



## **Going Beyond the Textbook (Part II)**

### **4.0 Objectives**

### **4.1 Introduction**

### **4.2 Need to Go Beyond Textbooks in EVS**

#### **4.2.1 Textbook and Possibilities**

### **4.3 Diverse Context and Need of Learners**

#### **4.3.1 Contextualization**

#### **4.3.2 Need of Learners**

### **4.4 Resources for Learning are All Around**

### **4.5 Helping Children Take Initiative**

### **4.6 Tapping Resources of the Community**

### **4.7 School and Community**

### **4.8 Integration with Other Curricular Areas**

### **4.9 Let us Sum up**

### **4.10 References**

### **4.11 Weblinks**

## 4.0 Objectives

After going through this module, you will be able to:

- understand your role, beyond using only textbooks, for teaching-learning;
- identify appropriate and meaningful resources as per the context and their availability;
- select and use the resources according to the needs of the children;
- help children connect the school learning with their surroundings; and
- be a reflective teacher who is sensitive to the issues of the environment and who can enthuse children with the same values.

The first part of the module laid the background for the need for going beyond textbook, citing the diversity of learners, their context and experiences and the integrated nature of EVS. However, this part of the module would talk about the resources and ideas that are available to teachers, including the community that is also very much a part of the school fabric.

### 4.4 Resources for Learning are All Around

We find that teaching-learning activities mostly get restricted to the classrooms and largely involve the use of chalk and blackboard. During informal interactions teachers often reveal lack of resources, which they think requires elaborate infrastructural, human and financial investment. They consider Teaching Learning Material (TLM) to be expensive, elite and not related to their contexts. On the contrary, each child's surroundings has immense potential and a careful look around you will reveal a plethora of resources which can be quite meaningful and cost effective too. Here are a few examples.

You must be familiar with the scheme of mid-day meal, which aims to provide hot cooked meals to children up to fourteen years of age in schools. It helped enroll many out of school and drop out children and retain them in schools. Many teachers consider it to be an activity segregated from teaching-learning. However, it provides excellent opportunities for teaching of many concepts from the textbooks such as nutrition, hygiene, cooking, waste management and social and environmental responsibility.

Read the article

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Midday-mealtime-right-for-teaching-green-behaviour/articleshow/40324824.cms>

Let us look at some activities which are based on children having access to a place where the mid-day meal is cooked.

#### Activity 1

Ask students to draw a lay out of the school premises and highlight the position of the kitchen cum store of your school in that. (Remember that the neatness and accuracy will vary as per the age and development level of the children). They may also draw the map of the kitchen cum store. Let students analyse it for the adequacy of space for storage, cooking and washing utensils as per the MDM norms. Some of the questions can be as follows:

- Mention the different sections of kitchen-cum-store and their use.
- Is there separate room/sections for cooking, storage and washing?
- Is the space adequate for cooking, storage and washing?
- What are the sources of light in it?
- What kind of system exists for the ventilation?
- Are the classrooms away from the kitchen?
- What is the material used in the construction of the kitchen-cum-store?
- Can the absence of the kitchen-cum-store lead to any health hazards or accidents? How?

### Activity 2

For safety aspects related to the preparation of meals, children may be provided any news such as the following and then a discussion be held as per the questions given below:

#### ***Shiksha Newsletter and World Socialist Website (22 July 2004)***

*On July 16, in a horrifying tragedy that shocked the nation, 90 school students were burnt to death and 23 seriously injured as fire raged through the nursery section of the Saraswathi English Medium School in Kumbakonam town of Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu. According to police and eyewitnesses, the blaze started in the kitchen while the midday meal was being prepared. The thatched roof caught alight and the fire rapidly spread to the rest of the building. Although, it is illegal to have thatched roofs on schools, the practice is widespread and largely ignored.*

- What is the material of the roof of the kitchen shed in your school?
- Is it inflammable?
- If yes, should it be of some different material? What could that material be?
- Do you think the cooking needs to be done on a raised platform? Why?
- Is there an appropriate drainage system?
- How is the waste disposed off?
- What are your suggestions for further improvement of the MDM in your school?
- Who all can be approached (people/agencies) to help the school adhere to the stipulated norms? (For example, SMC).

### Activity 3

On Procurement and Storage of Ingredients for Cooking, children may be involved to collect the following information individually or in groups:

- Is there a fixed menu in your school?
- How often is it changed?
- Who decides the menu?
- Is it displayed in the school?
- If yes, where? If not, how could anyone know about it?

### Activity 4

Enlist different dishes that you get in the MDM and explore the ingredients used to prepare those.

Name of the Dish	What is it made up of? (Ingredients)

- Which ingredients are procured in bulk? How are they stored? Are the ingredients stored in dry and covered containers to protect them from moisture and pests?

