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## About the Journal

*The Primary Teacher* is a quarterly journal brought out by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi. It carries articles and research papers on educational policies and practices, and values material that is useful for practitioners in contemporary times. The journal also provides a forum to teachers to share their experiences and concerns about the schooling processes, curriculum, textbooks, teaching-learning and assessment practices. The papers for publication are selected on the basis of comments from two referees. The views expressed by individual authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the NCERT, or the views of the editor.

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NCERT Campus  
Sri Aurobindo Marg  
New Delhi 110016 Phone: 011-26562708

108, 100 Feet Road  
Hosdakere Halli Extension  
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## EDITORIAL

William Wordsworth famously said, “The child is the father of man”, which expresses the idea that character formed during childhood goes on to stay in adult life as well. Pedagogically, it implies that children have various abilities, multiple intelligences and varying preferred ways of learning. This issue of *The Primary Teacher* focuses on these aspects of education.

The first paper titled ‘Socio-emotional Impact of Popular English Nursery Rhymes on Children’ by Prachi Ghildyal discusses that the quality of the curriculum of a nation may be gauged by its relevance to the country’s sociocultural context and aspirations of members in that context. Considering the fact that childhood experiences often have lifelong impact, the paper tries to analyse nursery rhymes, a type of content in the preschool curriculum, and their socio-emotional impact on children. It also aims to sensitise schools, parents and teachers to be cautious about what they expose children to.

In the paper, ‘Inclusive Education and CWSN — Parental Concerns and Expectations’, author, Quazi Ferdoushi Islam, underlines the concerns and expectations of parents, whose Children with Special Needs (CWSN) are enrolled in regular government primary schools of Delhi.

In the article, ‘English in Science Textbooks’, author, Anagha Kerur, argues that vocabulary in science textbooks varies greatly from that in English textbooks, leading to a ‘gap’ in comprehension, particularly, among students with a limited exposure to the language in the early years of schooling. She underlines the challenges faced by the students in understanding various scientific concepts, and suggests that science and English teachers need to collaborate in order to help the students understand the scientific concepts better.

Sunita Singh, in the paper titled ‘Implementing Innovative Teaching-learning Classroom Practices’, emphasises the need for implementing strategies like constructivism, collaborative and cooperative learning, etc., in classrooms to ensure an interactive learning environment, fostering better comprehension of concepts by the students.

In the next article, Neeraja Rashmi writes about various women icons from North East India, who have been the harbingers of social change like Rani Gaidinliu, Chandraprava Saikiani, Mary Kom, Dipa Karmakar, N. Kunjarani Devi, Indira Raisom Goswami, Tine Mena, Maharaj Kumari Binodini Devi, Mamang Dai, Patricia Mukhim, etc.

Stress, particularly, academic stress, is common among students. In the paper titled 'Academic Stress — Analysis and Measures', Tanu Tandon presents case studies to bring forth the causes of stress among students and its harmful effects on them. The paper concludes with suggestions to make learning fun and stress free.

Manish Kumar, Poonam Panwar and Paran Gowda, in the article, 'Innovative Methods of teaching Yoga at the Primary Stage', emphasise that yoga must be introduced at the primary stage of education itself, as it promotes a healthy way of life. Being a continuation of the article by the same title carried in the July 2017 issue of the journal, it stresses that the young learners must be taught yoga terms in simple and practical manner through material like the 'ABC of the Yoga Chart'.

The issue also includes the Journal's regular features — 'From the States', 'Book Review', 'Did You Know' and 'My Page'.

In the 'From the States' section, author, V. George Fernandez, shares that print rich posters were introduced as a learning tool in government schools of Puducherry, after the National Achievement Survey (NAS)-2017 pointed out that the learning outcomes of students, studying at the elementary stage in government schools of the Union Territory, were below the national average.

In the 'Book Review' section, Varada M. Nikalje presents a review of the book, *Grandfather Gandhi*. She shares the impact that Mahatma Gandhi's teachings of truth, peace and non-violence had on his 12-year old grandchild, Arun. The book, presented through this 12-year old narrator, takes the readers to a sojourn to the Sevagram Ashram in Maharashtra, where Gandhi lived for close to two years after returning from South Africa.

In the 'Did You Know' section, author, Rashi Thapa, sheds light on the National Action Plan for Climate Change and the eight Missions launched as part of the plan, namely, National Solar Mission, National Mission on Enhanced Energy Efficiency, Green India Mission, National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem, National Mission on Sustainable Habitat, National Water Mission, National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture and National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change. These Missions aim to study and combat the adverse effects of the persistent climate change, plaguing the country.

In 'My Page', Akanksha Dwivedi writes about channelising classroom conflicts among primary stage students constructively and encouraging them to solve their problems independently.

— Academic Editors

### Socio-emotional Impact of Popular English Nursery Rhymes on Children

Prachi Ghildyal\*

#### Abstract

*The quality of the curriculum of a nation may be gauged by its relevance to the country's sociocultural context. The early years are the most significant for a child's overall development. Preschool education is the first stage of organised education. Therefore, the curriculum must aim at providing an emotionally supportive, culturally relevant, and interactive and friendly environment to young learners. This paper tries to sensitise schools, teachers and parents to be cautious about what they expose their children to. It also presents an analysis of English nursery rhymes, a type of content, usually, included in the preschool curriculum. It tries to study the socio-emotional impact of these nursery rhymes on the young minds.*

#### INTRODUCTION

The foundation of lifelong learning, inclusive and equitable quality education lies in the way children are prepared to approach schooling and learning. Research studies suggest that children learn well in language rich, joyful and play based environment (Makovichuk, Hewes, Lirette and Thomas, 2014). Nursery rhymes have been a part of preschool education in India for decades. They are fun to recite, and thus, can render

a conducive environment to children's holistic development. Language based play can serve as an effective medium to foster development in areas of physical health and well-being, language and cognitive development, and socio-emotional development (Mullen, 2017). However, one needs to be cautious about the socio-emotional impact that these resources have on the young minds.

This paper tries to analyse nursery rhymes, a type of resource often

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\*Assistant Professor, North East Regional Institute of Education, Shillong, Meghalaya.

used in the preschool curriculum in India. It attempts to sensitise the educational stakeholders, most importantly, parents and teachers, about the kind of rhymes the young minds are exposed to. This, however, is not an exhaustive analysis.

Merely memorising the content is not enough. One needs to ensure whatever children learn is fun, meaningful and useful.

The genesis of many English rhymes reveals that they originated in different cultural contexts and periods. However, it must be noted that the contexts, in which they were first written, were very different from the twenty-first century, and therefore, they may appear incongruous to some extent. Hence, a major determinant of the quality of preschool education would be the curriculum. Among other things, the quality of the curriculum may be gauged by its relevance to the sociocultural context.

Preschoolers in India are parroted to recite a number of nursery rhymes. These may be in the local or regional language, as well as, English, depending on the policy followed by the school and the State. However, quite a number of parents aspire that their children speak in English from a young age due to the social status attached to the language. Therefore, most preschools teach English nursery rhymes, which have originated in different cultural contexts and periods, to children.

## OBJECTIVES

- To analyse popular English nursery rhymes with respect to their socio-emotional impact on children
- To build a rationale for using socio-emotionally appropriate nursery rhymes in preschool

## ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH NURSERY RHYMES

Children, studying in preschool, repeat rhymes after the teacher without understanding the meaning. It is observed that the 'rhyme' only 'rhymes' and helps the children focus just on the 'sounds'. This paper analyses four popular English nursery rhymes, which almost every child attending preschool is parroted in the classroom to recite.

### **Jack and Jill...**

The striking feature of this rhyme is its content. It seems illogical to go uphill to fetch water as it characteristically always flows downwards. Further, the consequences for both Jack and Jill of taking up the task prove to be risky and harmful. However, it is observed that most children enjoy the rhyme and the action lying therein.

*Jack and Jill went up the hill  
To fetch a pail of water.  
Jack fell down and broke his crown,  
And Jill came tumbling after.*



### ***Mickey on the railway line...***

The rhyme talks about Mickey, a piggy, walking on a railway line. While collecting stones on the railway track, Mickey is knocked down by a train engine. Mickey seems upset over the incident and complains about it to the engine driver, who does not pay heed to it. It seems that the rhyme is implicitly teaching children not to care about others and be indifferent to situations, where a person is in pain or meets an accident. There is ample research on subliminal studies, indicating how attitudes are influenced by imperceptible messages.

*Mickey on the railway picking up stones  
Down came an engine and broke Mickey's bones  
Ha, said Mickey, that's not fair  
Oh, said the engine driver, I don't care.*

### ***Johnny, Johnny...***

It is a popular rhyme and probably one of the first that a child learns to recite at school. On the surface, it seems to be a fun rhyme about a naughty little boy named 'Johnny'. However, an in-depth analysis gives a different impression of the father, who makes the child open the mouth to check if

*Johnny, Johnny.  
Yes, papa?  
Eating sugar?  
No, papa.  
Telling lies?  
No, papa.  
Open your mouth.  
Ha ha ha!*

he is 'lying'. If the child has actually been eating sugar and denying it, then the negative trait of lying gets communicated. Therefore, if Johnny is not eating sugar and is saying so but the father does not believe him, then this conveys distrust on the part of a parent. However, one may interpret the last line, i.e., "Ha, ha, ha", as a happy ending, emphasising the fun content.

### ***Rain, rain, go away...***

This is a fun rhyme, which most children are taught to recite at school. The rhyme was created in England, where rain was a daily affair. This rhyme appears to be in tandem with the expression of children worldwide and India is no exception as many do not want rain to play a spoilsport while they joyfully play outdoor games. However, with India, primarily, being an agricultural country, rain is associated with positive imagery. It is looked forward to by all, especially, children, who enjoy playing in the rain like sailing paper boats on rainwater, etc.

