, vocabulary, and the sounds of language. India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also focuses on improving literacy, particularly among primary school students. It highlights the importance of **Fundamental Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)**, ensuring that every child gain essential literacy and math skills by grade 3 (around age 8), which is a crucial foundation for further learning. Underscoring the importance of Literacy skills a study was conducted on Inculcation of Literacy skills in English Language among underprivileged community children with the objective to teach children Literacy skills in English Language and to study the change in behaviours of the children after the completion of these activities. For the study, pre-test, and post-test was conducted, and groups of children were formed focusing on various aspects of literacy skills. The findings of this study revealed that the performance of most students in the class improved. The hands-on experiences were found more engaging than direct teaching. The study also revealed the impact of various activities on increasing student motivation and confidence in learning.

Keywords: *Inculcation of Literacy skills in English Language, Hands-on instruction*

Literacy skills are the ability to read, write, speak, and listen well, helping people understand and communicate effectively. These skills also involve knowing how letters, words, and sounds are connected in language.

India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to improve literacy, especially for primary school students. It emphasizes **Fundamental Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)**, ensuring that every child learns basic reading, writing, and math skills by grade 3 (around age 8), which is key for future learning.

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In today's global world, English is widely used for communication, business, and research, so learning English is important for participating in international activities. Different teaching methods are used throughout childhood and adulthood. Research shows that early exposure to a language-rich environment and good teaching can help children develop strong Literacy skills. As children progress in their education, their reading skills grow, along with their ability to think critically, analyze information, and handle complex texts.

However, research also shows that literacy skills are often not given enough importance in early childhood education. While most schools focus on teaching literacy, the lack of effective teaching methods can make it difficult for children to truly develop literary skills.

In English Language Literacy Skills means the ability or the power of a person or an individual to read, write, speak and listen properly to understand the world and for proper communication is known as Literacy Skills. It also includes or builds the relationships between the letters and the vocabulary, awareness of the sounds of Literacy Skills and Language. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 addresses various issues related to literacy among primary school children. It emphasizes the need to focus on Fundamental Literacy and Numeracy so as to ensure that all students acquire basic literacy skills. This policy also encourages an integrated approach to teaching and therefore, reading and writing should be integrated with lessons and activities to increase children's learning and engagement. This will help children to develop their thinking skill, creativity and problem-solving skills from an early age.

Beside this, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of India 2005 has also focussed on various aspects related to literacy skills of primary school children: NCF 2005. NCF 2005 further recognizes the use of the child's native or local language as the medium of instruction in the early school years to promote better understanding and acquisition of reading skills. NCF 2005 also promotes an integrated approach to curriculum planning and teaching by integrating literacy into a variety of learning activities. This will help children understand the importance of reading in real life and will motivate them to study more. The NCF 2005 recommends that teachers be trained in early childhood education in different strategies to promote language and literacy development.

The Kothari Commission, known as the Education Commission of India, was established in 1964 by the Government of India under the leadership of Dr. D. S. Kothari. The Committee submitted its report in 1966, which had a major impact on education policy in India. The Committee emphasized the need for universal primary education with the aim of eradicating illiteracy and ensuring that all children receive primary education. This includes not only basic literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking and literacy skill) but also developing creativity, thinking and problem solving. Language of instruction: The Committee sees the importance of using the child's native or regional language as the language of instruction in primary schools. This approach is considered important in improving understanding and promoting better learning outcomes. It promotes a balanced curriculum that includes moral, social and vocational education as well as basic literacy. It teaches reading and writing skill to elementary students. The Kothari commission emphasized the importance of community and parent's involvement in education. This is considered important in creating a competent learning environment and ensuring the active participation of those involved in children's education.

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As mentioned earlier, English proficiency is the foundation of successful education and lifelong learning. Reading, writing, speaking and listening skills not only support the understanding of a variety of topics, but also communication skills that are important for personal, social and professional development. In today's global world, English is a lingua franca, and knowledge of English is essential for people who want to participate in international communication, research and business. Many methods are adopted from childhood to youth and adulthood. Research shows that early exposure to a language-rich environment and effective instruction influences the acquisition of reading skills (Adams, 1990; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). As individuals progress through their education, their reading skills increase along with critical thinking, analytical skills, and the ability to deal with complex interdisciplinary texts (Snow, 2010).