- Which items do not have a long shelf life? Are these procured fresh?

### Activity 5

The children may be asked to find out about the following – where are the ingredients for preparing the meals in their school procured from:

Ingredient	Supplied by Central/ State Govt.	School Management	Community	Purchased from Market	School Garden	Any other
Rice Wheat Vegetables Spices Salt Water Any other						

Do you have anything marked under the column school garden?

- If yes, what is that?
- If no, how do you think a school garden can help?
- Do you have any such garden at your school?
- How can it be used effectively for implementation of MDM

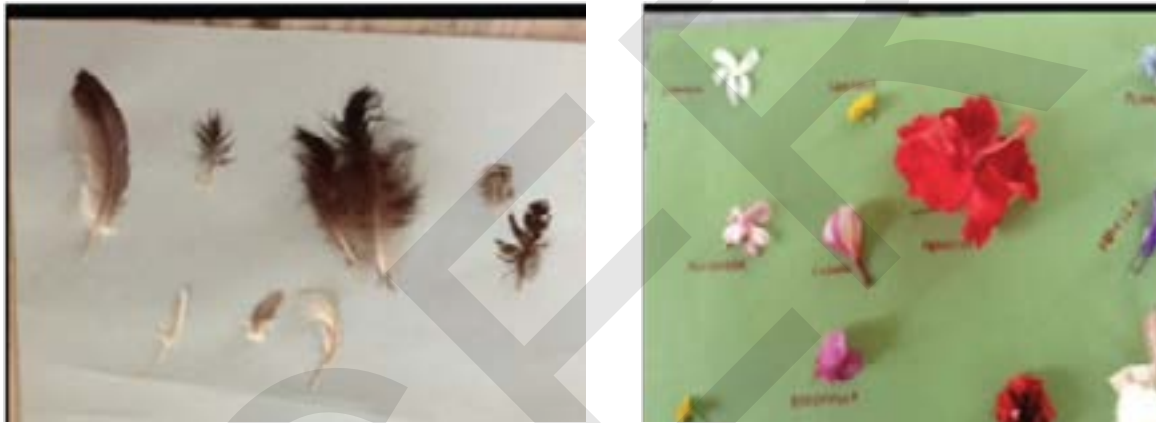


These are the learning material prepared and used by teachers in the classroom. As a teacher one can bring many resources to the classroom like newspaper, board games, puzzles, worksheets, pictures, etc. suitable to the EVS theme. These are all tangible resources that can be part of the classroom but the experiences that the students bring with them can also be used as resource.

The teacher takes the students to a garden or a forest area. She asks them to put together different objects. The list could include;

An interesting leaf, Something brown, Something rough, Something smooth, A fruit, A seed, Something with a beautiful pattern, A flower, A feather, A fallen twig, An object that creates a beautiful sound, Something multi-coloured, Anything else?

The students are given thirty minutes to go and explore the environment and pick up their treasures. The students collect these objects and take them back to the classroom. They then categorise and discuss their treasures. Further, the students use these to collectively create a beautiful object in class, e.g. a card, a box etc. The things that make a noise could be collected together to create a natural orchestra.



Students found these feathers of different size, colour and pattern and displayed it.

Students collected fallen flowers and they also tried to write their names.

### Let us reflect

\* What could be the objective of the above activity? How does it help children learn?

Children at primary level are still trying to perfect reading and writing skills but they have expressive skills that need to be nurtured. It is also important to provide opportunity for children to express themselves in a variety of ways. Asking them to draw, engaging them in role plays or helping them to create a skit or drama around ideas that enthuse them can be very helpful to bring out the creative expression within the child.

### 4.5 Helping Children Take Initiatives

Children are naturally energetic and very good observers of their surroundings. They can thus be meaningfully engaged in different activities that go beyond textbook and which can bring a positive change. Following are some of the activities that were done with children:



Students maintaining Kitchen Garden in School

- Have you thought of engaging children in growing vegetables in school? It seems a very daunting task but getting one class to maintain a small patch of land is not very difficult.

### Let us reflect

- \* What could students learn by performing tasks such as above? How are these related to the textbooks?

Thus, it is very important to understand that our school premises, building, infrastructure playgrounds, garden, corridors and terrace and even the surroundings are very good resources for teaching-learning. Many activities can be designed by teachers that will help children connect with their surroundings, be sensitive, use it as an opportunity for learning and transform the space into a Green School.

Refer to weblink 3 entitled “Towards a Green School Document”: [http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Books/ncert\\_book/Towards-A-green-School.pdf](http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Books/ncert_book/Towards-A-green-School.pdf)

This will expose the children to different processes of learning and strengthen the concepts given in their textbooks with real life learning and thus improve upon, learn better, progress and develop holistically. This will lead to a strong bonding with the school management, teachers, and support staff.