*Rain, rain, go away  
Come again another day.  
Rain, rain, go away  
Little Johnny wants to play.*

### **CONCLUSION**

It may, thus, be inferred that mere memorisation of rhymes makes a child secretly abhor the noble values of empathy, tolerance and sensitivity. It is observed that children simply repeat rhymes without understanding

the meaning. Therefore, it is important to consider the impact of nursery rhymes on children as they implicitly affect their behaviour, thoughts and beliefs. There are several research studies, indicating that the brain may be programmed or influenced subliminally. It needs to be studied

the way the meaning of the rhymes is explained by parents and teachers as it greatly influences the young minds. Moreover, care must be taken in selecting what the young learners are exposed to in the form of rhymes, lullabies and stories, as these shape their core values.

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## Inclusive Education and CWSN — Parental Concerns and Expectations

Quazi Ferdoushi Islam\*

### Abstract

*There has been an increase in awareness advocacy regarding inclusion in education by various stakeholders, including organisations at the national and international level. Policies and initiatives across the globe have addressed the issue of introducing and implementing measures to facilitate meaningful participation of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in regular schools. The Central and State governments in India, too, have been implementing programmes and policies for the inclusion of CWSN in regular schools. The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, also guarantees free education to every child in the age group of 6–14 years. But a reality check at seven government and municipal schools in two districts of Delhi (East and North East Delhi) reveals that these children are still amongst the most disadvantaged in terms of access to schooling and completion of education, as their basic needs are not yet being met. This paper highlights some of the concerns and expectations of parents of CWSN, studying at primary government or municipal schools in East and North East Delhi.*

### INTRODUCTION

*The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994, to which India, too, is a signatory, endorses inclusive schools by introducing practical and strategic changes to education. India has also agreed to follow the recommendations of several conventions*

*of the United Nations (UN) with regard to the education of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) in regular schools. Several policies by the Government of India, such as the *National Policy for Persons with Disabilities–2006*, underline the urgency of providing inclusive education. The RTE Act, 2009, guarantees free education*

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\*Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

to every child in the age group of 6–14 years. However, there exists confusion and ambiguity regarding the practice of inclusive education with respect to children with disabilities (Singhal, 2012). This has led to misinterpretation, and consequently, uneven implementation of policies at the grass-roots level.

### OBJECTIVES

- To highlight the concerns of parents of CWSN on the existing condition in government schools of Delhi
- To highlight the concerns of parents of CWSN regarding the future of their wards

### SAMPLE

A total of 17 parents were randomly selected as sample for the study from seven government and municipal schools in East and North East Delhi.

### METHODOLOGY

The paper represents qualitative research that focuses on understanding concepts, opinions and experiences. Narrative approach has been followed, i.e., obtaining information through open-ended and conversational communication (interview). Thematic analysis, a qualitative data analysis technique, involving reading through a data set like transcripts of interviews, has been followed to conduct the study.

### FINDINGS

#### **Inclusivity boosts children's confidence**

Most parents shared that CWSN displayed greater confidence and better social skills in an inclusive set-up. They said their wards shared incidents that took place at school regularly like friends and teachers helping them perform classroom activities, and mingling with neighbours after returning home, etc.

#### **Mockery, taunts and jibes**

Three parents shared their wards were often subjected to jibes and taunts, especially, name calling, which lowered their morale. They said many a time, their children were addressed as 'mad' by classmates. A parent shared that his child was labeled 'deaf', while another lamented that her child was called 'lame'. As a result, many children with disabilities developed inferiority complex. Most of the time, they were often seen angry and frustrated, or scared.

But neither the parents, nor their children complained about these unpleasant incidences to the school authorities. Besides, the parents did not even approach any social organisation or a counselor.

#### **Schools must empower children**

The parents shared that they wanted the schools to empower their children.

Talking about the importance of school, a parent quipped, “It is a place, where our children get education, which helps them earn livelihood, become independent and empowered when they grow up, thereby, earning them respect.”

### **Regular schools a preferred choice among parents**

Most parents preferred regular schools to those specifically meant for specially abled children. In fact, many shared that their children had been studying in regular schools right from Class I. Almost all of them shared that their children participated in all activities, including classroom learning, just like their peers, at regular schools. Moreover, regular schools are more easily available than special ones. Also, many parents were unaware that special schools for CWSN, especially, those with intellectual impairment, actually existed. This is all the more important as these parents live in the national Capital.

However, it needs to be realised that education can benefit CWSN only when they feel they belong to the common ‘mainstream’ education system. Inclusive education is, thus, one of the most effective ways to promote an inclusive society.

### **Lack of accurate and timely information**

Most parents interviewed came from weak financial backgrounds and were not aware of government initiatives and policies regarding PWDs. To

them, the only source of information was the ‘school’ or a family member of a disabled student studying in the school.

### **Social adjustment problems**

Parents’ responses regarding sending their wards with special needs to inclusive schools were varied. Some of their main concerns are as follows.

- Many expressed concern about the academic and social adjustment of their wards in regular schools. CWSN, generally, faced difficulty in adjusting with their environment unlike others. The physical environment at most government and municipal schools surveyed is not conducive for CWSN. As a result, these children are unable to actively participate in many activities at school and are often teased.
- Many parents expressed concern that their wards had to use common toilets, which lacked basic infrastructure required for PWDs.

### **CORROBORATION WITH INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Researches indicate that all learners benefit from inclusive classrooms (Wilms, 1999). Further, studies suggest that a family’s socio-economic condition also significantly influences the chances of a student completing high school, and in turn, get employment opportunities (Gollnick and Chinn, 2009).

This corroborates with an international finding, indicating that pupils with special education needs in mainstream schools are less socially accepted and more socially rejected than mainstream pupils (Frederickson, et al., 2004).

### **WAY FORWARD**

Some innovative initiatives may be adopted by schools to ensure better facilities and environment for the education of CWSN.

As schools are the primary source of information to parents, they must provide accurate and timely information about the latest government policies, benefits and redressal mechanisms for CWSN, apart from guiding them on how to avail those facilities.

In situations, where CWSN are subjected to taunts and jibes, parents should immediately inform the school authorities as the RTE Act, 2009, ensures prompt redressal of grievances related to PWDs.

A self-help group for parents of CWSN must be constituted in each school. These groups must consist of teachers as members, apart from parents and student volunteers.

The group must share vital information regarding CWSN with parents and help them in case a need arises. Research studies indicate that such groups involve the active participation of parents, offer information on vocational training and production centres for individuals with mental retardation (Rao and Sivakumar, 2003). Moreover, access to organisations and agencies that work and employ differently abled people must be ensured as it will allay concerns among parents regarding job prospects for their wards.

### **CONCLUSION**

Inclusive education is one of the major interventions of the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, RTE Act, 2009, and many other government schemes and policies. From the findings, it may be inferred that measures to facilitate meaningful participation of parents (of CWSN) and schools must be initiated at the grass-roots level to achieve inclusive education in its true spirit. Schools must also work towards providing an inclusive environment to all students, including CWSN, in order to achieve their overall and holistic development.

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## WEBSITES

<http://mhrd.gov.in/sarva-shiksha-abhiyan>

## English in Science Textbooks

Anagha Kerur\*

### Abstract

*There is a difference in the kind of English vocabulary and language used in literature and science textbooks. Students in the early classes, generally, learn the English alphabet, rhymes and few new words. As they reach higher classes, they are taught grammar and vocabulary, in terms of multiple meanings and complex sentence structures. But English language in science textbooks is entirely different from English textbooks even at the primary stage. So, children with a limited exposure to English language have to put in an extra effort to understand the terminologies and concepts as elaborated (in English) in the science textbooks. Many experience a 'gap' between the English they learn to speak and write, and that used in science textbooks. So, they need help in understanding the concepts explained in the textbooks, which many a time, they are unable to comprehend. Even if they happen to comprehend a concept, they are unable to articulate it fluently. This paper discusses how a little collaboration between science and English teachers can help the students understand the scientific terms and concepts discussed in the science textbooks better.*

### INTRODUCTION

Most teachers would agree that students with a limited exposure to English language in the early grades have to put in an extra effort to catch up with their peers, who may be proficient in it. However, these students may, gradually, achieve reasonable fluency in the language (both written and spoken), if regular exposure

and adequate exercises or practice sessions are ensured. But a number of students would still experience a 'gap' between communicative English and that used in science textbooks, and hence, may not be able to understand many concepts. The main reason behind this is that most students bank on rote learning, irrespective of the subject (Arora and Arora, 2017).

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\* Freelance Writer and Postgraduate Student, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, Tamil Nadu.



The unfamiliar concepts and theories in science textbooks add to the confusion. Science teachers are often seen sharing that students face difficulty in comprehending the concepts and theories explained in the textbooks, which are in English. It is, therefore, inferred that the language of science textbooks is new to them and the students need help in understanding the concepts explained therein. Many a time, it is noticed that even if they happen to comprehend a concept, they are unable to articulate it fluently in English or even their native language.

### TEACHER COLLABORATION

At the primary stage, the child should be engaged in exploring the world around and harmonising with it. The objectives at this stage are to nurture the curiosity of the child about the world (natural environment, artifacts and people), engage in exploratory and hands-on activities in order to acquire the basic cognitive skills (psychomotor, observation, classification, inference, etc.); emphasise on design and fabrication, estimation and measurement as a prelude to the development of technological and quantitative skills at later stages; and develop basic language skills — listening, speaking, reading and writing not only for science but also through science (*National Curriculum Framework, 2005*).

The scenario, thus, demands collaboration between English and science teachers, which may benefit the students. They must work

closely on classroom activities like book reading (reading aloud), etc. As the students participate in such activities, a teacher may identify gaps like mispronunciation, etc. One may also ask the meaning of difficult words or terms to the students and explain those in simple language to ensure comprehension.

At the start of every week, all teachers must chalk out a ‘monthly lesson plan’, which must include things like chapters to be covered, projects and assignments to be given to the students, etc. A science teacher must share the topics one plans to teach during the week with the English teacher. For example, the science chapter to be taught is ‘Water’, wherein, the concept of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ water is explained. The English teacher must oneself read the chapter first. In the classroom, one may talk about verbs associated with ‘water’ like ‘boil’, ‘flow’, ‘lather’, etc., with the students before the science teacher actually takes the class. The English teacher may also ask the students for the equivalents for ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ water in their native languages.

