

# They read better today

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bangalore:** More than 95 per cent of 69,800 children in government schools can read better today; 45,000 children who could not read before can now read without any hitch.

The 45-day accelerated reading programme, conducted jointly by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Akshara Foundation across primary classes in over 1,400 government schools in Bangalore, has done wonders for children.

Announcing the results of this highly-successful programme, primary and secondary education minister Basavaraj Horatti said: "We will now take this programme across the state. People expect the government to solve all problems, but they must learn from organisations like Akshara Foundation which has joined hands with us to tackle this problem of poor reading skills among government school children."

Children were made to read a story card every day along with other teaching aids. The foundation, which invested Rs 2 crore for



## HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMME

this project, trained 4,355 teachers for 45 days.

The result? Only two per cent children remained at ground zero. While 95 per cent showed marked improvement, 64 per cent who were classified as non-readers were converted to readers in three months flat.

"Studies indicate that Karnataka is the last on the list when

it comes to primary education. But programmes like this give us hope," education secretary T M Vijay Bhaskar said.

Horatti presented tokens of appreciation to volunteers and teachers who displayed exceptional work. "The government invests Rs 4,200 in each child every year and Rs 6,000 crore is diverted to primary and secondary education. But it's in the hands of the teacher to make a difference. This year, there was 100 per cent SSLC results in 132 government schools, 86 aided schools and 372 unaided schools. That can go up only if teachers make up their mind," Horatti said.

## Horatti's resolve for 2007

By July 2007, there will be no government school without teachers. "We will recruit 4,868 teachers in one week and have received clearance from the finance department to hire another 6,900 teachers. We will hire 12,000 teachers in 10 months, but might still fall short of 2,000 teachers. We also plan to recruit teachers in advance to replace those who will retire in 2010."