Many activities can be conducted where students can frame questions, conduct surveys (e.g. a cleanliness audit, energy or water conservation audit etc.), interview the relevant persons from their school, discuss their findings in class and share their experiences. The class can identify some of the solutions, which they can put into practice immediately. The concrete suggestions of their surveys can be passed on to the school management. Such projects could also be extended to the neighbourhood.

### 4.6 Tapping Resources of the Community

Although school is considered to be a formal institution of learning but learning can happen everywhere and all the time. There are other institutions too that help to learn. For example, books, journals, newspapers, magazines, web resources, the media, museums, interaction with people around us, etc. can also be sources of learning apart from textbooks. Interacting with a cobbler would give you lot of insight into shoes – the ma-

material used for making it and how it is repaired etc. He would also be able to give his insights on other things, beyond shoes, as he has been interacting with different people around him and has been running business in the market for many years. Similarly every person engages with some kind of work and that regular engagement with a particular activity makes him/her a rich source of learning. In a way, everyone is a resource for learning. Thus the community and its members become a rich source of learning for the school and this can be tapped very easily. Tapping the community resources, opens wider possibilities of learning from others' experiences – it can help students connect to the questions, issues and feelings that are important to people.

Read how Charu invited parents of her students to classroom as resource persons.

Charu was working on the theme –work people do, and the textbook chapter had pictures of different professions. She thus prompted her students to share what work their parents' do. She got a list of professions –someone was a vegetable seller, another carpenter, and few worked in offices. Some students shared that their mothers worked as maids while others shared that their mothers did not go out to work. Charu knew the importance of housework and thus quickly made the students realize that housework although not paid, is equally as important as working outside. To make the students understand more about different kinds of professions, Charu decided to contact those parents who could take some time out to come and speak to them. She contacted a student's parent who was a mason and another who was an electrician. She invited a student's mother who did tailoring work at home and another mother who ran a small teashop. She invited a fruit seller and student's favorite, Adisa aunty, who sold snacks and other knick-knacks outside the school gate.

On the decided day, all the resource persons came to school on time. They were excited and proudly shared their experiences. Rajesh's father who was a mason brought his tools and demonstrated their usage. The students were thrilled to look at the different tools and asked all kinds of questions like – why does he need different types of trowels? The fruit seller was overwhelmed by the questions he was asked. Pragya's mother brought her inch tapes and shared her knowledge about stitching with a lot of passion. Adisa aunty was thrilled to step into the classroom to talk about her shop. She shared about naughty kids that she has had to deal with. She also complained that at lunch time it is difficult to deal with so many kids in one go and that many people haggle with her and want everything at low cost. She talked about the little profit that she made and also shared how she barely manages to survive on a small income.

Enlisting six resource persons to speak to the children in one go was a little chaotic but the enthusiasm generated among the students was infectious. Few students complained as to why their parents were not called. Charu replied that all parents would be requested to come one by one to address the students.

### **Let us reflect**

- \* What, in your view, would the children have learnt from the electrician?
- \* Elaborate on the idea that each person around us is a potential resource for learning.
- \* Pick up a specific example of a resource in a community and explain how it can be used for learning.

From the above, it is apparent that the existing knowledge in a community can also be explored as a resource to facilitate learning beyond textbooks and that the learning from textbooks becomes effective after exposure



to such resources.

#### 4.7 School and Community

Community has been an untapped resource that has always and easily been available to us. However, we have built impermeable boundaries and not allowed the community to interact with schools. It is time that we change that.

Read Sailaja's experiences below and reflect:

My profession entails that I visit schools quite often. Mostly, I find the school gates closed and need to take permission to get in. In private schools, I am even asked to take prior appointments. Most often the reason sighted is that students might run away if the doors are kept open or that their safety could be compromised. Building barriers between schools and society not only deprives children from the rich resources available with the community but also prevents the community from deriving benefits from the school. Bridging this gap will help strengthen the bond between the school and the community and nurture a mutually healthy relationship.

Refer to the weblink 4 : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cnRa9f4A54>

#### Let us reflect

- \* There may be valid reasons and concerns for having such a practice of bolting the children in school. Can we do away with this practice? What do you think
- \* In what ways can the community contribute to the learning processes in the schools?

For understanding the relationship between the school and the community and planning many more related activities, refer to weblink 5 (Section 3.6) entitled 'Beyond School: Greening through Extended Activities'; pp. 139-151.

#### 4.8 Integration with Other Curricular Areas

Following is a simple activity that a teacher designed and tried out with her class. It is not theme specific but has the potential of integrating EVS themes as well as other subject areas.