The emergence of literacy has changed the perception of literacy, expanding the skills required to search for and evaluate information online (Leu et al., 2013). This change highlights the need for educators to adapt teaching methods to integrate digital information with traditional print media to ensure that students can create success in a world mediated by digital media. Effective literacy teaching has been extensively researched, but challenges remain in meeting the needs of a variety of students, including those from different cultures and language backgrounds, people with learning disabilities, and those with different levels of knowledge and experience (Guthrie et al., 2012). Cummins, 2000). Understanding these challenges is critical to creating inclusive and equitable literacy programs that support all students to improve their English.

Another study focused on the fact that academic content has little weight because Literacy skills are not valued in early childhood or community education. Although in most schools these lessons are only kept in the background for an hour a week.

Teachers facilitate the learning process by involving students in activities that provide meaningful learning and development, to learners.

Need and Significance of Study

The study on the inculcation of literacy skills in English among underprivileged community children is significant because it aims to bridge the educational gap between disadvantaged and privileged children. By focusing on English literacy, it will give these children important skills that can help them to get better chances in education thereby improving their social and economic situations. It is believed that the study could lead to more effective teaching methods tailored to the specific challenges faced by underprivileged children, ultimately contributing to greater educational equality and the upliftment of marginalized communities.

Statement of the Problem

Inculcation of Literacy Skills in English Language among Underprivileged Community Children.

Objectives of the study

- To inculcate the Literacy skills in English Language among underprivileged community children.
- To study the change in behaviors of Community children after the completion of the teaching.

Operational Definitions of the Key terms

- *Inculcation*- Inculcation is the instilling of knowledge, values, beliefs, ideas in an individual by repetitive act. In the study the word inculcation is used to teach through different methods of instruction.
- *Literacy Skill*-For the study, Literacy skills are the abilities to listen, speak, read, and write.
- *Underprivileged Community Children*-Children who lack necessities and opportunities due to their socio-economic situation, often facing barriers to education.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Allison, H., & Harklau, L. (2010), conducted a study to assess the method of Teaching academic literacies in secondary school. Literacy, as the process of reading information for academic content, is associated with an individual's thinking development and higher language skills (Shanahan and Shanahan, 2008). Recent research suggests that the development of advanced reading skills can only occur through students' participation in authentic and objective learning based on learning created with meaning, values, and emotion (Moje et al., 2017). Therefore, in contrast to the "autonomous model" of reading development (which views reading as a separate, transitional process between reading and writing), literacy development is viewed as a collaborative, social development, with change coming from the individual. In this sense, the development of literacy is seen as an important factor for the socialization of people through education, and this is closely related to problems of power structure, resource distribution and justice (Broom, 2004).

In line of the same, the development of educational knowledge is not an intellectual problem, but a general cultural and social problem through power, structure and ideology (Lillis and Scott, 2007; Wenger, 1998). A literary genre based on the process of good behaviour can be a powerful semiotic tool that brings people together to be meaningful and purposeful (Fang and Coatoam, 2013).

The development of literacy is seen as the individual's gradual adoption of cultural values and communication skills within a discipline. Today's practices of knowing, acting, and doing not only help validate the quality of the discipline of knowledge production but also provide a framework for the study of work (Fisher, 2019; Wenger, 1998). The development of literacy thus enhances self-awareness and learning in the pursuit of positive social service.

Parel, M. (2008) explained that Language learning is an important part of all learning. Language defines us as humans. Language is a means of communication. English, a powerful communication tool, plays a role as the language of communication in many cultures and languages such as India, as well as in the world communication system. Even seventy years after the British left India, it still has a place in our country. But no other language has managed to replace English as a means of communication or language. Over the years, it has become a special language of business, economic development and social relations. Teaching English to students is always one of the best things for pregnant women in school.

