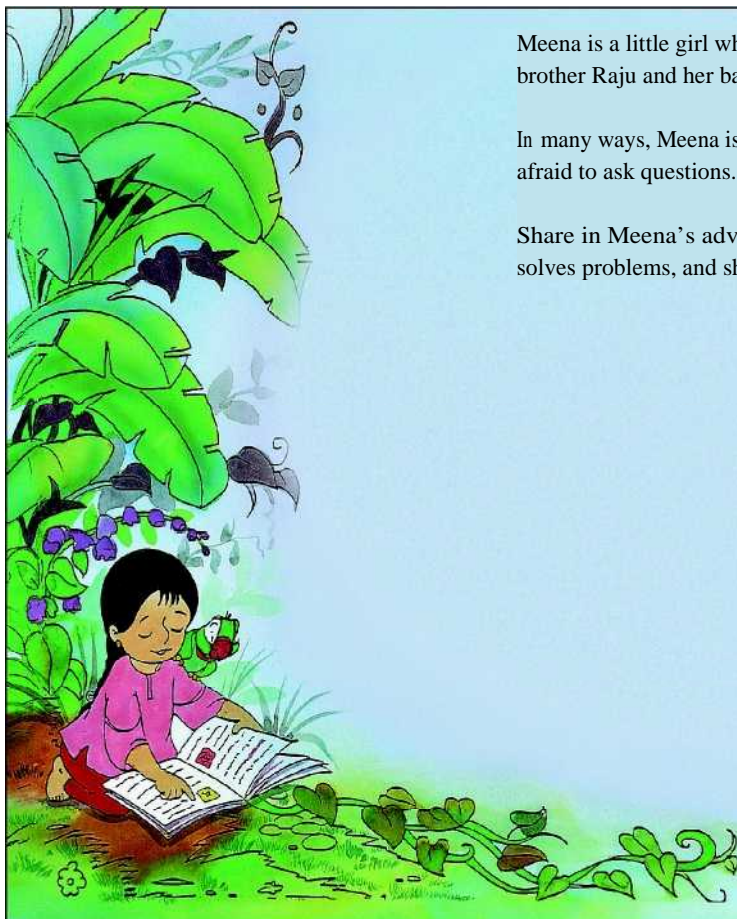


# Meena And Her Friend





Meena is a little girl who lives in a village with her parents, her grandmother, her brother Raju and her baby sister, Rani. Mithu, the parrot, is her best friend.

In many ways, Meena is like any other little girl you know. She is friendly but is not afraid to ask questions.

Share in Meena's adventures as she laughs, climbs trees, asks questions and solves problems, and shows you all the things that a little girl can do.

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Meena, Raju and their pet parrot Mithu were just walking into school when they saw their teacher talking to a new boy and his mother. He looked small for his age.





The new boy's name was Badol. Teacher made him sit next to Meena. Meena soon noticed that Badol had a lot of difficulty in keeping up with the rest of the class.



In the recess, Meena asked Teacher about Badol.



Most of the other children, though, did not understand about Badol. The next day, Meena found Dipu and his friends teasing him.





Poor Badol! Though he tried hard, he missed the ball every time. Meena was really upset with the boys.



Meena and Raju decided that they would be friends with Badol.

