

Diploma for Dropouts

2013

In November, our team(I, a colleague from design faculty and 3 craft specialist) was conducting a bamboo craft work shop in Gadchiroli, a troubled district in Maharashtra. The workshop was meant for local craft- persons . Most of them were women with family background of bamboo craft. But there were others who were not traditional craft persons by their family back ground.

We interviewed each of the craft persons and few collage - going youth who had just come to see the workshop. To our surprise many of the craftpersons had done schooling and some were in college. Many of them were school dropouts. One girl had failed in English with one mark in 10th and had left her studies. Some had found Maths or Science subjects difficult to cope up with, in the 12th standard and discontinued. In general they were intelligent, could comprehend and solve practical problems of life. They had no problem in dealing with bamboo craft and picked up the skills as well as related knowledge quite well. Almost all of them were either tribal or belonged to reserved catagory.

Here is a case for remedial coaching. All these dropouts need a 3 to 6 months remedial coaching to pass the required examination. A remedial scholarship of 6 months can be coupled with one year diploma in practical subjects like bamboo craft and other forest produce like lac, gum, tendu patta or subjects based on fish culture, bamboo construction etc,.. Gondwana university Gadchiroli (GUG) with mentorship from IIT Bombay can be a harbinger in this direction.

Coming to think of it, such a scholarship programme need to be offered by State and Central Govts. across the country before or after elections as it is a common problem throughout the country. A right catch word for budding or resourceful, creative politician would be "Diploma for dropouts"!