

Children of lesser god get a new goddess

For the 250 children who study at the Sarkara Kannada Balakara Madhyamika Shale on B.P. Wadia Road at Basavangudi, life will not be the same anymore and school will be definitely more satisfying, at least for their little tummies.

From June 1, 1998, when the school reopens after the summer vacations, all the students will get lunch at school thanks to the efforts of one lady who cared — Bhagya Rangachar.

When she returned after a longish stint in the US last year, Bhagya found that the children of construction workers were being taught and led by an NGO before they went to the government school near by. When she followed the kids to school one day, she saw the sorry state of affairs there. Most of the kids either did not eat lunch at all, or brought bad food which they could not eat.

Unused to the poverty that grips the country, she was moved. She wanted to help the children. What followed was a saga of rejections. Unfortunately, most Indians seemed immune to the plight of those unfortunate children who came to school hungry and tired everyday. Even big corporate houses who first promised to help, then responded with resounding silence.

Aware that she could not manage the task single-handed, Bhagya met the school better-

ment committee. Here, she was lucky. At least some individuals in the committee were inspired. They rallied around here and they agreed to work towards a common goal — ensuring 'their' children get food.

As V. Annaiah, who is the spokesperson of the committee says, "She inspired us to do this." They have managed to collect 150 plates and cups, while a local philanthropist has offered a year's supply of grain, a grocer on the panel has undertaken the responsibility of ensuring the children get fresh vegetables everyday.

And so as each motivated member contributed his mite, a dream came true. While the government supplies half a kg of rice to parents of these students, more often than not, it does not reach the students at all. "When the half-kg rice is taken to a home of several hungry mouths, how can the child get it all?" is the question she asks.

To ensure the children get food, let's feed them in the school itself, she says. She will personally be at the school each day to ensure this. And any volunteer who helps her in her task is welcome. That's not all, once the situation in this school is stable, Bhagya plans to move on to another and then another, till all the children in the city get at least one good, balanced meal a day.

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