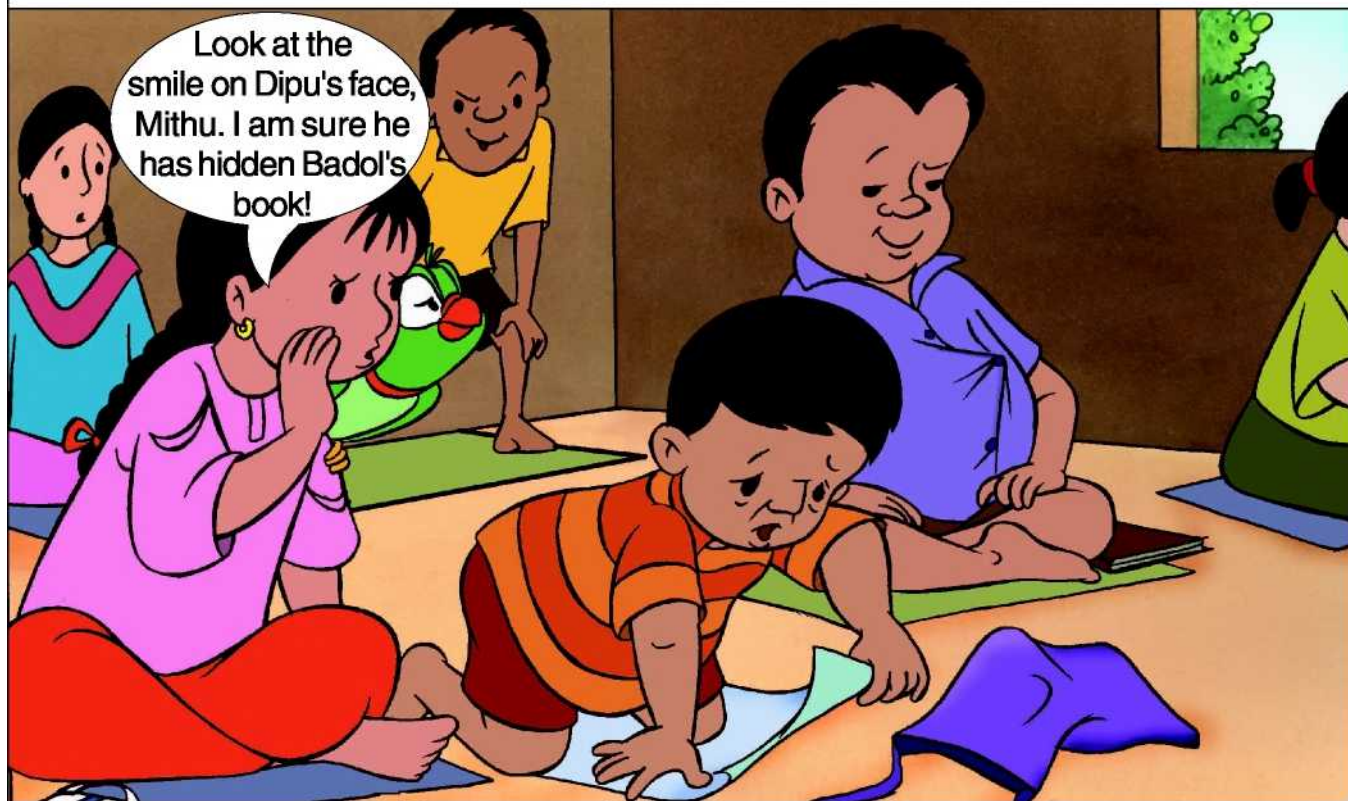




Badol cheered up at the children's friendliness. They saw a little black puppy on the school verandah. It belonged to Dipu. The puppy licked Badol's outstretched hand and he began to smile again!



In the classroom, Badol could not find his notebook. He looked everywhere. Meena realized that Dipu and his friends were playing another trick on Badol.