The science teacher may introduce certain new words that may occur in the chapter in way of fun exercises. One may start with simple words and, gradually, introduce three to four (relatable) new (scientific) words. The teacher may also ask the students about the things that plants need to survive. One of the things necessary for plant growth and survival is ‘water’. Gradually, the teacher may introduce the students to words like

melt, combine, evaporate, condense, etc. This would ensure that the students do not get perplexed when these words appear in the textbook.

Therefore, the science teacher must first present the subject matter in simple vocabulary and sentence structure. For example, if it is written that “some water is hard”, it means that such water has a high mineral content. It reduces the cleansing capacity of soaps and does not lather easily. When hard water is boiled in a pan, a layer of a hard substance called ‘fur’ gets separated, which may be seen settling to its bottom and sides.

After introducing the chapter like this, the concepts contained, therein, are understandable to the students. The teacher may now proceed with reading the text, which may be somewhat like this — “Some water is said to be ‘hard’; it does not lather readily when soap is used. The reason is that it contains traces of Calcium compound, which may have come through rocks in the Earth through which it has flowed. When a pan of hard water is boiled, a layer of hard substance is deposited on the bottom and sides of the pan.”

It would further be helpful, if the English teacher has already introduced ‘passive voice’ to the students a couple of days ago. However, it need not involve teaching the ‘Active and Passive Voice’ with its range of rules. It could just be as simple as asking the students to notice that these are the two ways of expressing the same idea. The following are a few examples.

- 1(a) People say that some water is ‘hard’. (Everyday language)
- 1(b) Some water is said to be ‘hard’. (Language in science textbooks)
- 2 (a) You could see steam coming out. (Everyday language)
- 2 (b) Steam could be seen coming out. (Language in science textbooks)

The next day, the English teacher may ask the students about new words that they have learnt in the science class. One must ensure that the students understand the meaning of words like ‘layer’ and ‘lather’, etc.

The English teacher may also introduce the concept of nouns made out of verbs by adding suffixes like ‘ment’ (as in ‘treatment’), ‘th’ (as in ‘growth’), etc.

The teacher may make the students aware that there are some verbs, which remain unchanged when used as nouns, for example, change, shape, supply, deposit, lather, etc.

At some point, the English teacher may introduce the practice of ‘omission’ in language. As science favours conciseness, omission is practised more in the discipline. Students must be explained that omission of certain (redundant) words does not change or alter the meaning of a sentence but makes it more concise, like the English teacher may write the following on the board.

Chlorine is poisonous to bacteria in water but it is not poisonous to human beings.

The students may be given a minute or two to read and understand the sentence, and asked if a word or two may be deleted, without changing the meaning. After listening to their responses, the teacher may encircle the words that the students suggest may be deleted. Now, the sentence may somewhat look like this.

Chlorine is poisonous to bacteria in water but it is not poisonous to humans.

The teacher may give one or two more such examples.

The science teacher may also come up with a simple 'match the following' exercise to make the students recapitulate the concepts learnt. Column A may have new words or terminologies, while Column B may list a short explanation or definition of these. The teacher may write the exercise on the blackboard for the students.

Meanwhile, the English teacher may help the students recall 'Passive Voice' a week later, taking up one or two examples from the science textbook.

Thus, a detailed knowledge of children's early abilities allows

optimal adaptation of instruction to their individual needs. Quality teaching is the greatest influence on students' engagement and outcomes in school (Hattie and Yates, 2014).

## CONCLUSION

In all four familiar areas of the school curriculum, i.e., language, mathematics, science and social sciences, significant changes are recommended with a view to making education more relevant to the present day and future needs, and alleviate the stress with which children are coping today (*National Curriculum Framework*, 2005).

These are just a few ideas. If carried out jointly by English and science teachers, these may help the students understand the concepts and terminologies encapsulated in science textbooks in a better way. Therefore, teachers, teaching at the primary stage, must see to it that they work as a team while planning the lessons to be taught and introduce innovative methodology to foster active and participatory learning, which, in turn, would lead to clearer understanding of concepts by the students.

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# 4

## Implementing Innovative Teaching–learning Classroom Practices

Sunita Singh\*

### Abstract

*Educational reforms are carried out from time-to-time to meet the needs of an ever evolving society. In the last two decades, particularly, societies across the globe have witnessed rapid changes. But education systems seem to lag behind in many parts of the world, including India. Here, many schools still stick to decades' old conventional teaching–learning practices like chalk and talk, and lecture method, which are not sufficient to meet the needs of today's generation of learners. However, the past two decades have witnessed many schools turning to innovative teaching–learning practices to ensure active student participation in classrooms. This is a major drift from the time when students were mere passive learners and classrooms were teacher-centered. Innovative teaching–learning practices based on constructivist approach like collaborative and cooperative learning need to be incorporated in the classrooms so that the students are shaped into active learners, reflective thinkers and skilful communicators. This paper discusses the various teaching–learning strategies based on constructivist approaches that are important for education in a 'knowledge society'.*

### INTRODUCTION

Education is considered to be an important tool that prepares children for the future. The progress of a nation depends on the quality of education being imparted to its students. Therefore, teachers must see to it that their teaching is geared towards

achieving the all-round development of the students. The *National Curriculum Framework (NCF)–2005* quotes Mahatma Gandhi as saying, “True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical facilities of the children.” The objective of teaching, therefore,

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\* Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

is not merely providing information to the students but imparting useful knowledge related to their day-to-day life. Further, the teaching of a subject must be such that can stimulate the students to think critically, solve problems and make decisions.

But most teachers still use conventional methods of teaching. Classes are driven by teacher's talk and are dependent heavily on textbooks, where a teacher merely imparts bookish knowledge to the students, who receive it passively. Teachers encourage rote learning of answers more than exploration of questions, which reflects memorisation at the expense of critical thinking. Moreover, they do not encourage the students to work together, share ideas and discuss a concept or topic with each other. All they focus on is maintaining the classroom 'discipline' and completing the syllabus on time, without ensuring if the students have understood the concepts covered therein.

This has led to an adverse impact on groups of students placed in a disadvantageous position. The disadvantaged group of students includes girls, children from rural and tribal areas, those coming from economically backward categories, and *divyang* (physically and mentally challenged children). Such children may come from homes that are not conducive to education. Besides, they often do not have the advantage of discussing the concepts learnt at school with their parents or older

siblings (who may be unschooled). Further, their own experiences, such as traditional knowledge of medicinal herbs or looking after younger siblings, seem to have no linkage with the school curriculum. So, when discussion among peers is not encouraged, they perform poorly in academics, which may lead to absenteeism, and perhaps, dropout in the long run.

Therefore, the teacher must use innovative methods to make the teaching-learning process more interesting and effective. This may be facilitated by the use of approaches, such as constructivism, cooperative and collaborative learning, etc.

### **CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH**

The 'theory of constructivism' refers to the way learners construct their own knowledge from experience, which is unique to each individual. It suggests that learners construct knowledge on the basis of interactions with their surroundings rather than just passively absorbing information. These interactions provide the learners with evidences and opportunities for experimentation with the world, and thus, help 'construct' one's own knowledge rather than assimilate a body of 'dictated' information.

Many research studies suggest that constructivism has a positive role in the pedagogy of teaching, which can develop problem solving abilities, and critical and reflective thinking skills in students (Singh and Yaduvanshi, 2015).

A constructivist classroom provides opportunities (to students) to observe, work, explore, interact, raise questions and share their discoveries with all (Kumar and Gupta, 2009). Nayar and Senapaty (2011) observe that the constructivist approach is more effective than traditional instruction in promoting creativity, reflective skills and enhancing the interest of students in mathematics. Moreover, the teacher, too, continuously evaluates one's teaching practices and thinks of ways to improve the learning and understanding of the students.

### **Constructivist teaching models**

There are several constructivist models that may be used for designing effective learning experiences for students.

#### **Gagnon and Collay model**

This model includes six steps, which are as follows.

- Develop a situation
- Grouping (of materials and students)
- Bridging (linking new knowledge with previous one)
- Asking questions
- Exhibiting (a record of their comprehension by sharing it with others)
- Reflection (on their learning)

#### **Information Construction (ICON) model**

This model, developed by McClintock and Black, contains seven stages, which are as follows.

- Observation
- Interpretation of construction
- Contextualisation
- Cognitive apprenticeship
- Collaboration
- Multiple interpretations
- Multiple manifestations

#### **5Es model**

This model, consisting of five phases, by Roger Bybee may be implemented in science classes. The five 'Es' are discussed as follows.

##### ***Engage***

This phase draws a connection between previous and current learning experiences, focusing the students' attention more on current activities. The teacher's role is to present a situation before the students so that they may delve into the concept, process or skill to be learned.

##### ***Explore***

The teacher designs some learning activities so that the students have common and concrete experiences upon which they continue building concepts, processes and skills. The aim of this phase is to establish experiences that the teachers and the students may later use for formal introduction and discussion.

##### ***Explain***

This helps the students explain the concepts that they have already explored. The teacher focuses their attention on specific aspects of the engagement and exploration of

experiences. The key aim of this phase is to present concepts, processes or skills briefly, simply, clearly and directly to the learners, and move on to the next phase.

### ***Elaborate***

This phase extends the students' conceptual understanding and allows them to practise the acquired skills and behaviour.

### ***Evaluate***

This phase encourages the learners to assess their understanding and abilities, and allows the teachers to evaluate their understanding of key concepts and skills.

## **COLLABORATIVE AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING**

These two pedagogical practices have emerged from social constructivist approaches. When it comes to students working together, the terms 'collaborative' and 'cooperative' learning are often used interchangeably. Both emphasise the social contexts of learning, and that knowledge is mutually built and co-constructed. While the goal of both is same, i.e., to provide the students with opportunities so that they may engage with each other in meaningful learning, it is important to understand the difference between the two.