Hanumanthrao, C.R. (2011) the researcher explained that in a country like India, classes for mixed ability groups are specific to each small town or village. In most rural areas of India, education and training will take place in the local language. On the other hand, most

competitive exams (university and employment) require English as the medium of instruction. If the teacher-student ratio is too high, it causes productivity to decrease. The rural environment does not provide students with opportunities to speak and learn English. Big classes are everywhere. This is one of the reasons why a dedicated student cannot do it. Teaching English in schools and colleges needs major changes for the benefit of students. Rural and semi-urban students of India face many problems because English is not their mother tongue. English is their second language. Rural learners face more problems in language acquisition than urban learners. In urban areas most of the parents are educated. Therefore, the family environment helps urban students to learn the language quickly. In rural areas students do not have the opportunity to speak and read English. In villages and small towns, students come from rural areas. Language lessons are given in two languages. This method only helps slow learners to some extent. Moreover, this behavior also reduces the actual learning process. If the student does not understand English, the student will be asked to explain in their L1 language (i.e. their native language). Therefore, English teachers must embrace bilingual education. Teacher shortage in rural areas has become a reality. Teaching is an ongoing process and teachers in rural India are often restricted from attending workshops and seminars to learn about new methods and approaches.

Aronson, J. and McGloren, M. S. (2018). The determination of the study was to assess the causes of low literacy levels in the four selected rural schools. Literacy has traditionally been defined as the ability to read and write (Mike & Hannalis, 2010). In today's world, this is one way of explaining literacy. Literacy, broadly defined, is knowledge and ability in a particular area.

Today, the concept has expanded to include the use of language, mathematics, graphics, computers, and other tools to understand, communicate, acquire useful information, solve mathematical problems, and use important skills. Ministry of National Education, 1976). The key to reading is the development of reading, which is a progression of skills, starting from the ability to understand spoken words and decipher written words and to understand the text in depth. Including language skills. Good reading provides a suitable platform and understanding (Allan, 2011).

The government and the public are very concerned about the level of illiteracy in Zambia and want Zambia to become a 100% literate country. National policies, information, communication and advertising are all designed to realize this dream. Teachers have been trained, and teaching methods have been adapted and improved for readers. All these combined efforts are unlikely to produce the desired results at our rural school in Mansa District in Zambia's Luapula Province, where teachers celebrate the literacy of six (6) out of 120 students and only 4% of the class. Despite all the interventions of the Ministry of Education, most students in Zambian public schools still have difficulties in reading. This unfortunate situation led to the conduct of this research. The importance of reading for individuals, communities, nations and the world cannot be ignored. Mwanakatwe (1974) stated that literacy brings security to a community or nation, the security and prosperity of any race/ethnicity depends on it. If reading is not given the attention it deserves, this success will remain a distant dream.

Ambe, Elizabeth. (2009) in her Literacy skills acquisition and use explained that many factors make learning English difficult for college English students. These factors include (a) the student's level of English proficiency and academic experience, (b) background knowledge, (c) native language experience, and (d) the student's age, which can be a

significant factor in ability and performance. These factors can make it difficult for adult English learners to learn a second language to learn if not addressed properly. Other researchers like (Marinova-Todd, Marshall, & Snow, 2000; Snow & Hoefnagel-Heller, 1978) are of the view that although children are better at speaking, preschoolers and adults are better at managing language.

METHODOLOGY

The term methodology means the core in which it includes the analysis of various methods used in a particular field of research. This includes examining the principles, assumptions and logic behind these methods. This includes steps to collect, analyze, and draw conclusions, it helps researchers to make well-discovered decisions about which methods should be used, how they should be used, and why they are suitable for research questions. In this study the researcher has used mixed methods integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. have been used to provide a comprehensive understanding about the inculcation of literacy skills in English Language among underprivileged community children and to study the behaviors of these children.

