

Anuradha Kishore



Introduction

One day in the journey of IAAT (June'17-March'18)

Day : Tuesday, November 21st, 2017 ,4.30 pm

Today after returning from a busy and active day at IAAT, where I was with 30 children from 8.30 am till 2 pm I thought I was done for the day as far as talking was concerned.

How wrong was I!!

As soon as I picked my own kids from their bus stop their cheeky smiles told me they wanted to have a treat of some sort. They usually have that twinkle in their eyes whenever they want to stop by at Plaza on their way back from school for a quick subway and an ice cream.

So we stopped at the shops and picked up our requirements before settling cozily despite being surrounded by chattering young beings that were returning back home after a full day at work and happened to be catching up with friends at the sandwich joint.

I took the opportunity and threw this question to my children, both 12 turning 13 soon," So guys! What do you think has changed about me since I started my course at IAAT in June?" Both of them exchanged smiling glances before signaling to each other about who is going to speak first.

My daughter decided to be the main spokesperson as she had almost finished her ice cream by now.

"Mom! You have become a much easier mom now!"

Now what does that mean?? i really wanted to know.

" You have become more occupied with good quality learning and now you don't keep asking us what we need to be doing next."

My son was constantly nodding his head, as his mouth was busy chomping the filled sandwich.

"I agree", I said with a smile.

I surely agree with this one simple statement made by my daughter which sums up the biggest change which has come in my attitude to life in the last 5 months since i began my new learnings at 'I Am A Teacher'.

I would say the course began with such an exciting module of self-discovery and self-awareness that the momentum of that has kept it going with all the following modules of learning the essentials of Philosophies of Education and the multiple facets and angles of Child Development while getting the structured mentoring from experienced Senior teachers in various specialized fields as well.

The remaining list of changes in my personality were happily rolled out to me in the next 5 minutes as I wrapped up the remaining bites while enjoying the most authentic feedback from these brutally honest critics - my own kids !

"Ma , you have become more patient with us when we are following new complicated instructions in a school task or a fun challenge."

"You have become better organized with your time and definitely more tech-savvy!"

They were very generous in telling me that I have evolved into a more efficient homemaker too. According to their observations I was laughing more, sleeping better and taking interest in wider variety of activities in and out of the house.

I again agreed and concluded that these changes have come about because of the self-reflection that I have learnt to do on a continuous basis, all the time.

Any change has to begin with your own self..This realization has come about crystal clear to me and it has helped all relationships in my personal as well as professional life.

As the course has given me a chance to be on the other side I now empathize much more with the hard working and compassionate teachers who are helping my own children through their growing years.

At the same time my appreciation of my children's work and effort has also grown since I realize that learning is an organic process and it needs the right amount of time and warmth for it to catch roots in the fertile minds of these young inquisitive children.

I have started answering more of their questions, which were earlier brushed away as 'silly questions'!

No question is a wrong question and every answer deserves a genuine listener as we all need to learn from each other's perspectives.

We follow these rules in our own course sessions at IAAT too where the 27 of us could have very different view points and yet find no hesitation in sharing with each other.

As a parent I have gained so much insight into the beautiful thought processes of my children's minds and have come to realize that I have a lot to learn from them too. Their acceptance of the world 'as it is' gives me a lot of hope for our future.

I am so glad I am part of this journey at IAAT and will surely miss being a student when we graduate in March next year.

Resume

Anuradha Kishore

19, Shahtoot Marg
DLF phase-1
Gurgaon

Contact number : 9910613193
Email: anukishore1@gmail.com

Objective : To work with young children as an educator and contribute to their mental-physical-emotional growth to its maximum potential in all possible ways.

Education :

| | | |
|---|---|--------------------|
| PGDLT- Post Graduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching | IAAT- Heritage Xperiential Learning School, Gurgaon | June 2017- to date |
| Msc- Child Psychology | IGNOU- New Delhi | 2009- 11 |
| MRCP-Ped (London) | Royal College of Physicians , UK | 2000 |
| MBBS | AllIMS, New Delhi | 1990- 95 |
| Grade 12, CBSE | DPS,RK Puram, N Delhi | 1990 |
| Grade 10, CBSE | Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, N Delhi | 1988 |

Experience :

- Post Graduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching -Extensive training in the various pedagogies of modern education with special emphasis on Child Development. Intensive field experience with onsite classroom work and curriculum development- Since June 2017
- Worked as a Consultant Pediatrician in a self managed multi-speciality clinic with associated branches such as speech and hearing clinic and growth monitoring- 2004-17
- Self directed learning achieved through IGNOU in the field of Child Psychology and Family therapy- 2009-11
- Worked as a Consultant Pediatrician at Max Hospital, Panchsheel, N Delhi. Conducted independent clinics with special interest in Developmental Pediatrics- 2002-04
- Trained and worked as a Pediatrician in NHS, UK in various district and teaching level hospitals- 1997- 2002

Key Skills and Strengths-

Diligent and Hard working,
Conscientious, Innovative and Adaptable.
Friendly and Compassionate.
Strong commitment to the cause of Equal opportunities in Education for all children irrespective of their socio-economic-cognitive abilities.

Table of contents



Section A

My Personal Journey as a learner

My Educational Philosophy

Me as an Observer

My Approach to subjects- Language and Math

Section B

How have I developed as a teacher
through practice and mentoring

Section C

Field engagement and Reflections-

Junga Retreat

Village expedition
to the Motilal Nehru camp

SECTION – A

My personal journey as a learner



IAAT happened to have entered as the most exciting chapter in the book of my life so far. I have been a very curious learner all my life. During my growing up years I was surrounded by many medical professionals in my own family as well as the extended to extra-extended family and hence quite naturally grew fond of the profession myself.

Graced with the blessings from loved ones and the strength of my hard work I managed to seek and receive the most acclaimed trainings in the field of Medicine, further specialising in Pediatrics as I have always loved children more than anything else in the world.

Having worked at various levels in the medical field and completely satisfied with my inputs I started secretly nurturing a dream of moving into the arena of education in order to explore the interface at which the 'Mind' and 'Body' merge as one.

My primary area of interest lies in exploring more about how one affects the growth of the other. Further quest of mine extends into the realms where the disturbance of one leads to the disturbance in the growth of the other.