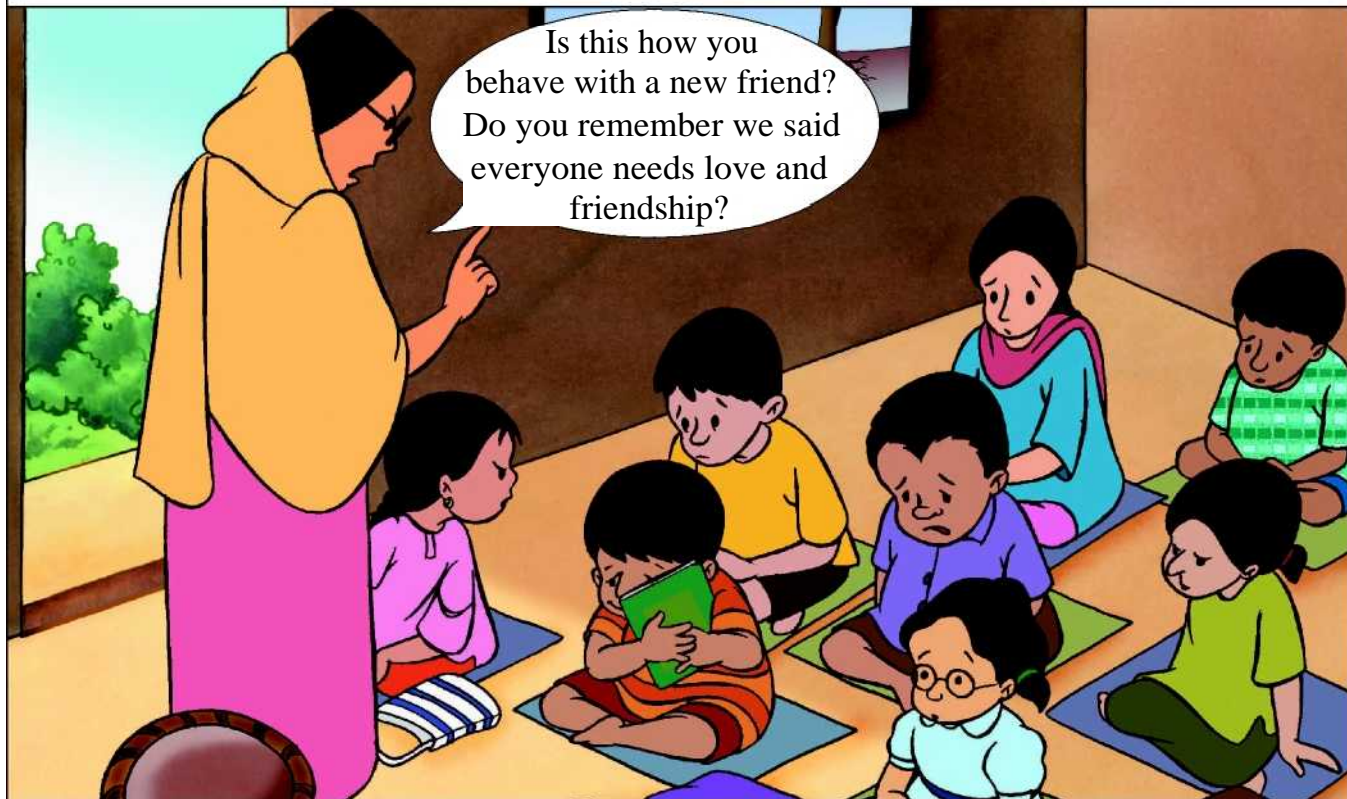


Mithu saw the suspicious shape inside Dipu's shirt. He swooped down and tugged at his collar. Out fell Badol's book!





Badol was very happy to get his book back. Teacher understood what had happened and was upset. The children realized that teasing Badol was not right.



After school Badol walked home with Meena and Raju. They met Babu, the shop keeper's son, outside Meena's house.



Meena introduced Babu to Badol. But Badol was lost in his own world.