To fulfill the objectives, the researcher taught the learners about the Literacy skills, that is reading, writing, listening and speaking skills etc. with the help of TLMs and videos on the topics. Researchers have done activities such as reading, theatre and role playing for developing their literacy skills. Using the TLMs during teaching primary underprivileged community children was interesting and helpful for teaching the students. The children between the age group of 4-15, that is primary level students they took interest in videos and activities such as chit games and name, place, animal and things games etc. Researcher made them write about self-introduction in English taught them to spell the words properly, their writing skills were also developed and to check the progress and to study the changes in their behavior was carried out with the help of assessment works and Pre-test and Post-test was conducted.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of school going children of rural areas between the age group of 4- 15 years children of Lolai area in Nizampur Lucknow. The maximum number of children are from government primary schools and few students are from private schools.

Table 1: Demographic details of the students

S.no.	Gender	No. of Children
1.	Boys	8
2.	Girls	12

Table 2: Details of Schools

Sr. No.	School	No. of Children
1.	Government	12
2.	Private	8

Construction of the Tools

To fulfill the first objective, the pre-test and post- test was designed by the Researcher, in which questions related to writing their names in English, arranging disordered alphabets in an order, matching, filling simple missing words, reading simple English sentences and so on. Poster and Charts designed by the researcher were also used.

For the second objective reading, an educational game related to names, places, animals and things was used along with the collection of some motivational documentaries and videos to bring positive changes in their behavior for their education.

Data Collection tools

Researcher had collected the data with the help of activities planned in this researcher tried to enhance or make more sharper their literacy skills because the activities which the researcher had planned will make their skills sharper, creative, good pronunciation and their vocabulary will develop etc.

In data gathering procedures Researcher worked according to the objectives and with that reference the activities were also done. With the proper support of children, the researcher was able to work on the activities and make their learning sharper. Researchers selected the area where the children were illiterate and underprivileged and there was a good strength of children of all the age-groups.

Description of the various Tools -

- **Audio clips and Video clips Teaching Learning Material:** The Researcher had collected the data based on showing them audio clips, video clips on the topic of Inculcation of Literacy skills in English Language among community children on activity-based learning. In this the Researcher had shown the video clips and documentaries which had a great impact on students, and they can relate this in their real-life situations. The Researcher used the audio clips such as storytelling sessions, audios for paragraph writing so that students listening skills will develop and they can write, it will enhance their literacy as well as their listening skills, writing skills.
- **Posters and charts:** The Researcher showed the posters to the learners to have better vision, and the activities were also there so that they can understand and work accordingly. With the help of charts Researchers showed the varieties of games for developing different types of skills and taught them the concept of good habits and importance of literacy skills for their growth and development. With the help of posters and charts Researchers tried to show them the reality of illiterate people in our country and around different countries. On a chart paper Researcher had drawn the vocabulary of basic words and how to break the words for proper pronunciation.
- **Educational games:** Educational games served as an excellent reinforcement tool, helping children retain information in a fun and engaging way. In the educational game the Researcher used chits in which name, place, animal and things children had to write in 1 minute by playing this game they will come to know about the names of different things and the definition of Noun and its examples. The interactive nature of the games ensured that the children were actively involved in the learning process, making it easier for them to remember and apply the knowledge in real-life situations. The positive feedback and enthusiasm displayed by the children during these activities indicated that they not only understood the material but also enjoyed the learning process.

Data Collection Procedure

The Researcher started by introducing the slum children and Researcher did a pre-test activity to know their level and knowledge through a short questionnaire activity by asking some students and in charge of that area. In the questionnaire Researcher included all basic questions related to Literacy skills and what they are doing for enhancing their skills and

how teachers are teaching them. For better knowledge, Researcher had asked the questions from the students through a small communication that exactly how far they understand and can communicate with my topic while teaching or making them aware.

The Researcher collected data from 20 students. The Researcher had asked them questions before starting my topic so many of the students were easily connected with me and gave good answers to my prepared questions. The Researcher received responses some were connecting or relating with me, so they were giving good response, and few were not able to answer because they were not aware of it. Now to overcome this problem Researcher started interacting with them and asked about their schools about their peer group etc., Somehow, they began getting curious and excited to study properly and an eagerness was there in them to learn and understand the topic.