My special interest lies in the youngest age group where a slightest change in the nurturing environment can have a very significant longlasting effect on the

cognitive development of the child. Going forward my endeavour would be to find out as to how I could contribute to the most optimum cognitive-emotional-physical growth of any child.

Children's innocence, purity of thoughts and expression have always filled my heart with sheer joy and considerable hope. In my experience while working in various parts of the globe I came to this one simple conclusion about the complex world we live in – i.e. Children are quite similar everywhere irrespective of their origin. They eventually grow up to become adults who are diverse in their personal preferences of socio-cultural existence and expression. But children around the globe have very similar needs and growth patterns despite their differences in ethnicity/ colour/ economic or cognitive backgrounds and capabilities.

As the course comes to an end I often sit back and reflect. Summing up briefly how the entire 10 month process seems to have evaporated so fast and yet I have gained so much ! Knowledge, experiences and most importantly new friends for life. Let me tell you how it went...

My learning at IAAT began with a module on Mindful Personal Leadership (MPL) which involved an exciting travel to Junga in the mountains of Himanchal Pradesh. I was impressed to see how everyone made so much effort to make warm bonds of friendship with each other while facing the most unexpected challenges which tested our endurance and resilience in significantly unfamiliar environments. I returned from there feeling a great sense of personal achievement. This was followed by a promise to myself to stay positive about facing all kinds of physical as well as psychological challenges with an open mind and the grit to do it well .

The theory sessions began soon after our return and about two weeks later we started our practice sessions in the allotted classrooms. I was assigned as a resident teacher at Kindergarten (the age group I was most keen to interact with). Within a few days of ardent observation of the students and tutors in KG where I paid special attention to the Pedagogy of teaching, I was able to connect my theory learning to the actual work in the classroom. Most useful were the sessions on Philosophy of education and Child Development patterns as it made everything in the class environment so much more relevant.

Learnings from the English language development module and Math Jodo-gyan modules were very useful for me while conducting independent classes with my group of Kindergartners .

I was most enthralled and amazed at the metamorphosis which I was undergoing as a person, as the sessions of Mindful personal leadership were shaping my inner self into a more patient and compassionate person when it came to accepting

differences esp differences in how my colleagues and my students approached the same challenges with very different perspectives and goals.

The fact which firmly got ingrained into my thinking with the help of these MPL sessions was that each individual is born with an inborn potential to do his/her best and will achieve that provided we as facilitators give them the most optimum opportunities.

Further enrichment modules of Art and PE made me aware of the benefits of Art based learning and the role of Physical education in a child's upbringing. Both at home as well as at school these two cocurricular activities are very important aspects to give a wholesome learning experience. This was consolidated as I started incorporating it into my lesson plans for the 5 year olds I was interacting with in my classroom practice..

Learning as a continuous process which goes on for as long as you live is one essential concept of life which developed a huge meaning for me during this course. It made me feel more and more alive whenever I got to explore and learn new skills or added new attributes to my persona.

As a going away gift from IAAT I take this essential nugget for life that the one common ingredient which makes anyone's childhood genuinely beautiful and fruitful is the presence of Unconditional Love from the Carers.

And I aspire to be one of those carers in the lives of many young beings who are blooming into thinking and applying minds that will shape the world very soon. Looking back I had joined IAAT to start my journey of becoming an Educator for life ...and towards the end of my journey with IAAT I can confidently say that I would start by Educating myself first and then the upcoming stars of this enchanting universe.

My Educational philosophy



Children are born as naturally curious beings. From the moment they come into the world they start exploring their surroundings , and this is with no prior knowledge or stimulating instructions from any grown up around them. They are always pushing themselves to do more than their physical capacity allows. This sometimes lands them into trouble too but none of it deters them from continuing their voyage into the fascinating world of colours, textures, sounds , smells and tastes which are infinite in number. Children are usually running their engines in gear 5 all through their waking hours and that's probably the reason they get properly exhausted at the end of the day to finally go into a deep slumber , what we call ' sleeping like a baby' !

Since if given the freedom children don't stop themselves from acting out their curiosity within the limits of pain and confusions that they can handle , their hearts are usually content and minds are satisfied with very little scope for regrets like "What if I had tried that?"

Hence it consolidates my belief even further that we must allow young minds to find out 'What they want to know' and then find out 'How do they want to go about it' while being there for them to clear their doubts and provide the required resources as well as the encouragement to keep going despite any number of failures. Also as informed adults we must strive to set good examples for them to get inspired from. Our actions should meet our words which should align with our thoughts to give out clear messages to the young impressionable minds in our care. Just like the 'chicken and egg' story goes it is still not clear what comes first – Do we see what we already know or do we get to know about things only once we see them with our own eyes !?

In other terms what builds the other thing?

Is it our prior knowledge which helps us to observe pertinently or because we are keen observers of new and unknown that our knowledge base keeps getting widened every moment of our existence.

Taking inspirations from the various philosophers all over the world I have come to believe in the power of osmosis as the most powerful tool of gaining knowledge. Any person, irrespective of her age, socio-economic background or previous knowledge base, will gain as much as she can in a purely organic way from her surroundings. For this to happen in an efficient manner an optimum amount of time and attention should be given to the individual. In addition offer her maximum opportunity to explore her personal motivation. As Educators we need to exercise our 'Listening and observing skills' to our best capacity and while giving instructions for any task we should speak clearly in simple language so that everyone can follow. A Teacher's contribution to the process of learning would be multiplied manifold if she is always ready to reflect and review and commit to be a life long learner herself.

Me as an Observer

As an educator I attained the realisation that a child doesn't come in isolation. He/she is a part of a bigger circle or circles which are concentric around him/her. She is interacting with various different relationships in her life which are coming with their own set of ideologies which influence this child in an obvious or a subtle manner.

Thus I decided to conduct a series of observations of different age groups in their natural everyday scenarios.

Here are my conclusions-



Observing mealtime of a 2 year old:

Rehanna 2 years 2 months was observed while having breakfast in her mother's bedroom. She was sitting in a high chair, with mother **Samina** next to her holding a plate of sweet daliya.