'Collaboration' is a concept that shifts the paradigm of teaching-learning from teacher-centered settings to learner-centered, making it interactive and participatory, i.e., ensuring

student-student and student-teacher interactions. Collaborative learning is a broad term for a variety of educational approaches, involving joint intellectual effort by learners, or learners and teachers together (Barkley, et al., 2014). It is the intentional grouping and pairing of learners to achieve a common learning goal. It is based on the idea that information that is discussed is etched in the memory. The concept of collaborative learning developed from Vygotsky's idea of the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD), which takes into account what a student can learn in collaboration with peers and adults. It, thus, implies that students can actively participate and also have individual attainments in this kind of an atmosphere. Learners engaged in enquiry based collaborative learning develop content knowledge and learn important twenty-first century skills, such as the ability to work in teams, solve complex problems and apply the knowledge gained through one lesson or task to other circumstances (Barron and Darling-Hammond, 2008).

'Cooperative learning' is a group learning activity, where the learner is responsible for one's own learning and is motivated to increase others' learning (Kagan and Kagan, 1994; Wendy, 2007; Barkley, et al., 2005). According to the Johnson and Johnson Model, cooperative learning is instruction that involves students, working in teams, to accomplish a common goal under a condition that includes the following elements.

### **Positive interdependence**

Team members have to depend on each other. If a team member fails, it adversely affects everyone.

### **Individual accountability**

All students in the group are held accountable for doing their share of work. However, they gain knowledge of the whole task in the process.

### **Face-to-face interaction**

Although some of the group work may be done individually, some must be done only by interacting with the group members, providing necessary feedback, and teaching and encouraging each other.

### **Using collaborative skills**

The group members are encouraged to develop and practise trust building, leadership, decision making, communication and conflict management skills.

### **Group processing**

The team members set group goals, periodically assess themselves as a team and identify changes they require to make in order to function more efficiently and effectively.

### **CONCLUSION**

Traditional pedagogical approaches, generally, followed in Indian classrooms encourage rote learning, memorisation and passive acceptance of knowledge by young learners. These practices may be replaced by incorporating constructivist approaches in the classroom, and also including collaborative and cooperative learning strategies to ensure better learning and active student participation. Implementing these innovative teaching-learning strategies may help develop necessary competencies and skills in the learners, enabling them to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

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## Women Icons from North East India

Neeraja Rashmi\*

### Abstract

*Surrounded by the eastern Himalayan ranges, North East India comprises the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The region is distinguished by its uneven terrain, multiplicity of ethnic communities and a rich cultural heritage. There is a high concentration of tribal population in the States of Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, and also in some of the hilly districts of Manipur, Assam and Tripura. But due to its location and terrain, the region has for long remained isolated from the rest of the country. So, not much is known about the valour and achievements of women from the area, who have been the harbingers of social change. This article gives a glimpse of the contributions made by some of these women icons in various walks of life as varied as Freedom Struggle, sports and arts.*

### INTRODUCTION

With a variety of cuisine, crafts, languages, flora and fauna, North East India has a fascinating mosaic of culture. Rich in indigenous diversity, the region is home to many tribes, each with its unique beliefs, traditions and customs. Women in the region, like the entire India, are, primarily, conditioned to do household and

agrarian chores. But many have broken the patriarchal shackles and proven their mettle in a myriad of fields like Freedom Struggle, sports, arts, music, literature, journalism, etc.

### WOMEN IN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT

The role and contribution of women in India's Freedom Struggle has been remarkable. Women from Manipur, too,

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\* Professor, Department of Education in Social Sciences, NCERT, New Delhi.

have actively participated in scripting the history of the country. Their struggle against British colonisers dates back to the first decade of the twentieth century. *Nupi Lan*, meaning war led by women, is an important movement in the history of Manipur. Manipuri women waged two historic *Nupi Lans* in 1904 and 1939 against the British.



Figure 1: Manipuri women fought *Nupi Lans* against the British in 1904 and 1939.

The first *Nupi Lan* (1904) was a revolt against the British imperialists for enforcing *Lallup* (forced labour) on men in the State. Many women united to protest against the British atrocities and razed the bungalow of a British agent. They even set ablaze stalls at Khwairamband Bazar in Imphal, Manipur.

The second *Nupi Lan* was fought in the year 1939 at the time of the World War-II. Women waged this war against the indiscriminate export of rice from Manipur by Marwari traders, who enjoyed British patronage. This practice of rice export had led to a famine-like situation in Manipur even though it being the harvest season.

These *Nupi Lans* against the oppressive policies of the British colonisers are indicative of the leadership role played by women in the North East and also their ability to mobilise themselves socially.

The contribution of women activists in the Freedom Struggle does not end here. In 1942, many women in Assam, too, joined the Quit India Movement and laid down their lives. A special mention may be made of **Kanaklata**, a teenaged girl, who died in police firing while trying to hoist the National Flag at a police station in Gohpur.

### ***Ima Keithel***

Meaning women's market, *Ima Keithel* is located at the same place in Imphal, where the first *Nupi Lan* was fought. It is one of India's largest markets run and managed by women. Men are allowed here only as customers. The unique market consists of 3,000 *Imas* (mothers), running the stalls. It is divided into two sections. Vegetables, fruits, fish and grocery items are sold on one side of the road, while handloom and household items on the other.



Figure 2: *Ima Keithel* in Imphal, Manipur

Her undying spirit and patriotism became a source of inspiration for the people of Assam and the entire India. She went on to acquire the status of a 'legend' in the Assamese culture and many folk songs were composed in her honour.

**'Rani' Gaidinliu** of Manipur, born in 1915, who belonged to the Kabui Naga tribe, joined the movement at the age of 13 years. In 1932, she was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. She was kept in different jails in Imphal, Shillong, Aizawl, etc., till India gained Independence.



*Figure 3: A stamp issued in the memory of Rani Gaidinliu of Manipur*

Jawaharlal Nehru, who became the first Prime Minister of India, met her first at the Tura Jail in Shillong in 1937. He was so impressed with her grit and valour that he called her the 'Daughter of the Hills' and bestowed her with the title of 'Rani' (queen). After being released from jail in 1947, Rani Gaidinliu spent the rest of her life

serving the people. The Government of India recognised her as a 'freedom fighter' and awarded her with the Tamra Patra Freedom Fighter Award in 1972. Commemorative stamps worth ₹5 and ₹100 were issued in her honour in the year 1996, while the Government of India issued coins of the same denomination on her 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary in 2015. The Indian Coast Guard also commissioned a patrol vessel called 'Rani Gaidinliu' in her honour.

**Chandraprava Saikiani**, born in 1901, was a freedom fighter, social activist, writer and crusader of the feminist movement in Assam. She actively participated in the Non-cooperation Movement of 1920–21 and the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932. At the age of 17 years, as a student leader, she vehemently spoke against the ill effects of opium and demanded a ban on its cultivation throughout the State. To give voice to several voiceless women, she set up the Asom Pradeshik Mahila Samiti at Dhubri in 1926. In 1948, Saikiani protested against temples for not allowing entry to women. She also raised her voice against child marriage, polygamy and old men marrying small age girls. The Government of India honoured her with the Padma Shri posthumously in 1972. The government also issued a commemorative stamp in her honour under the series titled 'Social Reformers' in the year 2002.



Figure 4: Olympian Mary Kom from Manipur

## WOMEN IN SPORTS

Boxing was predominantly considered to be a male bastion prior to the entry of Olympian, Mangte Chungneijang Mary Kom, popularly known as **Mary Kom**, from Manipur. From being a poor tenant farmer's daughter to becoming an Olympian (winning the Bronze medal in 2012) and a six-time champion in the World Amateur Boxing Championship tournaments, her journey is an inspiration to many (especially, women) across the globe. She has received many awards like the Arjuna Award, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan. She is the first amateur



Figure 5: Olympian Dipa Karmakar from Tripura

athlete to be awarded with the Padma Bhushan. At present, she is serving as a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha.

Tripura's **Dipa Karmakar** is the first woman gymnast from India to qualify

for the Olympics. She bagged the fourth position in the Women's Vault finals at the Olympic Games held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2016. She, too, has received many awards like the Arjuna Award, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award and Padma Shri.

**N. Kunjarani Devi** is a celebrated weightlifter from Manipur. She participated in the Olympics in 2004 and bagged the fourth position. As of now, she has participated in various weightlifting world championship tournaments and has made the country proud by winning many medals. She has also won three gold medals in the 2002 Commonwealth Games. She is the recipient of the Arjuna Award, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award and Padma Shri.



Figure 6: Weightlifting champion N. Kunjarani Devi from Manipur

**Tine Mena** of Arunachal Pradesh is the second Indian to hoist the Tricolour on the peak of the Mount Everest, after Bachendri Pal. The Mount Everest is the highest peak in the world at a height of 8,848 metres. Undeterred by the strong gales and heavy snowfall, she scaled the Everest from its southern side.

She worked as a porter and tree cutter that earned her ₹1,500 a month, which she used to support her training. Even after receiving the news about her mother's demise during the expedition, Mena continued with her journey to the top.

### EXERCISING THE POWER OF THE PEN

**Indira Raisom Goswami**, popularly known as Mamoni Baideo, wrote in Assamese. Goswami, a young widow, started her career as a school teacher in Assam, and went on to become a professor of Assamese at the Delhi University. She started writing at the age of 13 years. Her writings depict the miseries suffered by the downtrodden in society. Her novel, *Datal Hatir Une Khowa Howda (The Moth Eaten Howdah of a Tusker)*, revolves around the lives of three Brahmin widows at *Satra* (religious institutions in Assam). In *Chhinnamastar Manuh To (The Man from Chinnamasta)*, she wrote a critique on the tradition of animal sacrifice in temples. Goswami's another novel,



Figure 7: Litterateur Indira Raisom Goswami from Assam is a Jnanpith Award recipient.

*Neelkanthi Braj (The Blue-necked God)*, depicts the apathetic attitude of the society towards widows. She has also written novels and short stories on riots, construction labourers, labour unions, labour strikes, etc., in the backdrop of Delhi. Her autobiography is titled *Adha Lekha Dastabej (The Unfinished Autobiography)*. She received the Sahitya Akademy Award for her novel, *Mamore Dhora Torowal (The Rusted Sword)*. She went on to win the country's highest literary award, the Jnanpith Award, for her contribution to literature, becoming the second Assamese writer to be, thus, honoured.