#### Learning from Wrappers!

The students are encouraged to collect the wrappers of different eatables that they or others have consumed. These wrappers are put on a chart paper and displayed in the classroom. The students take responsibility for collecting and changing wrappers on the chart every week for a month. These wrappers are used to enhance students' awareness of nutritional content of different foods followed by a discussion, on which foods are unhealthy and ought to be avoided or eaten in small amounts. The teacher facilitates this discussion based on the observations of the students. The aim is to make the students voluntarily take responsibility for their own health and growth. The language-

and mathematical skills of the students are exercised as they note down the exact nutritional content, the weight of the packet, the price, the date of manufacture and expiry, the food standard and safety mark (e.g. FSSAI mark) as well as the content written on the wrappers. This sensitizes the students to the kind of information they should look for, when buying different consumables. The teacher asked the student to examine whether these wrappers are bio-degradable; whether the content in a packet is worth the net price or not; and what kinds of strategies manufacturers use to attract the customers (e.g. use of shiny wrappers) etc. The teacher and the students learn together as a community of learners by gathering fresh information each week and discussing it. The students are asked to write their reflections and share them.

### Let us reflect

- \* Suggest how the above activity can be integrated with other themes and subject areas.
- \* Take up any theme and design an activity describing how it has been contextualised for the children you are teaching and how it addresses the issues around them.
- \* If there were only themes and no textbook up till primary, would it be more empowering for teachers and children? Reflect and elaborate on your answer.

You might have realised that going beyond textbook is not very difficult, one only needs to understand the objectives, and be a little innovative. However, you might be worried and concerned about the quantum of syllabus, time constraint, large number of students, inflexibility in school curriculum and time table, and the attitude of the authorities, parents, etc. Here are a few tips to overcome these challenges.

### Suggestions

- Plan activities that go across themes in a subject and even help in integration of different subjects. This will help reduce time taken for coverage of the syllabus.
- Try to involve other teachers, staff and authorities in the planning process.
- Let children take initiative to do small projects and provide support.
- Emphasise more on peer and collaborative learning.
- Prepare the activities in accordance with the school calendar. For example, some of the activities can be carried out when some event is about to take place or a festival is to be celebrated.
- Use Parent Teacher Meetings (PTMs) meaningfully to sensitise and make parents aware about how students learn from various sources and places and not necessarily just from textbooks.
- Involve different stakeholders from the SMC, village/block samities and community as a resource, etc.

### 4.9 Let us Sum up

The textbook no doubt is very central to our system of education and important but one needs to understand its limitations as well. It is difficult to have an ideal textbook, which will address the pedagogic needs of the curriculum, developmental needs of the learner, specific needs of the socio-cultural contexts of the learners

and demands of the learning context (most often, uncertain) in which it is used (Nawani, 2010). The role of the teacher here becomes important as she is in a position to bridge the gap between the textbook and the learners.

Learning takes place through the active engagement of the teacher, the learners and a well thought-out activity. The 'going beyond' challenge thus rests with the teacher, who needs to be empowered in a school system, for its success.

#### 4.10 References

1. Towards A Green School: (2015); NCERT [http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Books/ncert\\_book/Towards-A-green-School.pdf](http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Books/ncert_book/Towards-A-green-School.pdf)
2. Pustkon Se pare Hamara Paryavaran: (2013); NCERT; [http://www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/dee/publication/pdf/Pustakon\\_se\\_pare\\_hamara%20\\_paryavaran.pdf](http://www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/dee/publication/pdf/Pustakon_se_pare_hamara%20_paryavaran.pdf)
3. EVS textbook, Looking Around, NCERT: Class III (2006), Class IV (2007) and Class V (2008).
4. Green Activities for the primary school children, A resource book based on an Innovative project (GC-203) funded by University of Delhi.
5. Nawani, D., School textbooks: Understanding frameworks for analysis. Contemporary Education Dialogue Journal, Vol. 7, No 2, July 2010.
6. NCF-2005, Syllabus for classes at the elementary level, NCERT, 2006.

#### 4.11 Weblinks

1. [www.ncert.nic.in/rightside/links/pdf/framework/english/nf2005.pdf](http://www.ncert.nic.in/rightside/links/pdf/framework/english/nf2005.pdf)
2. [http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Books/ncert\\_book/Chapter3.pdf](http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Books/ncert_book/Chapter3.pdf) (Section 3.5)
3. [http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Books/ncert\\_book/Towards-A-green-School.pdf](http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Books/ncert_book/Towards-A-green-School.pdf)
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cnRa9f4A54>
5. [http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Books/ncert\\_book/Towards-A-green-School.pdf](http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Books/ncert_book/Towards-A-green-School.pdf)(Section 3.6)
6. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Midday-mealtime-right-for-teaching-green-behaviour/articleshow/40324824.cms>