



ST. MARY'S ICSE SCHOOL

KOPARKHAIRANE, NAVI MUMBAI

Report on the workshop organised by “The Karadi Path”-Education Company

Resource person: Preetika Venkatakrishnan

Venue: Meluha The Ferns, Hiranandani Gardens, Powai

Theme: Reimagining the English Classroom

Date: September 23, 2017.

Time: 10 am to 2am

Teacher in attendance: Wilma D'souza

Preetika Venkatakrishnan from “The Karadi Path”-Education Company conducted an excellent workshop for school heads on the topic ‘Reimagining the English Classroom’. The crux of the workshop was to emphasise the need to teach children to comprehend the English language in its contextual nature. Through her research and experience with working with schools, she felt even though a child learnt the English language in school for 10 to 12 years, at the end of it the child was not confident in expressing, debating or even communicating in the language. According to her this is purely because English is taught as a subject and not a language, here we mostly learn to decode the language and not to comprehend it contextually.

Learning and mastering a language is best done in its natural environment. Most children in India speak or understand at least three languages fluently by the age of five i.e. their mother tongue, their regional language and a link language, which is an excellent precursor. We face problems while dealing with or teaching English, again that's because it's not taught in its natural environment, its taught as an subject, broken up or divided into prose, poetry, grammar, composition and comprehension. Rules, rules and more rules to learn a language. The speaker pointed out that when looked at thus it does point out to the absurdity of the whole exercise.

As the speaker saw it, English should be taught or spoken just like we speak our mother tongue, in its natural environment, tone, expressions, actions and pace. We do not give out rules and meanings, or



ration/ use grade level words with a child when we speak in our mother tongue, so why should we do that in schools when we teach English.

Here the simple pedagogy is to make our classroom an English environment, use neutral Indian milieu to speak the language, it's syntax as it's meant to be spoken, it's nuances, essence, reading storybooks, inductive reading, questioning, conversing, singing songs, using music, using kinaesthetic, audio books and a lot of theatre, so as to enable a child to think independently in the language.

Though we as teachers are aware of the said pedagogy, we tend to sacrifice it at the altar of curriculum and syllabus. Revisiting these education workshops rekindles the spirit of being a teacher.