**Maharaj Kumari Binodini Devi** was a revered writer, lyricist, sculptor and painter from Manipur. Devi was born in a royal family of Manipur in 1922. She has written many novels and short stories based on her experiences in the palace and lives of royals. Her collection of short stories titled *Nunggairakta Chandramukhi (Chrysanthemums among the Rocks)* established her in the world of

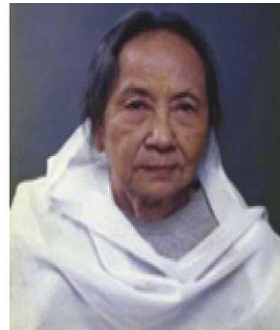


Figure 8: Maharaj Kumari Binodini Devi, a celebrated writer and artist from Manipur

Manipuri literature. She received the Sahitya Akademi Award and Manipur's State Kala Akademy Award for her novel, *Boro Saheb Ongbi Sanatombi (The Princess and the Political Agent)*, and the Padma Shri for her contribution in the field of art and literature. She also directed a ballet called *Sangai*, which is based on the endangered brow-antlered deer of Manipur, and also introduced *Thang-ta*, a Manipuri martial art form on stage. *Thang-ta* is now one of the recognised martial art forms in India. Devi was instrumental in establishing the Manipur Film Development Corporation, Manipur Polo Association, Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy and several other organisations for the promotion of arts, dance and music.

**Mamang Dai** is a poet, author and journalist from Arunachal Pradesh, who writes in English. A former member of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), she quit the civil services to pursue journalism and writing. She has written and published many books of poetry like *River Poems* (2004) and *Midsummer Survival Lyrics* (2014). She has also written a book titled *Arunachal Pradesh — The Hidden Land*, which documents the culture and customs of the State, with a guide about the places to visit and colourful photographs. She has also written many novels based on the history of Arunachal Pradesh and short stories for children.

**Patricia Mukhim** from Meghalaya is one of the most celebrated journalists from the North East.

Women Icons from North East India



Figure 9: Journalist Patricia Mukhim from Meghalaya is a Padma Shri recipient.

She is the *Editor* of *The Shillong Times*, Meghalaya's oldest and largest circulated English newspaper. She regularly contributes to newspapers like *The Telegraph*, *The Statesman*, *The Assam Tribune* and *Shillong Times*. A Padma Shri recipient, Mukhim started her career as a teacher and later switched to writing and journalism.

## NURTURING MUSIC

Born in a conservative family of Nagaon Assam, **Begum Parveen Sultana** is a renowned classical vocalist. She has performed with her *guru* (teacher or mentor) and husband Ustad Dilshad Khan at several national and international events. She has sung in many Assamese and Hindi films as well. Sultana is the recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan, among others.

**Laishram Mema Devi**, considered the 'Nightingale of Manipur', has devoted her life to music. Her rendition in various genres of Indian classical music like *thumri*, *dadra*, *kajri*, *bhajan*, *ghazals*, film and folk

songs from several States of the country titled *Swaranjali* is popular. She has sung for Hindi, Assamese and Manipuri films as well.

### CONCLUSION

Thus, these women devoted their entire life to bring in social change in their surroundings, despite facing personal hardships and challenges. Their lives and work is an inspiration to many. Sharing the stories of such successful

women, especially, at the primary stage will make students aware about their valuable contributions in a myriad of fields. It will also help strengthen interstate and inter-region bond. Hence, it is the responsibility of educators and policy makers at the National and State level to ensure that the young learners are made aware of India's rich diverse culture and eminent personalities in various fields from different parts of the country.

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## Academic Stress — Analysis and Measures

Tanu Tandon\*

### Abstract

*Stress refers to the way the mind and body respond to physical and emotional stressors. Continued exposure to such stressors may lead to mental problems like anxiety, depression, anger and frustration, and even develop suicidal tendencies (as seen in a few cases), apart from causing health disorders and fatigue. One, often, hears of students, functioning under extreme stressful conditions. Academic or educational stress is one of the most common problems affecting students. It, therefore, becomes imperative to identify the sources of academic stress and its adverse effects on students. This paper discusses these issues and suggests ways through which learning may be made stress free and fun.*

### INTRODUCTION

Given the fast-paced life and intrusion of social media sites in the private lives of people, no one, including students, is untouched by the harmful effects of stress. Continued exposure to 'academic stress', coupled with peer and parental pressure to excel in exams and extracurricular activities, causes a host of mental and physical disorders in students like anxiety, depression, anger, frustration, inferiority complex, fatigue, etc.

The only task that society commonly bestows on students is to 'study' and it never considers 'studying' as 'stressful'. It is observed that even at the primary stage, a child is burdened with performing the best in class and one's family and neighbourhood, compelling one to study harder and for more number of hours than appropriate for one's age, leaving hardly any time to play and rest. One also notices children being reprimanded for not meeting parents'

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\* Professor and Dean, Faculty of Education, Nirwan University, Jaipur, Rajasthan.

expectations in exams, which may add to their stress levels.

While conducting the study, the researcher came across cases, where stress had severely affected students both at the primary and elementary stage. In some cases, it even led to psychosomatic diseases like irritable bowel syndrome, migraine, fatigue, etc. Significant behavioural changes were also observed in a few students, transforming them into reticent, nervous and withdrawn from being confident, cheerful and friendly.

### **CASE STUDY-1**

Vrinda (name changed), a student of Class VII, was sent for school counselling as her class teacher felt that she was depressed, withdrawn and inattentive in class, which affected her performance in academics and extracurricular activities. It was found that being a single child of doctors, she had immense pressure to excel in academics. On further probing, she shared that she had interest in art and music. She loved to paint and sing, and was full of life before the traumatic journey of academic excellence began. As her grades continued to drop in science, she eventually, started losing confidence and was even reluctant to participate in extracurricular activities, which she, initially, enjoyed. Her talents were suppressed and she often had to face mockery and jibes at school and home. Her parents often told her that medical education was the only key to success

and appreciation in life. This made her sink into depression, apart from transforming her into a withdrawn and nervous child from being a bubbly one.

### **CASE STUDY-2**

In another case, it was found that stress may develop delinquent tendencies in a child, where one, may even try harming oneself and others. Abhinav (name changed), a Class V student, was often reprimanded and punished by teachers for not completing homework and scoring low marks in class tests. His parents, too, scolded him, while his classmates jeered at him. This made him dislike and bunk school, and also transformed him to becoming an aggressive child from a jovial one. Teachers soon noticed aggressive tendencies and uncontrolled anger in Abhinav. Many a time, he even tried harming himself and others in the class in a fit of rage. He was, then, referred to the school counsellor. It was found that Abhinav was dealing with a lot of unexpressed emotions, which made him angry. He had even developed anxiety issues and was unable to adjust in class. It was observed that more than him, it was his parents and teachers, who needed counselling.

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of education is to liberate a person from ignorance and prejudices. It aims at the holistic development of the child, including physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

According to some case studies conducted at a prestigious school near Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, some of the factors, leading to stressful education, are discussed as follows.

### **Homework pressure**

After returning from school, a child has the pressure of completing the home assignments. Since these assignments need to be submitted to the class or subject teacher the very next day, this hardly leaves any time for the child to unwind and relax, adding to the stress levels. As a result, the young learner may become irritated, frustrated and even aggressive.

### **No time to play and relax**

The students are under immense pressure at school and are also burdened with home assignments, which they need to complete on time. Moreover, they have to deal with the pressure of excelling in exams and extracurricular activities. All these leave them with no time to play and relax, adding to their stress levels.

### **Lack of sleep**

Inadequate sleep due to longer school and study hours also leads to stress in students. According to doctors, an uninterrupted sleep of 8–10 hours every night is important for students, especially, till the elementary stage.

### **Rigid evaluation**

The government has introduced the ‘no-detention policy’, according to which no child till the elementary stage

can be declared ‘fail’ in the year-end or final exam. But many schools in the country still follow the traditional method of evaluation, where even a Class V student is declared ‘fail’ in the report card and parents are advised to make the child repeat the same class, which makes one feel humiliated, making education stressful. Therefore, every aspect of examination instills the fear of failure in students.

### **Comparison with others**

Parents’ obsession with their children’s performance, i.e., marks and ranks, makes them compare their wards with others. This puts unnecessary burden on them to ‘compete’ with others and perform better.

### **Development of delinquent tendencies**

The undue pressure to outshine their peers makes many students take to unethical practices like cheating and copying in exams to score high marks. It also implies being selfish and acting mean with classmates like not sharing the class notes and books, etc.

## **MEASURES FOR ENSURING STRESS-FREE EDUCATION**

Some of the innovative measures that may be adopted to ensure stress-free education are as follows.

### **IPASITIVE approach**

It is a psychological approach, which implies comparing one’s present performance with the previous one.

This approach motivates the students to compete with themselves, without the pressure of outshining their peers, leading to stress-free learning. It also ensures that there is no jealousy, inferiority or superiority complex in the process, thus, encouraging healthy and collaborative learning.

### **Redefining assessments**

Education is stressful because of traditional parameters of assessment and evaluation. Assessments must be continuous in nature so as to achieve the overall and holistic development of the students, apart from ensuring optimum learning. Besides, teachers' performance, too, needs to be assessed at regular intervals. Assessments should critically engage the teachers in self-analysis, where they reflect on their teaching strategies and classroom performance. The students, too, must be taught to self-evaluate and rate themselves accordingly. This motivates them to perform better the next time, and encourages them to work on their shortcomings. Moreover, the teachers must realise that all children are unique and blessed with diverse talents. Therefore, their achievements — big or small — must be recognised and celebrated.

### **Creating happy classrooms**

Efforts must be made to create a happy and relaxed classroom atmosphere as it helps achieve stress-free and optimum learning. Children learn the best and are creative only when

happy and relaxed. For example, apart from focusing on academics, teachers must ensure that children have some hobbies. They must see to it that the students practise their hobbies in free time and also talk about these in the classroom, which must be applauded. More such activities may be implemented in the classrooms to convert these into happy places of learning.