The Researcher had started teaching by using my posters and some printouts of the images which have a meaning relating my topic of Inculcation of Literacy skills in English Language among underprivileged community children through activity-based learning. Using posters of body parts, simple 3 letter words, alphabets, sentences etc., to know some basics of literacy skills among community children, Researchers made them learn about literacy skills and Researcher relate with them and ask from those pictures that what you are understanding by these pictures. Then Researcher started explaining them about various kinds and types of habits and skills such as fine motor skills, creativity, Literacy skills etc and started with my activities which the Researcher had planned. The Researcher shared the ways to enhance or sharper their skills from Literacy skills and with activities and shared the links with them at their parents' phone they work accordingly and present it next day, so that if they will face any problem in future like this then they can handle it on their own.

Some children were not interested in studying English Language and learn Literacy skills because they treat English as a subject rather than a Language. So, Researchers worked a lot with them to explain its importance and to motivate them to study it as a Language rather than a subject. After making them aware we give some sweets to them, and they happily eat them and are excited to study for the next day.

Description of Activities

To inculcate Literacy skills in English Language., the researcher conducted following activities -

- **Self-Introduction Activity:** In this activity children participated by introducing themselves and explaining about their hobbies, areas of interest and about their favorite subjects. With this activity, the researcher assessed their communication skills, pronunciation skills and their literacy skills. This activity involved all the children and encourages interaction between the researcher and the children.
- **Group-Discussion:** In this activity only, few children had participated because they all were not able to speak, and some were not taking interest as they were not aware of the word literacy and skills. But few children knew the meaning of the word literacy and skills, this helped the researcher in the introduction of the topic.
- **Chart-Paper Activity:** In this activity, children identified the animals, things, people, places and write their names in the boxes. This helped the researcher to know about the children weakness areas and how it can be improved. This activity also helped the researcher in finding out the strength of children who are good at writing but weak in speaking.

- **Assessment:** The assessment questions involved the basics like dictation, paragraph writing. Letter writing and making sentences with the words given. This helped the researcher to know the strength of children who are weak in these activities and many of them were not aware of these terms. The result of the Pre-test was below average that showed the number of efforts we had to put to improve their literacy skills.

To study the change in behaviors of Community children after the completion of the teaching the Researcher conducted three activities for the fulfilment of objective:

Educational Games: Educational games were another tool used by the Researcher to reinforce the importance of literacy skills and to develop interest of students in playing and knowing about their need and scope. These interactive games were decided to be both fun and informative, allowing children to learn about the uses of literacy skills in their real life while engaging in play. Games included activities like (Name, Place, Animal or Things) in this student had to identify the name of a person, animal, place or things. It helped to boost their thinking skills and will develop literacy skills as well. These games help develop interest in students and grab their attention while learning and explaining the difficult terms to the learners.

Animated Videos and Documentaries: understanding the children are often more engaged by visual and auditory content, the Researcher incorporated animated videos and documentaries into the educational sessions. These videos provided real-life scenarios and testimonies from individuals who were illiterate and because of illiteracy they were facing many problems based on education in their real life. The use of animation helped to simplify complex concepts, making them more relatable and understandable for younger children. Documentaries added a layer of realism, showing the true impact of literacy skills in real life.

Group-Discussion: Group-discussion was facilitated by the Researcher to create an open environment for children where they can express freely, their thoughts, ask questions and share their concern about literacy skills and its effect on them. These discussions were guided to ensure that accurate information was provided and any misconceptions addressed. The interactive nature of group discussion helped in reinforcing the learning, as children could learn from each other's question and insights.

In this objective Researcher had studied the behavior of children and asked many questions related to these activities and gave assessment work. The next day learners used to present their assessments in class. This showed progress among them and their learning outcomes. In which 8 students responded well, and they were able to do the assessment work, and their response was good, 5 students performed well in educational games, 3 students were not bothered and 4 students participated but their result was below average.

Learners enjoyed the hands-on experience learning rather than simple teaching methods. Learners' curiosity was there to study new experiments to work on it and they were very punctual with their assessment works they used to complete and present it in the class next day. They have a lot of experience with these Literacy skills and have many exposures with the help of videos of short stories that were played.

RESULT, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Results, findings and analysis are the important components of any research paper. In this section the researcher talks about the results of students and the problems faced by the students, based on the data they have collected and analyzed.