(Inference- *Rehanna is using complex fine and gross motor skills compatible with her age of 2 years and a few months. Her socio-cognitive development is showing appropriate level of alertness and coping skills. Language usage is also following the expected format as she's been observed to be comprehending long complex sentences with multiple instructions while her expressive language is still limited to short meaningful phrases with 2-3 words joined together.)*



Observing playtimes in 3 year old preschoolers:

Three children- 3 year old **Medha**, 3 year old **Rubin** and 2.9 year old **Shyla** .

Setting- Crèche in their parents' office building located on the groundfloor of the office building.

Time: 4 pm

(Inference- *Physically active 3 year olds who find it difficult to sit still. Their hand-eye coordination is significantly improved. They have illogical egocentric thinking with vivid imagination, mostly unable to separate reality from fantasy. They have no clear sense of time or sequence yet. They indulge in cooperative imaginative play engaging in fantasy social role-playing. They are self-directed in most activities with a good control on their emotions. This age group shows less emotional outburst as they seem to have developed a better frustration control. Their language usage also shows significant development with improved expressive language skills.)*

Observing an interview of a 5 year old child:



Interviewed **Ruhaan**, 5 years old who has just had a baby sister come home from the hospital 2 days ago. He is very proud of his mother for she went to the hospital without crying and has come back with his baby sister Samaira (Sammy).

(Inference- Ruhaan is a sensitive and expressive 5 year old boy for whom language has become a strong tool of communication. He is able to sit calmly for 5-7 minutes and have a composed conversation with an adult about a new development at home. He shows a good understanding of other's perspectives as well as of concepts of time, space and sequence of events. His analytical thought process is still not completely logical and rational which is compatible with the socio-cognitive developmental stage expected at 5 years of age. He is displaying effective coping skills and understands how his behavior will affect others. Ruhaan seems to have a clear understanding of various social roles and gets the concept of adaptive behavior to suit different circumstances. He wants to take on more responsibilities at home and wants to avoid punishment. He is genuinely sensitive to others opinion about himself.)

Observing 8-9 year olds in a playground:



Observed a group of 8-9 year olds in the playground at school.
Setting – Large open playfield with trees on the boundary.
Time – 10 am
Specifically observed 5 children (**2 boys and 3 girls**).

(Inference -This preadolescent age group also uses Verbal Language and Body Language as main communication tools. They are able to differentiate between intention and the actual behavior of people around them. Their emotional bonds with friends are situation specific. They have by now developed logical and rational thought process and can perceive events quite accurately. They also start self reflecting to guide themselves for their further actions. They rely on Rules to guide their attitude and approach to any situation. These children look for structure in a social setup and generally look for security in a group, mostly of the same gender. Concept of right vs. wrong gets further instilled in their minds. They have sensitive self-esteem that gets affected by other's opinion about them. But at the same time they also display much more effective coping skills that help them come up with alternative strategies for dealing with frustrations. By 8-9 years their motor and perception skills are better integrated which helps them take on more responsibilities. They mainly focus on less fantasy play and more team sports.)

Observing a 16 year old adolescent girl:

Setting – My friend's house in Sushant lok, Gurgaon

Time – 5.30 pm



Met my friend's daughter **Diya** who is a close friend of my daughter Meghna (Meg). Both are 16 years old.

(Inference- At 16 years of age adolescents are very confident of their communication skills and can think hypothetically to discuss an event in complete detail much before it actually happens. They have the ability to calculate the consequences of their thoughts and actions without experiencing them in real. However they also give consideration to others point of view and plan their own behavior accordingly. As needed they are able to think logically and reject a proposed idea based on logic. This age of mid-late adolescence has a good insight into their thinking and they display skills of self-analysis and introspection, taking into account the perspectives of the social systems they live in.

At the same time their emotionality drives their cognitive thought processes significantly. If their emotions are under control and they feel balanced they can systematically solve problems and plan a future course of action. Somewhere during their psychological development they also get distanced from parents and start identifying more with their peer group. They constantly strive for independence from adults in their environment and are motivated to do a lot to get social acceptance in their peer group. They give credit to adults who are honest and straightforward with them.

This age group is extremely self-conscious and usually self critical about their own body image. They tend to indulge in risky behaviors and reject parental advice fairly easily. Their emotional-lability makes them over react to parent's questions or criticism.

While constantly challenging other people's value system, their main psychosocial task at this stage and age is developing their own independent identity.)

My approach to learning and teaching Language and Math

During my course work in IAAT I had the opportunity to work with 31 students in KG at Heritage Experiential Learning School and I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of my practise sessions in that environment which was brimming with energy and ideas all the time!

Learning and Teaching was happening at a subliminal level and we were all learning together. The children were learning how to grow from littler versions of themselves at 4 turning into much more alert and confident versions of themselves at 5.

We as tutors were learning how to facilitate this beautiful process of metamorphosis . These young minds had just stepped into the big formal school the year before and they were moving around in that huge expanse of a place mingling with children of all age groups in different zones- buses, foyers, staircases, assemblies and sports functions besides having to understand the speed at which things were changing inside and outside them.

They were becoming more communicative, were in better control of their limbs and bladders, had a much better orientation of time , space and person than ever before.

It was as if they were waking up from their baby-time slumber to get set and Go!!

In this exciting roller coaster ride it was our responsibility as educators to guide them well and in a timely way. In order to help them achieve their own best potentials it was very crucial for the Language skills as well as Logical thinking skills to get established and enhanced as per age expectations .

Keeping that in mind our curriculum for KG was mainly designed around these two pedagogies i.e. Early language development and Math .

Here are a few take away nuggets which I collected in my experience in the last 10 months re our approach to these two subjects-

Language



Methods and approaches to instruction while teaching Early Language Arts in Kindergarten have changes significantly in the last few years as now the approach is more Hands-on and through experience.

Students of KG get their first exposures to the Basics of reading and writing as they further hone their speaking skills. As per my observations these young children are getting introduced to the concepts of how to decipher the symbols they see and also how to put their own ideas together for others to decipher them. This will connect them to the world through language connections. They are pre-readers to start with , just getting to know the connections between speech and letters and sounds. By the end of the kindergarten year most of them have developed a fair amount of understanding of Reading and writing.