### **Stress releasing breathers**

To ward off boredom and check academic stress, breaks or energisers after every period are important for children. These serve as breathers and help them release stress. There may be short nutritional breaks, in which the students are encouraged to eat fruits, while Saturdays may be treated as 'fun' days, on which no academic activity is conducted. In order to ensure that the students remain active throughout the day, teachers must encourage them to participate in extracurricular activities like sports, drawing, painting, singing, dancing, etc. This will enable them to stay happy and energised, wanting them to attend school every day.

### **Learning through teamwork**

Schools need to encourage teamwork and collaborative learning among students. They must be encouraged to be part of teams, houses or committees like hygiene and sanitation, beautification, personality development, etc., where they work as a cohesive unison, helping out each

other, sharing, caring, and developing citizenship values and empathy in the process.

### **Words of encouragement**

Teachers play an important role in shaping the overall personality of students. Therefore, they must use kind and encouraging words at all times while interacting with the students. They must show empathy and positive reinforcement in the students, and help them work on their shortcomings.

### **Action research for teachers**

Schools need to encourage every teacher to become an action researcher. In contemporary times, a teacher is much more than merely being a teacher. The person is a friend, a surrogate parent and a facilitator of learning. Therefore, it is important for teachers to study the problems and demands of dynamic classrooms, and implement changes by working on their teaching strategies and using interactive audio-visual teaching aids.

### **Parental calendar**

This ensures the active involvement of parents in their wards' activities. A parental calendar is designed around 3Ps, i.e., Participate, Practice and Promote, as the three roles of parents. The 3Ps are corresponded with 3Ls, i.e., Learn, Live and Lead, the three roles of children, to help strengthen the parent-child relationship. Parents are encouraged to spend quality time with their children every day, which

ensures their holistic and all-round development. Many schools regularly give such calendars, along with audio recordings of weekly and monthly activities held there, to parents. The schools guide the parents to go through these materials and encourage their wards to have fun as they learn. Meanwhile, teachers, too, check the students' weekly progress and provide necessary support to them, which helps minimise their stress levels and improves academic performance.

### **Nature and heritage walks**

Such activities must often be organised by schools to develop hobbies like gardening, environment and monument conservation, etc., in students. These help the students de-stress as they learn about their surroundings.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus, it is observed that a variety of factors lead to stress in students. Parents, teachers, school managements, policy makers and other concerned stakeholders need to realise that the real purpose of education is to ensure the holistic and overall development of students. But it is even more important to understand that the young learners should not be burdened with an unnecessary overload of information and examination pressure as these lead to stress. The well-being of children (physical, mental and emotional) is one of the key aspects of education as they are the architects of the future.

So, coping up with stressors and managing them is what education needs to support. A learning system that uses recreational pedagogical methods of imparting education could be implemented to relieve the students of stress. Besides, the examination and evaluation systems, too, need

to be reorganised and restructured to mitigate the effects of stress. Self-paced learning culture also needs to be promoted. Hence, educators and educational institutions need to be mindful and reorient education, eliminating obstacles that may cause stress in students.

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## Innovative Methods of teaching Yoga at the Primary Stage

Manish Kumar\*

Poonam Panwar\*\*

Paran Gowda\*\*\*

### Abstract

*It is a widely accepted fact that 'yoga' promotes a healthy way of life. Daily practise of yoga helps one to stay physically fit, mentally alert and emotionally balanced, which leads to spiritual development. It is important to introduce yoga at the primary stage of education and make children aware of common yoga terminology at an early age. Therefore, yoga terms must be taught to the young learners in simple and practical manner. This paper is in continuation with the analysis of the 'ABC of Yoga Chart(s)', which was carried in the July 2017 issue of the journal. The yoga terms in the chart analysed have been linked with the 26 letters of the English alphabet. To test the statistical efficacy of the chart on primary students, 170 teachers were selected from 12 schools of Kurukshetra in Haryana.*

### INTRODUCTION

Yoga helps people to stay fit and relaxed. Besides, it is observed that the practitioners learn to exercise self-control in challenging situations. Therefore, yoga needs to be included in the school curriculum from the primary stage itself. Yoga can counter the pressures of this fast-paced society and help children calm their minds (Weing, 2010). According to Bersma and Visscher (2003), children are yogis by nature. However, they may not

be able to comprehend this without understanding the yoga terminologies. Practising yoga postures or asanas creates opportunities for children to explore their body movements and flexibility. Therefore, children at the primary stage need to be encouraged to practise yoga to stay physically and mentally fit. Serwacki and Cottone (2012) reviewed studies of yoga based interventions in schools. They concluded that yoga interventions exerted positive impacts on factors,

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\* Research Scholar, University of Patanjali, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.

\*\* Research Scholar, Jain Vishwa Bharati University, Ladnun, Rajasthan.

\*\*\* Professor, Department of Yoga Science, University of Patanjali, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.

such as cognitive efficiency, emotional balance, negative thought patterns, attention, control and anxiety. According to Pilkington, et al., (2005), yoga based interventions may help treat depression.

This paper is in continuation with the research study titled 'Innovative Methods of teaching Yoga at the Primary Stage' carried in the July 2017 issue of *The Primary Teacher*. It tries to find out from school teachers how the philosophical yoga terminologies (based on each letter of the English alphabet) as depicted in the ABC of the Yoga Chart (Part-II) may affect the learning of students at the primary stage.

Although the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has published a book titled *Yoga — A Healthy Way of Living* for upper primary and secondary stage,

there is a need to develop yoga material for students at the primary stage as well, wherein, they are exposed to the concepts in simple words before they actually start performing the *asanas*. This will ensure better understanding of the terms and concepts as entailed in books.

## DESIGN

The study discusses the importance of the ABC of the Yoga Chart designed and developed for primary stage students. The chart depicts 26 philosophical yoga terms, on each letter of the English alphabet, along with corresponding illustrations, for example, 'E' is philosophically used for 'Ego', a barrier in the spiritual path. Another example may be taken for the letter 'A', which (in this chart) stands for *Ahimsa* (non-violence).

A	<i>Ahimsa</i>	Not to harm anyone by any means
B	<i>Brahma</i>	Creator of the universe
C	Crown <i>Chakra</i>	Power centre located in the uppermost area of the skull
D	<i>Dwesa</i>	A strong feeling of dislike
E	Ego	Pride — sense of me and mine
F	Fish pose	Posture like a fish
G	<i>Guru</i>	A teacher, who lights a pupil's path
H	Happy	Feeling of pleasure
I	<i>Ida-nadi</i>	One of the three main channels in the body



J	<i>Japa</i>	Sacred and silent chanting
K	<i>Kosha</i>	Five coverings over the soul
L	<i>Laya</i>	Process of merging with the self
M	<i>Mandukasana</i>	Posture like a frog
N	<i>Niyamas</i>	Five personal ethics
O	<i>Ojasvi</i>	Energetic
P	<i>Prana</i>	Vital power force
Q	Quiet	Silence
R	<i>Rajas</i>	One of the three <i>gunas</i> (qualities that activate and excite)
S	<i>Surya Namaskara</i>	Showing reverence to the Sun with 12 yoga postures
T	<i>Tapa</i>	Hard work put in to achieve the target
U	<i>Utsah</i>	Great energy or enthusiasm
V	<i>Vidya</i>	Knowledge
W	Waken	Awakened — becoming aware
X	X-ray power	Power to sense other's thoughts
Y	<i>Yog Nidra</i>	Deep relaxation
Z	Zen	Feeling of being peaceful

A	<b>AHIMSA</b>		<b>Not to harm anyone by any means</b>
B	<b>BRAHMA</b>		<b>Creator of the universe</b>
C	<b>CROWN CHAKRA</b>		<b>Power centre located in the uppermost area of the skull</b>
D	<b>DWESHA</b>		<b>A strong feeling of dislike</b>
E	<b>EGO</b>		<b>Pride — the sense of me and mine</b>

Figure 1: Philosophical yoga terms, based on the first five letters of the English alphabet (A to E), as depicted in the ABC of the Yoga Chart (Part-II)

## HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is no relationship between the ABC of the Yoga Chart and yoga education.

H1: There is a relationship between the ABC of the Yoga Chart and yoga education.

## OBJECTIVES

- To highlight important yoga terms (philosophical), along with their meanings and illustrations, for example, 'A' stands for *Ahimsa*
- To explore the significance of the yoga terminologies used in the ABC of the Yoga Chart

- To understand from school teachers how the chart may impact young learners

## SAMPLE

Sampling technique was used to conduct the study. A sample of 170 teachers was randomly selected from 12 schools in Kurukshetra district of Haryana.

## Description of the sample

Table 1 depicts the details of the teachers like school, experience, sex, etc. It was found that the number of female teachers (90.59%) is more than males (9.41%). Their overall experience is 1–35 years.

**Table 1: Details of the school teachers**

S. No.	School	No. of teachers	Sex		Experience (in years)
			Male	Female	
1.	Navyug Senior Secondary School	15	0	15	3–13
2.	St. Peter's Convent School	10	03	07	1–24
3.	Geeta Co. Ed. Middle School	12	01	11	4–25
4.	Geeta Niketan Vidya Mandir	10	01	09	4–31
5.	Arya Senior Secondary School	14	0	14	4–33
6.	S. M. B. Geeta Primary School	09	01	08	8–20
7.	Nivedita Public School	10	01	09	1–20
8.	Geeta Kanya High School	21	0	21	3–35

9.	Geeta Niketan Vidya Mandir	19	03	16	3-15
10.	Aggarsain Public School	35	01	34	3-26
11.	Janta Senior Secondary School	06	02	04	9-20
12.	B. R. International School	09	03	06	5-25
		170	16	154	
			9.41%	90.59%	

## METHODOLOGY

Group sessions, including PowerPoint presentations and workshops, were conducted at the 12 selected schools in Kurukshetra, Haryana. A total of 170 teachers surveyed were given a questionnaire, comprising 15 questions with two options — agree or disagree, and were asked to fill in their responses.

The data collected were analysed using chi-square test, applying RM ANOVA<sup>1</sup> and frequency distribution

method. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was also used to analyse the data.