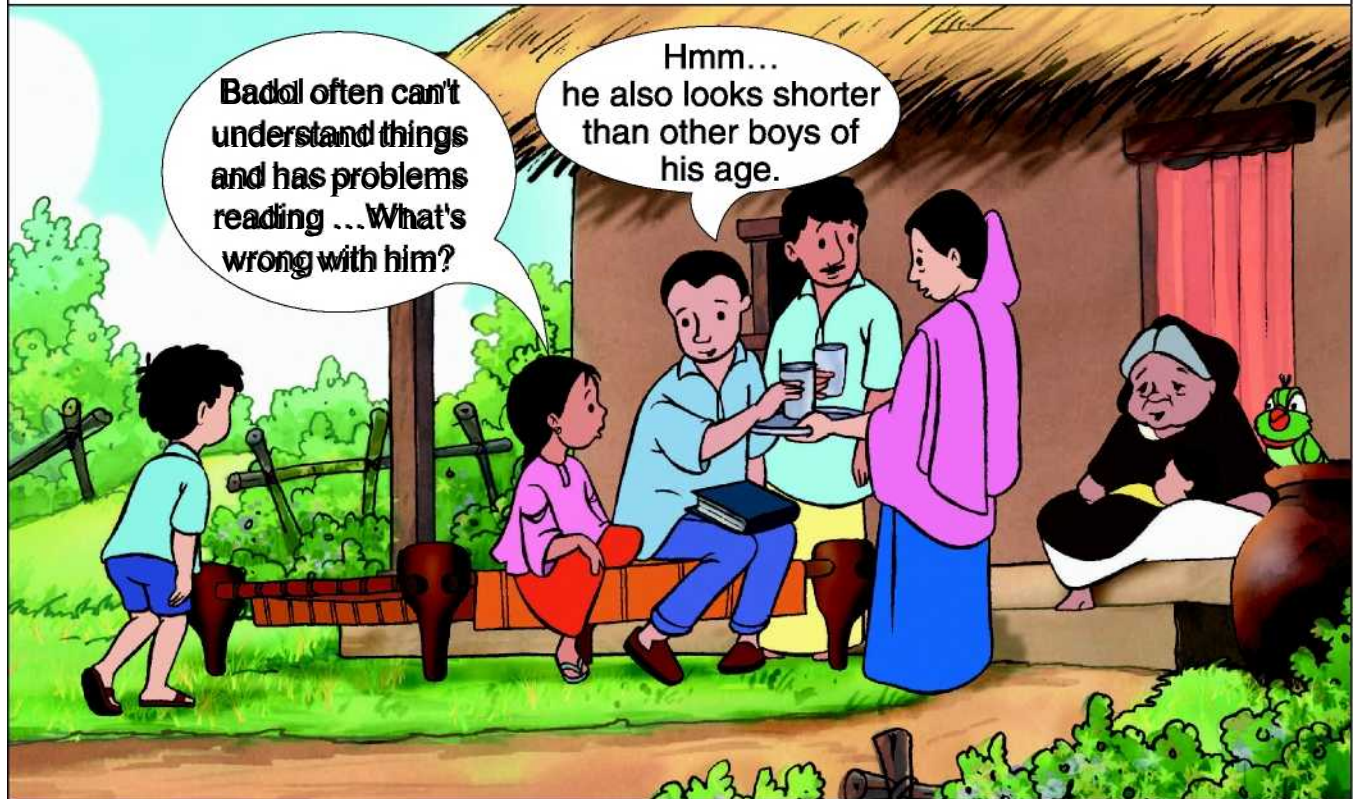




Badol suddenly walked away. He seemed to have forgotten that he had come to play with Meena and Raju.



**Babu had come to visit Meena's family. Everyone was very pleased to see Babu. Meena wanted to know more about why Badol was different.**



Babu looked thoughtful..... then he showed some pictures from his medical book to everyone.

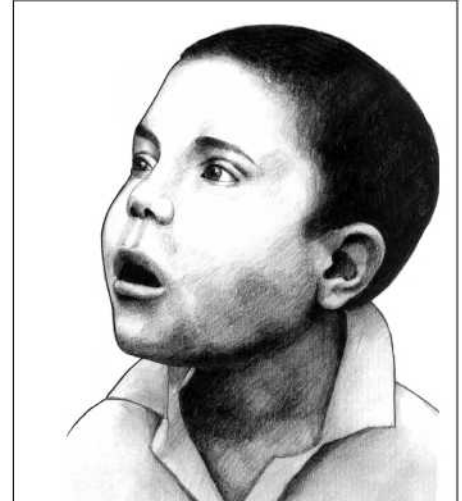


Babu explained that if a pregnant woman doesn't take sufficient iodine she might give birth to a baby, which lacks iodine. Also, if a child doesn't get enough iodine during the early years of life the development of the brain can get damaged. This damage can be mild or severe.

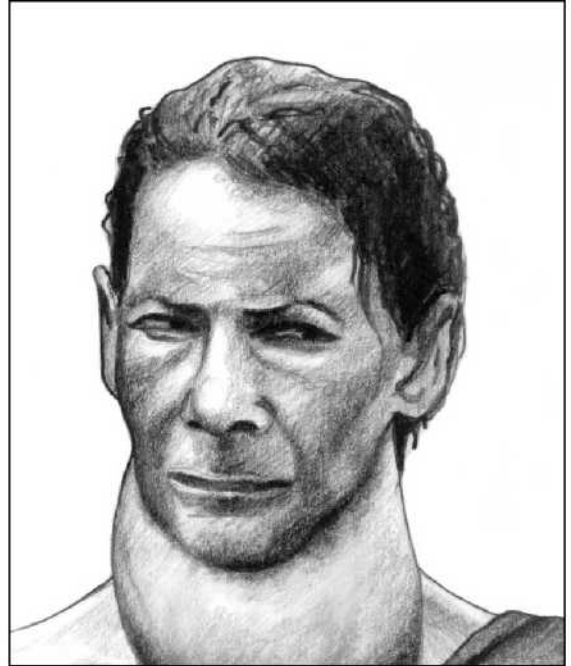


Babu said lack of iodine in the early years of childhood could lead to difficulty in learning and remembering things. Sometimes children may have hearing and speech problems, and their growth may also get stunted. When such children become adults they can't do the same work as others. During the early years of development of the brain if this deficiency is corrected, the child might be all right. But once the brain is damaged it can't be cured.

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Iodine deficiency can also result in goitre.







Babu held out a handful of iodized salt and explained about it.