Learning objectives and goals for teaching Language in KG-

- to learn the alphabet . (Children were introduced to individual letters and the concept that sounds have symbols that represent them.)
- to understand that Print represents the words we speak. Also to grasp the reverse being true as well-that the concept goes both ways; the words we speak are turned into print, and print can be turned into speech.
- to sing songs about the alphabet. (rhymes and stories were narrated and enjoyed by all.)
- to write, draw and manipulate letters using different mediums, Crayons on paper, clay, water on paper, blocks.)
- to learn and recognize how the written word appear in the books.
- to learn where to begin reading on a page, how to move from one page to the next, and what word, sentence and line spacing means.
- to get maximum exposure the teachers read many big books aloud to demonstrate these concepts.
- Tutors were specific and clear about instructions and repeated them as needed. They recognize that not all children are on the same level of comprehension and understanding.
- tutor to provide individual attention to students while teaching a whole class topic.
- To begin reading sessions /lesson by reading a book aloud to students.
- Then to allow students to practice reading aloud together a few times as a group, highlighting the sight words, rhyming words.
- Eventually students will practice their reading skills independently taking help from tutors as needed. During this time, the children get to read their own copies of the books.
- **In our KG-I we introduced Learning Stations in the second semester-** the aim was to design these centers as independent practice stations for the concepts learned in the first semester and consolidate them further such as letter and word practice, and concepts of reading various levels of print.
- To engage the students better some stations were set up as games and other learning-centered activity zones.

Collectively these strategies and approaches proved very useful in learning the languages – both English as well as Hindi.

Math



Being one of my own favorite subject I took special interest in the Math sessions in KG-I and with every session my belief got further strengthened that the contextual approach to learning this subject makes it so much more relevant and interesting for the students as well as the teachers and it doesn't feel like a burden or a thing to be afraid of !

My understanding of learning and teaching of Math goes as follows-

Math is a choice you make, in the way of thinking and then approaching any situation, big or small, in life. It's the method our brain applies by picking and choosing the data it finds useful, then analyzing it to come to a conclusion which helps our mind to make sense of the complex world it lives in.

Math is also the way we organize things, or steps in a process or the sequence in an event to achieve a sensible explanation to any scenario we experience.

This systematic approach to decipher and solve a real life problem in a logical way is what constitutes the very nature of Math.

As a subject it can be taught in several ways both inside and outside school. The interesting thing about Math is it is a universally understood language in itself as it covers the entire universe of math with just ten simple digits.

What we understand of any particular scenario and what we do with it depends on our analytical skills as a person and further as a society which will have a crucial impact on the socio-economic-political balance in the society.

For this reason mathematization of our brains is an essential developmental skill. To reach this goal the educators and parents must make all active efforts to stimulate and facilitate the love for this subject in the growing minds.

Under the right kind of guidance, support and encouragement any child tends to develop an innate ability to approach any problem with an attitude to solve it systematically.

She/he develops a plan for it, collects evidences and data, approaches it step by step and with a logical approach, analytically comes to a conclusion. Its been realized that its far more important to Mathematize the brain of a child than to make him work towards a certificate with the destructive fear of failure at the back of his mind.

As responsible carers and educators we have a task in hand to give a positive outlook to the subject of Math for all the children we interact with.

Learning how to solve a problem or in other words how to do Math would be-

- Systematically break the bigger problems into manageable smaller ones.
- Solve them one by one to reach the ultimate solution without exhausting the brain.
- This encourages the students to develop a natural love for this way of thinking which is logical.
- It also involves learning how to think clearly and linearly while trying to develop the higher order thinking skills that allow out of the box approach when needed.

Going forward it's absolutely imperative that we as educators develop and spread this important belief that **Math is for All , All can learn it and All must learn it as a life skill.**

This approach will help all our students develop as wholesome human beings.



Teaching Math -

Some suggested approaches, which will make Math an enjoyable learning experience and leave a positive mindset in all students to give them a tool of survival for life, are –

- A very open minded approach by the teacher to believe in the capability of each student.
- A tutor should give ample exposure to young developing minds by giving them the basic concepts in easy to understand language while using plenty of examples from real life.
- Tutor must allow sensible and satisfactory amount of time to the student's minds to analyze the situation and apply his learning.
- Methods of assessment also need a fresh approach so that each student gets a sense of achievement while at the same time gaining sufficient conceptual knowledge of the subject.
- The assessments should be done in a non-stressed environment on frequent intervals to keep a close watch on the student's learning.
- Also keeping multiple intelligences in mind various different methods should be used to check if everyone is approaching the final learning objective even if their routes are different.

In KG here at HXLS we use the Jodo-Gyan methods while teaching Math.

It's a very child friendly and child-centred approach that makes learning fun and impactful. In the first semester we learned moving from Number names, recognition to ordinality and cardinality of numbers upto 10 and then upto 20, finally upto 50.

In the second semester we introduced the concepts of sequencing, spatial orientation, comparing numbers and adding small number to make a bigger number. Lots of social contexts and age appropriate stories were used to engage our students better and enhance their curiosity about the subject.

SECTION- B

How have I developed as a teacher through practice and mentoring

Children are like soft clay, still waiting to grow hard in their ways of living life.

A good education will help them in a well-rounded manner as I observe in my classroom experience, where by setting some basic norms and practices with the children we are able to inculcate and re-enforce the values that will help them achieve great heights in all their endeavours.

In order to succeed in life we all need two essential ingredients - opportunities and the motivation to use them judiciously. In KG-I where I go for my class observations I see how my Collaborating Teacher along with her Co-Tutor is helping the 30 students to experience a way of life which is organized, systematic and self-regulated.

Early morning welcome and the morning routine of attendance set the tone on a good note of feeling responsible and attentive.

The pace of the entire day is managed well because of the way each new activity / lesson is blended into one another using transition rhymes, and reminders about paying attention.

Reiteration of civic sense everyday makes it easy and helpful for all.

Students are learning how to be patient, respectful and mindful towards each other and also towards what they learn.

They are inculcating the most important value of gratitude as they learn to conserve water, not waste food and keep their environment clean.

Starting at a tender age of 4-5 years if they practice these life skills in a loving and ever encouraging environment they will make these beautiful values a part of their fabric and live a purposeful life leading to happiness for one and all.

Student chosen for observation- Pseudonym-ROHAN MADAAN

Class- KG

Information collected about and from R has been kept confidential.



