

UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN RUB SHOULDERS WITH STANDFORD AND NASA SCIENTISTS

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The foundation has also set up a 'Space Club'

By: Dipankar Chakraborty

Bengaluru-based Parikrma's Universe to You programme helps children learn science practically by inviting renowned scientists

Parikrma Humanity Foundation, an educational institute for marginalised children, is holding an ongoing science programme called 'Universe to You' (Universe 2U) for its students.

"From the smallest unit of matter to the great nebulae that churn out stars which keep the universe alive and expanding, from the smallest strand of DNA to the way we interact with each other and with our environment, all (this) falls (between) the universe and you. The science program at Parikrma is therefore called Universe to You (Universe 2U)," explained Shukla Bose, CEO and founder of the schools, speaking to Bangalore Mirror.

"When it comes to science and education I have set very clear rules for children in our schools - we teach without textbooks," said Bose. She pointed out that there was not much in the standard school curriculum to encourage children to think independently.

As a part of the Universe 2U initiative, the school invites renowned scientists to expose students to latest developments in the field of science. For example, Marguerite Blake Wilbur, Professor in Natural Science at Stanford University and Professor Richard Zare, were invited to interact with the students. They explained rocket mechanics with the help of a rudimentary rocket. Zare then explained the chemistry behind the flight and helped children balance the equation that made the rocket fly. He took children and teachers through a presentation on problem-solving skills. The presentation was later shared with teachers from other schools. In another instance, students travelled to Kavalur-based Vainu Bappu Observatory to explore space through the giant telescope.

The foundation has also set up a 'Space Club' run by Srinu Srinivas, who headed the Microgravity Science Program at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Centre, for over 12 years, and is currently based in the city. "A telescope-building program will start soon. Special lectures by astronomers and physicists as well as associations with space-interest groups, were being planned," Bose further said.

She said some pass-outs from Parikrma have gone on to become software engineers in multinational IT companies, doctors and senior hotel professionals. Most children studying at Parikrma are first-generation learners. Bengaluru-based Parikrma is a non-profit organisation that runs four schools and a college for underprivileged children.