The result and data analysis discussion are a crucial part of any research or project report, as it provides insight into the meaning and significant of the findings and helps to contextualize the research within the broader field of study.

Findings of Objectives 1

Performance of 20 Students

Table 1

Above Average	Average	Below average	Total
10 (50%)	08 (40%)	02 (10%)	20 (100%)

Table 1 represents that out of 20 students, 10 students were above average, 8 students were average, and 2 students below average in developing Literacy skills.

It is evident that 50% of students were above average, 40 % were average and 2% were below average in inculcating Literacy skill. Therefore, it may be concluded that activities conducted during the study helped majority (90%) of the students to inculcate Literacy skills.

Findings of Objectives 2

Change In Behaviors of Community Children

Table 2

Above Average	Average	Below average	Needs improvement	Total
8 (40%)	05 (25%)	03 (15%)	04 (20%)	20 (100%)

The table2 represents the performance of students who took part in those activities and how they performed, where 8 students' result was good, 5 students performed well, 3 students were least bothered, 4 students were below average.

It is clear from Table 2 that 40% of students were above average, 25% were average and 15% were below average and 4% still needed to bring change in their attitudinal behavior.

DISCUSSION

Many children learned a lot more by us than their schoolteachers like the basic spellings in English and their pronunciations. They learned to make differences between words their present, past and future tenses and understood the concept of self-introduction. They came to know about group discussion, debate, comprehension and elocution etc.... Overall, children enjoyed their learning, and a solid understanding of literacy skills was developed in them.

They had many experiences with these literacy skills and have many exposures with the help of movies and videos of short stories were played.

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As a result, our children were able to do or perform many activities and have better exposures outside the classroom, they were able to define the term properly and reading skills were improved with this researcher having done the activities properly.

The researcher had collected samples of assignments which were given to learners for their Pre-test in class and for their practice at home so that they can remember it for a longer period and the main purpose was to make them understand and they can become more creative learners. Theatre activities had made them active listener, understandable and language developed is build, comprehension writing helped them in becoming good observer and boosts their cognitive minds to become active with this learner have developed their literacy skills, relationship skills, extempore had helped them in developing communication skills, relationship skills and constructive personality because those topics were given to them for making them aware about their family, friends etc.

Some games were also planned in which they were participating like chit-chat game and Name, place, animals, and things, which helped to inculcate students to listen speak read and write little words in English. By participating in self-introduction, group discussion, chart-paper activity and assessment activities students were able to know about their interest area and it boosts their communication skills, speaking and expressing themselves in their peer group. These activities helped the researcher to find out the strength of the students who are aware of the term literacy skills and the subject English Language.

These activities helped the students in fostering their confidence towards English Language and the importance of Literacy skills. It encouraged interaction, teamwork, and understanding skills among students and created a more creative and friendly classroom environment.

As far as change in their attitudinal behavior is concerned, it is concluded that change in behavior takes time as change in attitudinal behavior is a gradual process but no doubt with conscious effort and a series of constructive steps, one can hope to bring change in the behavior of children.

CONCLUSION

According to the Researcher, games and activities and movements adapt human beings to reality, playing a fundamental role in both affective and social life from an early age. It is in the infant's stage that most of the changes that allow children to explore the world around them take place. This interaction in space-time is acquired through adequate psychomotor development that allows the child to respond to the different challenges presented to them. Different activities were found to be very helpful in developing the literacy skills in English Language among underprivileged community children.

Future Scope

In future the learners are ready to explore more and learn more about literacy skills and their importance, the readiness was developed among the children for learning and knowing more about the types of skills and activities. The communication skills of community children were enhanced, and they were communicating well. Literacy skills can be developed with proper activities and regularity of children.

Suggestions for Future Research

Researchers would like to suggest some points such as the nature of the environment, like teaching students or learners on roads is much tougher and it was a difficult task for us to gain their attention and to create readiness in class. Learners were not regular during the starting days due to heat waves, and they were getting dehydrated during summers because there was no proper shade. The age groups were not divided, they were mixed, and it was difficult to teach them.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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