Purpose/ Rationale of choice

Report written from observations made in July'17

Why did I select this child?

Rohan is a 5-year-old boy who is full of ideas and energy but as of now seems to be looking for direction. He reminds me of a rafting boat which has just tipped over a rapid waterfall at high speed and is quickly trying to find its upright balance once again. In early July when he had returned from his summer break he had turned in an immaculately done holiday homework, which he also shared with the class in great detail over two consecutive days.

This left a very positive impression on my mind about his dedication towards learning and displaying what he had learned. And he did it with the right balance of pride and confidence. But lately his teachers, including myself, have sadly noticed a sea change in his approach to schoolwork.

He is a person with a great potential both academically as well as socially but of late he's been losing his focus. He has always been very affectionate towards everyone but in the last 3-4 weeks he has become extremely clingy to adults and is feeling slightly detached from his peers.

When he is given a task to perform he begins drooling or starts making spit-bubbles and rubs his saliva all over his clothes, books and table. When corrected he back talks and gets very flustered. It is heart breaking to see a bright and confident boy changing into a shaky person who's feeling disoriented.



However with the slightest of scaffolding and inputs from his teachers he is able to concentrate better on his own self as well as his surroundings. This helps in enhancing his love for learning and shows significant improvement in his work quality.

We were sincerely concerned about the downward shift in his attentiveness and engagement in class and we spoke with his father in a PTM.



He shared that just about 3 weeks ago Rohan's mother had delivered a baby boy and the entire household had become extremely tied up with the new arrival. Since then Rohan had been showing signs of significant disinterest and insecurity as well as a slight touch of rivalry towards the little baby whom he feels is keeping his mama' very busy all the time'.

So after discussing with my Collaborating Teacher I decided to change from my initial case study student to Rohan. Both of us felt that by doing so Rohan would hopefully gain the much-required one on one inputs and support. I sincerely plan to work with Rohan in helping him overcome his hurdles in learning and genuinely wish that he achieved his cheerful demeanor and focus back.

Report prepared during August- September'17

(Information re Rohan Madaan shared with my CT and the TE)

Frequent meetings and sharing of information about Rohan with M.s B (CT) was very helpful as – It gave me all rounded information about his approach to work and extracurricular activities and also allowed me to note it from another perspective too.

This helped me crystallize my thoughts and inferences further.)

My beliefs and assumptions that influenced my choice while selecting

I found Rohan to be very fascinating for my case study as I had seen him as a very diligent child who was keen to finish what he had started and do it well. However just over a few weeks span his entire concentration as well as motivation had begun sliding back on a downward spiral. I wanted to know what triggered it and if I could be of some help to get him back into his groove. I conscientiously believe that children are like soft clay and the right inputs at the right time can make an immense difference to the way they shape up.

Areas I decided to focus on while observing Rohan (R)

I planned to pay special attention to his socio-emotional adjustment to the classroom, his peers, his tutors, his work challenges at school and most importantly to the new developments at home with a new sibling.

How I planned to observe, gather information about R

In accordance with the available time and the schedule on a day-to-day basis I made a mental note to spend extra time with Rohan, specifically around the transition times and the initial part of a lesson when the Tutor regarding the task at hand was giving instructions. I felt this would be most useful as these were the times when I had noticed Rohan to be most distracted and hence non-productive while doing his task.



Various situations in which I observed Rohan – classroom/ lunch hall/ playground/ bus bay/ music room/ yoga room.

I observed that Rohan showed varied levels of interest during the day depending on which subject was being shared in the group or which environment he was in.

He showed maximum involvement when a new topic was being introduced but when the same lesson material was being discussed or recapped to reinforce further he would show complete lack of interest and hence minimal involvement. He would just leave the group and start roaming around aimlessly in the classroom. Mostly not disrupting others but feeling restless and confused when asked.

Again, out in the playground or in music/yoga lessons he would be very interactive but inside the KG classroom he displayed increased distraction.

Informal conversations with Rohan to know about his interests, fears, likes/ dislikes, his family

During the course of my observations I got several opportunities to have conversations with Rohan. I realized that he is an outspoken and articulate child who loves to share stories in great details. At the same time he's a good listener too provided he's the only one being spoken to, he mostly loses interest as soon as there are two-three people involved in the conversation.

His definite areas of interest are Cars, Trucks and Planes. He seems like an adventure loving person and doesn't show any obvious fear or hesitation about anything.

He's very loving and affectionate and often talks fondly about his mother and father. He rarely talks about his brother. When asked a direct question regarding his baby brother he gives short answers in a slightly annoyed tone.

He loves BOOKS ! Any free moment in the day you would find him sitting quietly in the reading corner with a book, which he tries his best to read himself.

Final draft of Student profile was prepared at the end of September'17

Summary of my observations July-September

PROFILE: *Making Rohan Madaan visible* -

- Physical Appearance and Gestures -

Rohan is a 5 years old boy with an average built. He is fairly tall for his age with a lean built and tends to keep a slightly bent-down posture with his head tilting to the right side.

His shoulders are mostly drooped when he walks. While talking he uses a lot of hand and arm movements in order to put emphasis on what he is trying to convey.

His hair are neatly cut short. His face expression is mostly with widely opened eyes and a slightly open mouth, sometimes drooling spit.



He wears comfortable weather appropriate clothes made with soft materials but the drawstrings in his lowers often disturb and distract him.

Early in the morning he enters the class in a quiet manner and throughout the day he generally keeps to himself. He doesn't ask many questions and loves to daydream while holding a book in his hand sitting in the reading corner of the class. His energy level are on the lower side throughout the day but when its time to sing and dance his face lights up, he enjoys the music and jumps and makes funny faces along with his friends.

His voice modulates from being mostly soft to occasional bursts of angered replies when he's repeatedly asked to do something or join the group for a learning mat activity. He prefers sitting

on his chair or on the table when the rest of the class is sitting on the mat for a language class/ story time. When reminded he prefers sitting in the last row on the mat from where he frequently gets up to roam around while the lesson is going on.