## DISCUSSION

All teachers were advised to introduce these yoga terms in the primary classes. The results in Table 2 and Table 3 show the mean score at 14.22, Standard Deviation ( $\sigma$ ) at 1.4, F-value at 13.93 and chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) at  $< 0.001$  at  $p < 0.0001$ , which is highly significant. There is not much difference between the expected and

**Table 2: Descriptive scores of the respondents**

<b>N</b>	<b>170</b>
Mean	14.22
Standard Deviation	1.4

**Table 3: RM ANOVA results of the respondents**

Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ )	Significance (p)	F-value	Partial Eta Squared		Observed Power
$< 0.001$	$< 0.0001$	13.93	0.16	1	3-13

<sup>1</sup>RM ANOVA results compare the mean differences between groups.

observed values and both are almost identical. The null hypothesis may, therefore, be rejected and there is a strong indication of considering the alternate hypothesis, i.e., the ABC of the Yoga Chart may greatly affect yoga education at the primary stage.

### LIMITATIONS

The study is not exhaustive in nature and further research may be carried out in other languages as well. Besides, there is also a scope for carrying out research in developing mobile applications based on yoga terminologies in different languages.

### CONCLUSION

Therefore, it may be concluded that the ABC of Yoga Chart may help students at the primary stage learn important philosophical yoga terms and understand the concepts, thus, embedded. Besides, it will serve as a helpful teaching aid for teachers, catering to students at the primary and pre-primary stages. Hence, educationists, policy makers and administrators may consider making yoga education a part of the curriculum for primary classes as well so that children may start reaping its benefits from an early age itself.

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## Print Rich Posters to achieve Learning Outcomes

V. George Fernandez\*

The assessment and evaluation of the National Achievement Survey (NAS)-2017 reveals that the learning outcomes of students at the elementary stage in Puducherry are below the national average. The genesis of print rich posters was an analysis of the NAS-2017 results for the Union Territory. Consultative meetings and post-NAS intervention workshops were held, in which experts inferred that the dismal performance was due to the lack of reading comprehension skills in the students. Thereafter, in the meetings

held at both the district and State level, suggestions for including print rich posters in primary government schools of the area were made.

An estimated budget for the development of posters was included in the Puducherry Annual Work Plan and Budget, which was granted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The posters were conceptualised and developed in a three-day workshop. The posters were further refined through a 10-tier system of designing and verification.

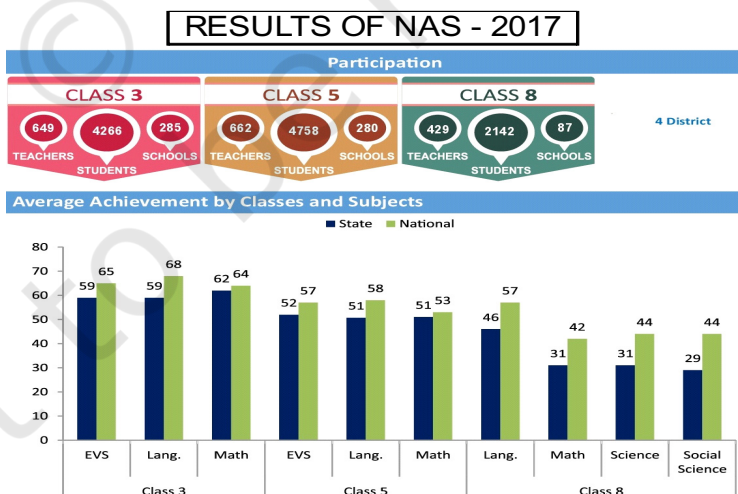


Figure 1: The NAS-2017 results indicate that the learning outcomes of students at the elementary stage in Puducherry are below the national average.

\* State Coordinator, Samagra Shiksha, Puducherry.

The major role in this exercise was performed by block resource educators. All content carried in the posters was finalised by a core team, consisting of teachers from pre-primary and primary stages, school principals, block resource educators, officials in the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) and *Samagra Shiksha*.

### PRINT RICH POSTERS

A print rich environment is one, in which young learners interact with many forms of printed material, such as wall stories, word displays, murals, poems, etc. In order to improve the learning outcomes of students at the elementary stage, an action plan was prepared and print rich posters were designed and developed by the *Samagra Shiksha*, Directorate of School Education, for students of pre-primary to Class VI based on the learning outcomes in English, mathematics and environmental science.

The novel approach aims to exhibit these posters in schools from the year 2018. This has been specifically done to enhance the literacy skills of students at the pre-primary and primary stages.

### Aim of the posters

The posters have been developed as per the learning outcomes of each class and subject. They aim to foster quality education. However, with the usage of attractive illustrations, they are capable of catching the attention of the young learners automatically. While studying, the learners may connect

these posters with the topics being taught in their respective classrooms. These posters will, thus, help them focus on a certain idea, fact, event or process.

### About the posters

The size of each poster is 24×36". There is an aluminium strip at the top and at the bottom to ensure stiffness and facilitate display.

Posters have been provided for each class in all primary government schools of Puducherry, ensuring a colourful, attractive and enriching learning environment. Each school has been provided with a complete set of 63 posters, titled 'print rich material posters'. Some posters emphasise the significance of the area like 'Our Puducherry' (Figure 2).



Figure 2: A poster emphasising the significance of the area

Nine posters have been developed per class per subject — three each for English, mathematics and environmental studies. Each poster has been numbered (e.g., Poster-1) and carries the class and subject name on the top left corner.

The posters have two unique features. Each poster is based on one learning outcome. The teacher’s role in facilitating the achievement of the learning outcome is elaborated in one of two lines, as shown in Figure 3.

The second feature is the inclusion of a QR code on the top right corner of each poster. This feature will enable teachers and parents to scan the code(s) on their mobile phones so that the learners are able to see the posters.

The posters have also been uploaded on the portal of school education, Puducherry, (<https://schooledn.py.gov.in/ssarmsa/learnindicators.html>). A watermark has been put in place to ensure that the posters remain the intellectual property of the *Samagra Shiksha*, Puducherry.

### CONCLUSION

It is, thus, hoped that these innovative posters would engage students, especially, at the primary stage, in active learning, and boost their creativity, which would further better their scholastic and non-scholastic performance.



Figure 3: A poster elaborating teachers’ role in facilitating the achievement of learning outcomes



## BOOK REVIEW

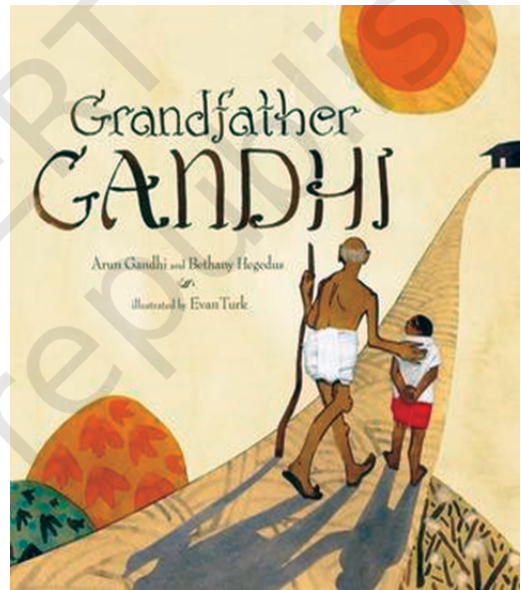
### *Grandfather Gandhi*

Varada M. Nikalje\*

<b>Title of the Book</b>	: <i>Grandfather Gandhi</i>
<b>Author</b>	: Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus
<b>Illustrator</b>	: Evan Turk
<b>Year</b>	: 2010
<b>Publisher</b>	: Marshall Cavendish
<b>Price</b>	: ₹399.00

The book, co-authored by Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, Arun Gandhi, presents a vivid account of Gandhi through the eyes of the 12-year old narrator — Arun. Narrated in the first person, the author gives a glimpse of his grandfather's simple life at the Sevagram Ashram in Maharashtra, which was just the opposite of what it used to be in South Africa. The narrator also expresses the bond that he shares with his grandfather.

Written, primarily, for children, the book contains minimal text. The



language of the book is simple and lucid. It narrates how Arun travelled with his family from South Africa to the quiet village of Sevagram, where his grandfather lived simply in the company of his followers. Arun is told that it is considered to be an honour and privileged to live at the Ashram.

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\* Professor, Department of Elementary Education, NCERT, New Delhi.

Though happy about it, Arun frets as he has to share his grandfather with quite a number of people, all of whom clamouring for his time and attention. Further, Arun also worries about living up to the expectation attached with the name 'Gandhi'. The narrator goes on to describe his life at the Sevagram Ashram for two years and the time spent with his grandfather.

Arun is good at soccer and plays the game with boys in the village every day. But one day, a boy pushes him in the field and he gets hurt. Anger overwhelms Arun, and he, too, wants to retaliate. But the reverence of his family, particularly, grandfather, stops Arun, and he thinks, "How could he — a Gandhi — be so easy to anger?"

Arun reaches out to his wise and loving grandfather. Overwhelmed with embarrassment, he confides into him about the incident. Gandhi lovingly tells Arun that he, too, gets angry but uses it for the good. He says that anger is like "electricity: it can strike like lightening and split a tree in half, or it can be channelled, transformed and like a lamp, switched on to shed light in the world". The author's personal account carries a message of peace and shows how Gandhi's quiet anger went on to lead India to 'Freedom'.

Readers may relate Arun's experiences as narrated in the book to the ideals of peace, truth and non-violence, and that non-violence does not mean cowardice.

Bethany Hegedus, the co-author of the book, could not come to terms with the senseless 9/11 killings. One day she happened to attend a lecture by Arun Gandhi and felt a sense of solace. His speech moved her so much that she decided to co-author the book with him. In the 'Note from the Authors' section, Hegedus says, "The world we live in needs to heal — to heal from the wars that are fought, to the bullying epidemic, to mass killings by a lone gunman, to poverty, to hunger, and to issues that contribute to internal anger being outwardly expressed in violent actions." Gandhi's message never ages or grows old.

Illustrations are the highlight of this book. Which give a glimpse of Gandhi's life at the Sevagram Ashram. This picture book biography, thus, presents Gandhi as a loving grandfather and a revered figure across the world. Using the technique of mixed media, the illustrations are presented in watercolour, paper collage, cotton fabric, yarn, gouache, pencil and tin foil. The illustrations match the text, creating a captivating and vivid imagery, such as in this statement, "The tin bowls and utensils we used clanged, making a funny-sounding music."

While commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, one cannot stop pondering on his thoughts and ideals for the self and society. What then, is Gandhiji's vision? More importantly, how do

children perceive this vision? What is the understanding of children in India, as well as, other countries, on Gandhiji's concepts of non-violence, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* and world peace?

Many books have been written on the life, teachings and works of Gandhi. They have appeared in almost all main languages of the world. On a parallel note, there have also been

questions about his ideals — their utility, suitability and whether they can be applied in today's context. This, of course, would depend largely on how we perceive his ideals. Children's literature can influence the thinking of impressionable minds to a large extent. Concepts like truth and non-violence are eternal. They never die. One only needs to discover the Gandhi within oneself.

## DID YOU KNOW

### National Missions to combat Climate Change

Rashi Thapa\*

‘Climate’ is the average weather condition at a place over the years, whereas, ‘climate change’ is recognised by a drastic shift in those conditions. Climate change has caused a rise in the Earth’s temperature, leading to global warming and melting of glaciers, apart from causing many other related challenges — both at the local and global levels.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) drafted an international environment treaty — to which India, too, is a signatory — to combat dangerous human interferences with the climate system. India has shown a constructive and forward looking strategy in this area.

#### **NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR CLIMATE CHANGE**

The National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC), launched on 30 June 2008, is one such initiative taken by the Government of India to

look into the adverse effects of climate change. The action plan focuses on promoting an understanding of climate change, adaptation and mitigation, energy efficiency and natural resource conservation.

#### **Sub-missions under the National Action Plan**

There are eight Missions, which are the core of the NAPCC. They are discussed as follows.

##### **National Solar Mission**

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission (JNNSM), popularly known as the National Solar Mission, is an initiative of the Government of India launched in the year 2010. The Mission aims to place India on the world map as a global leader in solar energy production by harnessing the abundant solar energy naturally available in the country. The government has developed various policies to generate mass awareness about manufacturing solar utility

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\* Postgraduate Student, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

products — both commercial and domestic. The Mission aims to make the public aware that solar energy is an alternative to fuels like charcoal, kerosene, etc. It is also used to generate electricity. These days, it is commonly observed that many buildings have solar panels installed on the rooftops.

### National Mission on Enhanced Energy Efficiency

Launched by the Government of India under the NAPCC, the Mission aims to promote the market of energy efficiency by fostering innovative policies and effective market instruments. The enhanced energy efficiency measures are aimed at facilitating energy intensive industries to reduce their energy footprint.

### Green India Mission

The Mission, launched in February 2014, aims at conserving, restoring and increasing India's forest cover to combat the ill effects of the persisting climate change. With this initiative, the Government of India aims to increase forest cover on 5 million hectares and improve forest cover on additional 5 hectares. Therefore, the Mission not only aims to increase the forest area but also enhance the quality of the existing ones. Moreover, it takes cognizance of biodiversity and water resources, and tries to provide increased options to households, whose livelihoods, primarily, thrive on forests.

The Mission envisages a holistic view of greening that extends beyond planting of trees, such as preservation

of mangroves, wetlands and critical habitats. It also aims to involve organisations at the grass-roots level and local communities in planning, decision making and implementation of its programmes.

### National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem

The Himalayas assume great significance to the people of India — socially, culturally, spiritually and economically. About 51 million people practise agriculture in the Himalayan lands. The Himalayas are a major source of freshwater for perennial rivers like the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra. But the Himalayan ecosystem has become increasingly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem was launched in June 2010 to address these issues holistically. The primary objective of the Mission is to develop a sustainable national capacity to continuously assess the health status of the Himalayan ecosystem, including glaciers, and create a data base of the same.

### National Mission on Sustainable Habitat

The Mission, launched by the Government of India in June 2010, aims to integrate energy efficiency as a component of urban planning and renewal. Capacity building is an important component of this Mission. The prominent areas it focuses on are as follows.

- To work on the energy conservation building code in order to optimise the energy demands of new and large commercial buildings
- To recycle material and urban waste management, which includes research and development programmes for producing power out of waste
- To redesign urban planning by provision of pedestrian pathways; and bringing in a modal shift to public transport to establish fuel efficiency standards and reduce the amount of fuel consumed per passenger

### National Water Mission

Launched in 2009, the Mission aims at achieving integrated water resource management to conserve water, minimise wastage and ensure more equitable distribution of the resource (both across and within States). One of the prominent features of the Mission is to promote traditional water conservation systems along with expeditious multipurpose water projects.

### National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

It is imperative to progressively adapt agriculture to suit the projected climate change. The Mission recommends that the Indian agricultural research systems must be oriented to monitor and evaluate climate change and suggest changes in agricultural practices

accordingly. It, thus, aims to devise strategies to help Indian agriculture become more resilient to climate change and improve productivity in rain-fed areas by observing dry agricultural land management. The Mission also identifies and develops new varieties of crops, using traditional and modern agricultural techniques.

### National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change

The consequences of climate change on social systems would vary in different regions due to several factors. Therefore, it is pertinent to adapt strategies and technology as per geographical and social contexts. Further, there are many uncertainties in disaggregating the effects of global warming in different climatic regions. In order to identify the challenges posed therein, the government launched the National Strategic Knowledge Mission for Climate Change. The Mission focuses on identifying knowledge gaps and creating feedback for the Indian National Network for Climate Change Assessment, a stock taking exercise conducted every two years as part of the national obligations under the UNFCCC.

### CONCLUSION

These Missions, thus, aim at creating public awareness on the threats posed by climate change. They also point out the steps being taken by various government agencies at the grass-roots level to combat the ill effects of climate change. These may be introduced in

the teaching-learning process at the primary stage itself so that students are able to relate to the climate change problems, plaguing their surroundings and the country at large. Teachers may pick up various examples from

local surroundings, making it relatable for the students, which may further inspire them to protect and conserve the existing resources and ecosystem, and combat the adverse effects of climate change in the long run.

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### Helping Children solve Classroom Conflicts Constructively

Akanksha Dwivedi\*

*“Teacher, he won’t share his pencil.”*

*“Teacher, she is not playing with me.”*

*“Teacher, he said bad words to me.”*

Classroom learning is always marked by minor instances of conflicts among children, especially, at the primary and pre-primary stage. Therefore, teachers need to play the role of peacemakers or pacifiers, apart from being facilitators of knowledge. They closely interact with children on a regular basis, and in the process, try to make them understand the nature of a conflict and that they should desist such situations. Children must be taught to become peacemakers and channelise their anger, leading to the resolution of a conflict. It is necessary for a teacher, parent and student to understand that conflicts can be managed constructively.

As a teacher for many years, I have had the opportunity to closely interact with children, particularly, at the primary stage. On many

occasions, I had to look into student conflicts and perform the role of a pacifier. I encouraged the young learners to resolve their conflicts independently without causing any sort of physical harm to each other and be friends without holding on to any kind of bitterness or grudge. Making the young learners understand that holding on to anger causes stress has been difficult. But many children became adept at resolving their conflicts independently and channelising it constructively by merely following a few ways like preventing the occurrence of a conflict in the first place, etc.

Moreover, I observed that teachers need to teach children to stay calm in challenging situations. In case of conflicts, they must communicate directly with each other instead of going to the teachers to complain or for redressal. Such an exercise helps promote self-confidence, cooperation and communication skills in the young learners. Since the children become

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\* Former Teacher, S. D. Public School, Pitampura, New Delhi.



active listeners, they choose their words carefully and communicate accordingly. After listening to each other, they even propose solutions and agree to try out a solution. The tenets of compassion and empathy make the young learners 'innocent' and different from adults.

Inculcation of such approaches transforms the young learners into problem solvers. In the process of conflict resolution, they learn to take responsibility for dealing with or handling difficult situations.

Life at school becomes easier when students and teachers use the same set of negotiation and protocol, i.e., ways to manage and resolve conflicts. Being a facilitator, a teacher must implement measures to make the classroom environment joyous, and the teaching-learning process interactive, participatory and fun. Apart from imparting textual knowledge to students, teachers are

also responsible for shaping their behaviour. When a conflict is resolved constructively, the bond between students is also strengthened.

The dominant problem in conflict management or resolution is that many students at the primary stage lack the required skills, and thus, seek help of elders around. In case of a school, it is the teachers, who they turn to.

In India, students from diverse social, cultural, ethnic, economic and linguistic backgrounds come together to study under a common roof in schools. But diversity should not be treated as a problem but as an opportunity. However, due to such a scenario in the classroom, a child tends to get involved in conflict(s). By exercising effective communication skills, practising restraint and controlling their anger, they can resolve conflicts easily.

Form IV (See Rule 8)

**THE PRIMARY TEACHER**

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I, Anup Kumar Rajput, hereby, declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

**Publisher**

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## To the Contributors

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*The Primary Teacher* invites you to write articles, field notes and reports that impact elementary education. The focus may be on issues and concerns that you are sensitive to, which you feel should be shared with other teachers, working at the grass-roots level.

- Each article should be about 1500 to 3000 words.
- Each article should have a short abstract in about 150 words.
- Use simple and non-technical language, keeping the clientele in mind, who are primary teachers.
- The articles should have a friendly and communicative tone.
- The articles must be sent in two copies, along with the soft copy (CD/e-mail).
- The photographs and illustrations should be sent in JPEG format, having a resolution of at least 300 dpi.
- The papers may be sent to:

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G. B. Pant Building, NCERT  
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### MY PAGE...

This column would contain your letters and feedback, where you can put forward your responses, suggestions and expectations from the articles, papers and columns presented in *The Primary Teacher*. You may have issues, concerns and doubts related to teaching-learning processes, classroom practices, syllabus, textbooks, evaluation patterns, research pursuits, etc. These could also reflect the concerns of many others working in this area. Please feel free to raise these issues in this column. You could also ask specific questions that would have baffled you.

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E-mail: [gg\\_cbm@rediffmail.com](mailto:gg_cbm@rediffmail.com), Phone: 011-26562708, Fax: 011-26851070

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