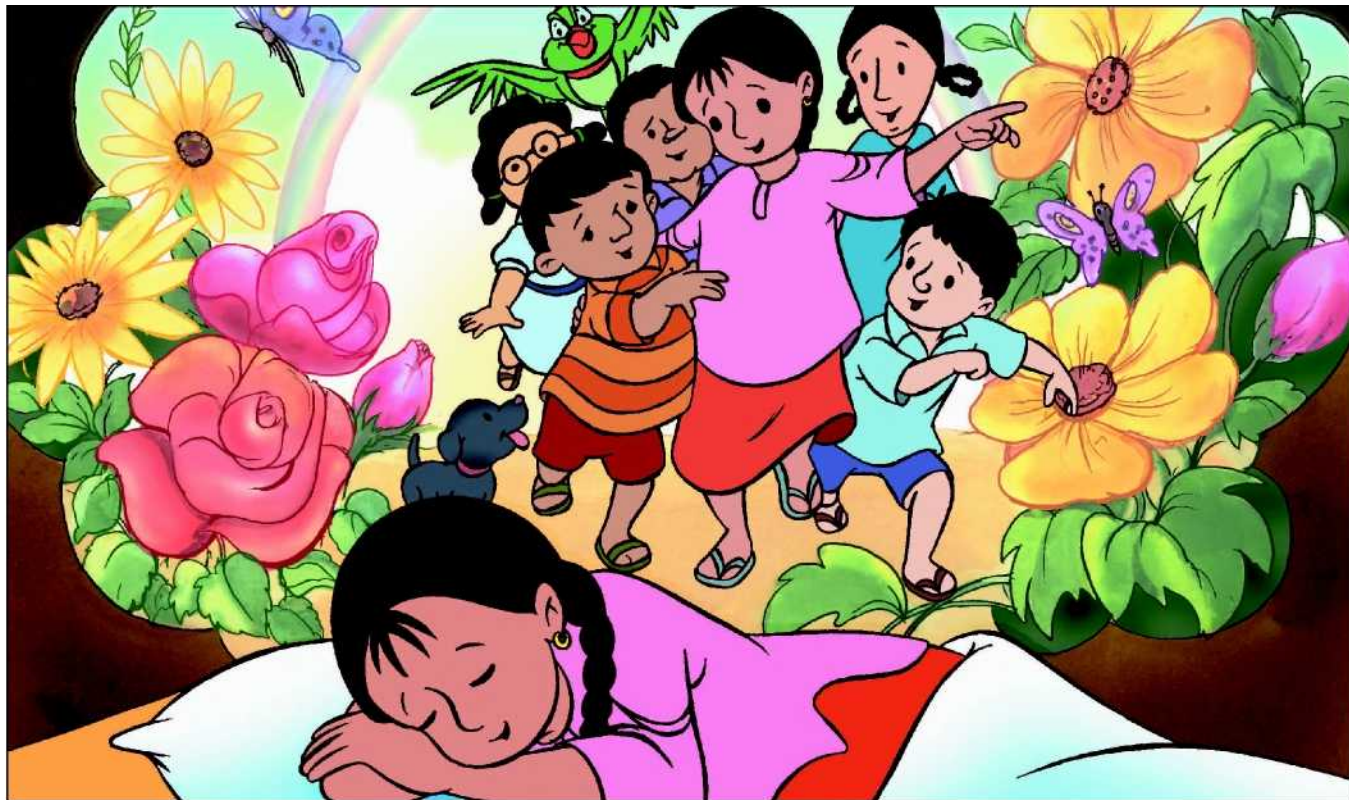


Mother and Father agreed that from then on they would only use iodised salt.





That night Meena had a dream in which Badol was playing happily with the other children. Everyone seemed to love him!



The next morning Meena felt sure that her dream would come true.



On the same day, Meena and Raju went to the market with their father.





Meena looked at the packet. She did not see the word 'iodised' printed on the packet.



Just then Babu appeared. He explained to his father, the shopkeeper, the importance of iodised salt, and he made him exchange the packet for the right one.



The next day in school, a worried Dipu told Meena and Raju that Kala, his little puppy, was missing. All his friends had searched for Kala.





Just then Badol scrambled up from a nearby ditch. He was dirty and messy, and cradled carefully in his arms, was Kala!





Dipu was overjoyed. He put an arm around Badol and asked him to be his friend. Badol smiled happily and Meena saw her dream coming true.



Soon after, Dr. Babu came to Meena's school. He showed the class how to test whether the salt is iodized.



This is what Babu taught Meena and her friends:



Take five grains of cooked rice on a plate.



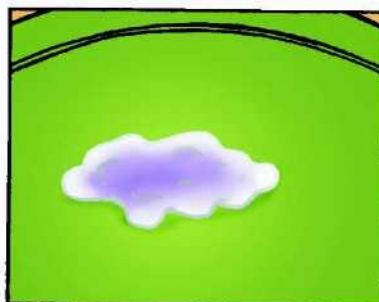
Add one teaspoonful of salt.



Mix well.



Add two drops of lemon juice.



If the salt is iodized, the mixture turns violet.



(UNICEF also distributes salt testing kits. Two drops of this solution added to a teaspoon of salt turns iodised salt violet.)

Meena, Raju, Badol, Dipu and of course Mithu, now tell everyone to make sure that iodised salt is used in the house. Do you use iodised salt in your house?





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