He appears distressed when forced to sit down and begins to chew on his I-card or its strap. Possesses good listening skills if interested in the new topic, but soon loses interest in the same after the first exposure. This affects his work too. When the first activity is done to consolidate his learning of a new topic he usually shows attentiveness and finishes the work well but in the reinforcement tasks on the following days he's unable to work to the finish and the quality of his work is also not up to the mark, considering his capabilities. He is not disruptive towards other students and even when sitting in a group he is usually on his own or at the most interacts with his immediate neighbors.

- Disposition, Relationship with Children and adults -



Rohan is a person who shows very transparent emotions, ups as well as downs. He is inquisitive about his surroundings and articulates his queries very precisely.

Extremely affectionate he usually spends time on his own or with one or two friends but at the same time gels well within a group too. Shows controlled and gentle body movements without seeking much attention. He enjoys talking to adults (Tutors) more and likes to discuss his dreams and aspirations.

Generally has a non-reactive demeanor but when provoked repeatedly he does fight back, initially verbally with a harsh and firm voice and eventually with a bit of mild hitting too. But doesn't intentionally use force to hurt someone. He soon displays remorse and apologizes if urged by the tutor. He mends his fights quickly and does not hold grudges.

- Activities and Interests -

Rohan's usual topic of choice during free play, creative drawing or open-ended discussions is Vehicles of any kind. Even with Rangometry or jodo-cubes he mostly makes Cars, trucks or airplanes. His passion for reading is clearly evident in his keenness to use every free moment with a book even if he has read it many times before.



He shows enthusiasm when the day begins but by mid-day his level of involvement starts trailing. But with just a little scaffolding from the tutors he is able to finish his work as needed. As the time has progressed we have noticed that now he earnestly asks for help and is focused on giving a good final product.

- Ways of Learning and Thinking -



Rohan displays a fairly serene emotional tone. He likes to follow rules as long as they allow him physical movement and space to stretch. His conversations revolve mainly around 'me', 'my', 'mine'. He is just and fair in his approach to his peers and shows compassion towards them. He doesn't mind sharing his things and class resources with them.

He enjoys participating in verbal discussions and idea exchanges but feels uninterested in putting them on paper. He avoids writing the date and the day in his journal, tries to finish his task quickly with scribbles and doodling and doesn't fill many details. If helped by tutors he improves his work otherwise leaves it midway.

-Teacher's view about the child-

According to his teachers Rohan is a soft hearted and loving boy who craves for affection but is not particularly attention seeking. He stays aloof mostly but gets self-defensive when corrected for not paying attention or not doing his work in class.

Tutors hold him in high esteem and hope he will surely display his full potential once he feels more settled and adjusted in a wholesome way.

- Parent's view about their child -

As shared by his parents on different occasions, Rohan is an adventurous child who loves to explore new things and is very observant when in a new environment.

According to them he is courteous and loving. They shared that after the arrival of the new baby in the family Rohan appears disturbed. Since he has been moved out of his regular bedroom (earlier shared with parents) to his grandparents' room he is struggling with all the changes in his routine. Parents feel this has led to some confusion and feelings of mild frustrations as he's getting used to the fact that now he will be sharing his space and his people with his younger brother. At present his parents are unable to give him much time on a daily basis but on weekends and holidays they try to catch up with his schoolwork and his personal needs.

- Way forward-

Suggestions for -

Rohan-

My effort would be to encourage Rohan to express openly and frequently. As he is an articulate child with a creative bent of mind I would urge him to share more freely about his fears and anxieties as well his joys and dreams in verbal form or in creative-drawing form. This should be encouraged amongst his peers, with his teachers and most importantly with his parents. This would give him a strong sense of belonging and also help him realign his perspectives in light of the new developments in his life.

Teachers-

I would earnestly request the teachers to continue giving Rohan the unconditional love and support that he's receiving from them. They could ensure that in the beginning as well as at the end of his school day he gets some exclusive time with them (about 3-5 minutes). This would help them to check on how he's been and what does he plan to do for the rest of the day(both in school as well as home). This added involvement would encourage a strong sense of bonding and boost his self-confidence.

Parents-

During the parent-teacher meets I would appreciate the parents for the hard work they are putting in to balance their time and energy between Rohan and the baby. At the same time I would humbly request them to pay special attention to Rohan's emotional needs on a daily basis during this significant shift in family dynamics.

It would be useful to remind them to further support Rohan's efforts to adjust in his new routines as he develops a connection with the new baby. As tutors we can suggest that parents be extra attentive about giving exclusive quality time (at least 10-15 minutes, both together as well as individually) to Rohan. This should ideally be done every day, first thing in the morning and last thing in the evening in order to give him a good start and a stable closure to the day. Also to help him integrate well and develop a loving bond with his brother, they could try and involve him in small and simple activities of baby care as well as in playtime together with the baby.

These moments of laughter and cries that they will share together will give them beautiful memories to cherish and seal their bonds firmly for life.



Classroom engagement strategies which proved helpful during my Practice days

Methods which I used to help me learn the names of all my students in KG

While welcoming them in the morning I would ask them to mark their attendance at the clip board where their pictures are attached to the cards holding their names.

That way every day I managed to reconnect the names with the faces. This helped in learning most of the names in the first week itself.

The diaries which were checked by me every morning also have their names and photos . This reinforced the name-face connections.

While interacting with them during the lessons and playtime I made it a point to call them by their names and if in case I forgot some name I would quietly check it from their I-cards.

Sometimes I made small songs/ rhymes with their names incorporated (children really enjoyed and would ask me to repeat that often).

The **method which proved most effective** was the repeated use of their names in everyday interactions while giving out instructions, helping them with some task or generally while playing with them/ reading to them during their free time.

The use of small rhyming songs using their names was a popular activity with them and it helped me remember their names easily.

Whenever I would address them with their names rather than saying 'hey 'or 'excuse me' or the instruction directly, the child would immediately pay attention and respond with a smile and "Yes ma'am" !

They felt more connected to what I had to say to them.

It was extremely useful to get to know and remember their names and for them to know mine fairly early into my period of observations and interactions as this improved their engagement with whatever activity I was carrying out with them.

It helped me build a warm bond with them and that improved their attention span to my instructions as well towards the task itself.

Approachability was also more comfortable both ways once we knew each other's names.

It proved very useful knowing the names of all the students as the responses to all the instructions as well as queries were smoothly exchanged between them and me.

