

Special Features

A tale from its head is how this school begins its day

Singh quotes heavily from ancient Indian epics and gives numerous examples to inculcate moral values in students

He is a modern day version of Vishnu Sharma, the author of the famous 'Panchatantra ki kahaniyan' (the Panchatantra stories), through which he used to impart practical education to the children of the king.

Shiv Narayan Singh, principal of an intermediate college in Uttar Pradesh's backward Deoria town, about 325 Km from here, must have created a record of sorts. For the past eight years, he has been telling his students a story every day. The stories are not new, but carry moral values. Singh, who innovates to make his stories inspirational, is a recipient of a number of awards at the national and state level.

"I pick up the theme from our age-old traditions and happenings of daily life and include them in my stories to give some concrete message to the students", Singh told Deccan Herald from Deoria. Singh also draws inspiration from the 'Vedas', and 'Upanishads'. "All these stories instill a new confidence in us and provide us the guidelines to be followed in the life", he says.

Born in a modest farming family, the post-graduate in science tells his stories to the students after the daily prayer at the school. The students have made it a point to attend the prayer regularly as they know fully well that they will get to listen an 'inspirational story' from their principal.

No wonder the prayer hall of the school, which has a strength of over 1,500 students, is always packed to the capacity, when the 46-year old Singh tells the stories. The school is known for its discipline and education.

Not only the students but the other teachers and the staff of the school also listen to Singh in rapt attention during the time. The story session normally lasts 10 to 12 minutes.

Singh is so regular with his story telling that the students and others

begin calling his home to enquire about his well being on the rare day when he misses school due to illness or other preoccupation.

In his stories, Singh quotes heavily from the ancient Indian epics and gives numerous examples. He also cites Gautam Buddha, Jesus Christ and Ramkrishna Paramhansa. "The main objective is to inculcate moral values in the student", he says.

Singh laments that the modern education does not in any way contribute towards the moral development of the students. "Education should make a student a good human being", he opines.

"My endeavour is to establish a communication with the students through inspirational messages so that they may become good

source of encouragement for Singh.

So far five volumes of his stories have been published. The volume entitled 'Vidyarthiyon Se...' (to the students) contains the stories Singh has told his students. Interestingly the volumes are not his writings. "Some people, who were inspired by my stories, decided to record whenever I told a story and then compiled them and got them published in the form of books", he said.

"I was myself surprised when I heard my own utterances...I could not believe that it was I", he said.

On whether he makes preparation in advance for telling the stories, Singh said even he does not know about the subject on which the day's story will be based.

"I only keep one thing in my mind that



Shiv Narain Singh telling a story to the students

international citizens", Singh says. "Stories are the best way to communicate with the children".

Singh said that during his childhood his grandfather used to regularly tell him a story before he retired to bed. "His (grandfather) words used to be in my heart when I woke up in the morning", he said. "My stories force the students to ponder over what they want to do in their lives and they also apprise the students about their responsibilities towards society and the environment", Singh said.

He has received hundreds of appreciation letters from the educationists, parents and politicians.

His wife Shiva Singh also is a

Whatever I say must have a positive impact on the minds of the students."

Singh's books were on display in the world Book Fair in Delhi and received a good response from visitors, mainly students. A research study is also under way on his books at Kanpur University.

Singh has been recipient of the 'Bharti Ratna Samman' by the National Rajbhasha peeth, Delhi and the Teachers' State Award in 2009.

Sanjay Pande from Lucknow