Myths in schools and elsewhere

Is it shocking to you, young reader, if I say that programs like *prathibha karanji* are just myths? If it is shocking to you, you must read on, because you need exposure to true and real concepts of teaching and learning. If it does not shock you and you wanted to say the same thing to someone, you will, on your own, be interested in reading on.

Let us look at the place of competitions [and selection tests and prizes and grades etc.] in a system of teaching and learning process [teaching and learning]. Are these contributing to acquisition of any new knowledge or skill? In other words can these find a place in pedagogy, as tools of teaching and learning ? Assume for a moment that the most important goal of any teaching and learning process is TO REACH ALL [I REPEAT ALL i.e.. 100 %] of the target group. With this background ask again the same questions. You get my drift.

Let me now make a few statements. Teaching and learning process should have an ultimate aim of UNIVERSALIZATION of education which includes all the members of the target group and all the matter that is to be taken up for teaching and learning process. This means a complete communication and total transfer of subject matter to each and every student entitled to this education process. Assuming that   a majority of readers of this article agrees with these assertions in principle , can I further say, these will form the ideals of teaching and learning process irrespective of the composition, comprehension, ability, effort, or any other attribute of the target group?

In practice, any extracurricular intellectual exercise [even in so-called best schools] appears to be competition and prize oriented. Naturally there is a selection process. It is common experience for some judges to see the same 'star students' in every [even diverse] event [as if no other participants exist or can be trained and encouraged]. No doubt the selected few benefit. But all the rest are excluded without even getting a chance. Looking at these processes [and much worse, malpractices by institutions to hog prizes] I have developed an almost aversive attitude to slogans like "**nurture the best**" or "**support the meritorious**" etc. I have even created my own slogans: [**selection produces seclusion of some and exclusion of many}. ['Exclusion encourages elitism]   [Inclusion improves interest** in teaching and learning .

So, do we do away with all competitions and prizes? To answer this question, I have to pose some other questions. Do you discover talent, already developed [by some other agencies] and honour it? Or, would you like to find [on your own , in your group of learners] the potential for talent and provide opportunity to make progress, and reward the top achievers? An analysis of the last two questions will lead to the answer to the first one.