Although much needed, making notes was a challenge after the first few days as I would want to be more a part of the class activities rather than watch and write about them as a silent observer, sitting in one corner of the class.

I would usually manage to write my notes in point format with some details added.

The students used to feel very inquisitive about my note-writing and would often ask me what I was doing. Sometimes they would leave their work and come close to me to look inside my book. They felt very fascinated when they got to know I was making running observations about what all of them were doing in class. It made them feel that they were doing something really important as someone was specially making notes about them doing it.

These notes helped me get a fair idea about the routine of the class, the schedules which were being followed, the methods used by the teachers for giving out instructions , getting the students' attention and handling discipline related issues.

Since I was observing them closely by moving around the class, sitting with them on their tables as they did their tasks, and also while they ate their snacks and meals, I managed to get a reasonably good sense of their temperaments, ways of approaching a challenge and how they reacted to hurdles in their attempts.

While writing my running observation notes I was extremely attentive towards the students and the teachers that helped me stay focused. This proved helpful in increasing my interest in them and theirs in me.

The most pertinent conclusion from my observations was the fact that different children learn the same topic using different ways/ methods.

Some used Audio-Visual faculties to grasp what they saw/heard in terms of stories, imagery, table story or videos shown on YouTube.

Some others were most attentive when the support to learning was given with written text on the white board or the teacher gave them their individual workbooks/ reading books.

The remaining few displayed better attentiveness whenever any new concept was being introduced outdoors, for example though Nature walk, Games with rules in the playground, Role play inside the classroom.

Most students however fell in the first category of Audio-visual as they are very young and their reading/ writing skills are still developing.

My Observations of their classwork and homework over a period of time-

Around **15-16** students were able to follow all the instructions and were grasping the concepts appropriately for their age. Their academic as well as extracurricular work was **exceeding expectation** most of the times.

Around another **10-11** students were able to understand the concept and follow instructions well if the teachers in the class made sure they were seated facing them and had attentive and focused children on the neighboring seats as well to reduce their distractions.

These students were consistent in their hard work. They produced results in academic as well as extracurricular work that **met expectations** for the grade level.

The remaining **5-6** students were **struggling significantly** with most of the challenges. Their work in academic as well as extracurricular fields was not up to the mark and needed reinforcement. The extra attention and repeated explanations of the required expectations from the teachers was proving very productive. Also setting small frequent goals was making it more manageable for these children to eventually give them a sense of achievement.

Seeing this distribution of the class students, while planning my lessons I will keep in mind the average attention span and speed of understanding of students in grade KG where children are on an average 5 years of age.

My running observation notes about all the students in the last 2 months have given me a fair idea about which students need extra inputs from the teachers, and how to make the seating arrangement of the class so that each table group has a balanced distribution of students with varying levels of understanding and work capacity.

I plan to make frequent notes about the students in a tabular form (taking guidance from the class journal used by the Class Teacher). It will be a very effective way of noticing an individual student's performance and progress throughout the session.

SECTION – C

Field engagement & Reflections

(Retreat to Junga , Village expedition)

Offsite Retreat To Camp Junga

13-17th June 2017



An informative and interactive orientation day on 12th June built up a lot of excitement for our journey the next day , and we were all geared up to start our journey to Junga the next morning. All of us had met each other for the first time, and were now setting off to an adventure camp filled with palpable excitement for the unknown. Certain aspects of the camp had been kept from us, which we later realised was completely sensible and valid.

Our ride, the Swaran Shatabdi left at 7.40 am sharp, our bogeys crammed with bubbling anticipation and non-stop chatter, leading all the way to Kalka.

Ice breaker conversations and tea biscuits warmed up the otherwise chilly bogey of shatabdi which was buzzing to get us to our destination.

From Kalka, we left for Junga in innova cars after doing an efficient head count, which later became a fun routine. We reached the campsite within a couple of hours. Our camp: Chrysalid Junga; was located at the scenic village Maheshu in Junga Tehsil, Shimla district, Himanchal Pradesh.

The camp organisers and our mentors; Maneet and Smriti were already present to receive us with warm smiles. We were famished by the time we reached, and before we knew we had gulped down the hot lunch layed out for us. Soon after that , our tents were allotted to us through chits. I was in tent number 15 along with my roommate Shweta, and her adorable toddler Ojas .

It was a fairly expansive tent with comfortably sized beds and bedding , which felt like melted butter under our aching bodies at the end of each hectic day when we crashed into them having finished all the tasks which left our muscles and joints fairly sore.

We found the staff at the camp extremely helpful in getting us settled in .The surrounding serenity was breathtaking and the nature view in Junga was at its best.



As the day turned into dusk we all settled our luggage and headed off to the Baithak which was our focal point for the camp. The Baithak room was a spacious hall with chairs and daris to sit on and was the place where all the instructions for the day were given before getting into the sessions of self exploration.



The sessions here would start with humming; to help us centre our thoughts and get our focus into place. Personally, I found this extremely helpful in balancing my mind. As a part of the “Mindful Personal Leadership” training we were guided by Maneet and Smriti to tune into our own thinking patterns and perceptions. These reflected on the world around us, as well as ourselves.



Different days surprised us with different tasks varying in difficulty levels such as on the first day we played some group games (Hoopla game and Pebble with Pipe challenge) which tested our attentiveness and our strategizing capabilities.

The next day we did rappelling, terra terra bridge building followed by zip lining . Both these activities helped me overcome my inhibitions towards heights and filled me with a new confidence about myself.



The following day brought in the biggest challenge so far, that of a long trek followed by an overnight camping at Chail. Although I faced a slight setback in terms of palpitations and breathlessness during the trek for which I received immediate support and help I was thrilled to have finally reached the steep mountain top .For me, this day was the most eye-opening and helped me to break down my own mental barriers. I didn't only face my fears, but also learnt what all I had been missing out on. The challenge of cooking meals with meagre supplies was well handled by us all and made me feel so much gratitude towards my faith for giving me the comforts which should not be taken for granted . We managed to make tea, soup ,complete dinner including a dessert all well in time to fill our starving selves. This was made possible because of efficient planning and flawless teamwork by all in the group.

The sumptuous meals were followed by an extended round of singing and dancing by the bonfire which was so much fun.

What we handled together brought us all closer to each other and I felt a strong connect with each one of them as we danced around the orange flames and laughed like carefree adolescents.

The unexpected shock came to us when around 11 at night the camp organisers Vicky and Shoaib announced the idea of Solo Night.

The idea sent shivers down our spines as till now what appeared to be a fun picnic at 7000 feet had just turned into a living nightmare for most of us.



The concept of sleeping all alone on the grass filled with all kinds of creepies and crawlies and surrounded by a thick jungle with all its own possibilities in terms of mild to aggressive wildlife was becoming absolutely unpalatable for many of us. But as we had realised by now at our camp; having doubts and fears served no purpose whatsoever and it was in our favour to face the challenge with a brave heart and a strong mind so that we carry back some amazing memories of that night.

As luck would have it I got a spot which was a plus as well as a minus-plus because it wasn't too far from the bonfire spot to give me some warmth through the chilled night in the open , but a minus since I was inside a very slippery sleeping bag just about 10-12 feet away from the edge of a deep valley.

As expected I hardly slept.

Certainly not more than an hour and that too only after the sunrise once I could hear people chatting around me. On return to Junga , the served breakfast was the most relished meal of the entire camp by unanimous vote, after the 15 hours of mind gripping emotions and fear. We had escaped all of it, but most importantly, we had conquered fear itself.



After catching up on our sleep, we enjoyed FIRO-B and Dreambody activities.

Most of us including myself were pleasantly surprised to note that what we think about our emotional needs and behaviours was a mismatch from the results of FIRO-B. This pointed out the areas of our behaviours where we need to work on ourselves.



The last night at the camp was going at a slow pace with chitter and chatters at the Baithak when as part of a surprise task we were all made to walk in the dark with bare feet and rolled up trousers; only to reach a spot where four feet long path of burning sparkling coal was waiting for us. At the first go; my optimistic mind said to me that we will be asked to roast some marinated food material on the grill in front of us and this would be our treat dinner meal in the dark.

But soon we all realised what actually had to be done..we were supposed to walk on the coal without getting ourselves roasted too badly !

The group broke into a frenzy of anxious giggles and the enthusiastic ones took the lead to jump into the challenge first. I got my chance somewhere in the middle of the whole organised chaos and I got away without any harm and yet filled with truckloads of adrenaline.

As I placed my first step on the burning coals, I felt like I was in a dreamlike state. The crackling sounds of the hard surface beneath me felt like whispers from another me in another time, who was telling me that this was it. This was my step into a new life that I would build for myself, and as I crossed those three steps across the glowing charcoal, I had crossed over an invisible line, the line of transformation into a better , bolder person , now ready to face all that was waiting for me on the other side.

This moment felt like it had been seared into my mind, and would remain a flaming memory for a long, long time. I was thrilled and terrified at what I had just done, the rush in my head like a brain-sized tornado. I remember, I looked up first to the velvet night sky which was studded with diamond-like stars that somehow looked like they were

smiling down at me, and then back, at the burning obstacle I had managed to survive.



In summary this retreat was one of the most enriching experiences of my life and has marked the beginning of a beautiful journey ahead; the journey of the rest of my life as a complete person who believes in herself and wants to impart that belief in all the young minds she comes across in her life as an educator.

Looking forward to a fulfilling journey as a life long learner now...

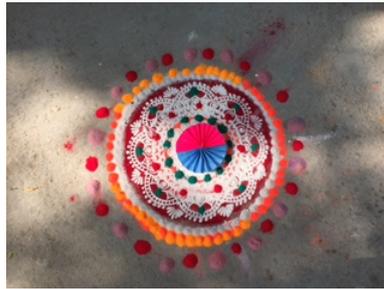


Village Immersion Expedition

Anuradha Kishore

My visit to SDMC School, Police colony, Haus-Khas, New Delhi.

Dates- 25th-28th October 2017



Purpose-

To explore the facilities and curriculum being offered by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation School in the Police colony of Haus-Khas, New Delhi.

To visit the nearby urban villages/slums of Motilal Nehru camp, Indra camp and Begampur camp. To observe and research about the demographics as well as the most pertinent challenges and aspirations of those communities.

Aim- To develop a bond with the people of those communities and to encourage them to enroll their children into the nearby schools such as the SDMC School.

To organize and conduct a fun-based carnival (Bal-Mela) at the SDMC school campus for their own school students as well as for the people of the three urban villages mentioned above.

(This Bal-Mela was planned, organized and executed by the IAAT students along with the faculty. This facilitated exposure of the slum residents to the SDMC school. This helped them interact with the school teachers and share their details for enrollment, if so desired, while enjoying a day filled with fun and games followed by a sumptuous lunch offered at the Mela.)



Orientation-

On the first day we were oriented to the history and journey of the SDMC School including its struggles and triumphs in the last several years.

The school had been running since the 1980s but was not able to retain its teachers as well as students due to funding constraints and lack of guidance/support from the Delhi Government. It was only after the school was adopted by IAAT, Heritage school around 1.5 years ago in collaboration with the Tech-Mahindra foundation for funds that the SDMC School found a new lease to life and has been growing from strength to strength. In addition to a Govt appointed school Principal and a nursery teacher a couple of IAAT fellows and teachers are enrolled here to teach some of the classes on a regular basis. Administrative as well as pedagogical guidance and know how is also provided by the IAAT group.

School Structure-

Grades- Nursery, KG, 1-2 (multigrade), 3-4-5(multigrade).

Each class has 18-20 students (6-8 girls and 12-14 boys).

They have provision for multigrade teaching to accommodate the needs of all the children who are getting enrolled in a school for the first time ever in their lives.

This also keeps the staff and resource requirement compatible with the available facilities.



After spending an hour or so observing the various classrooms at the SDMC school we were divided into three groups. Each group was accompanied by a faculty member to visit one of the three slums/urban villages.

Our subgroup visited the **Motilal Nehru Camp, located near IIT-Delhi.**

We visited the slum on three days for 1-2 hours each day. Though for a short while only we felt immersed in the way of life there as we kept our observation and inquiry caps on.

My understanding of the community –

Social Background and Demographics

- There are around 5000 people residing in this congested colony.
- Most have migrated from UP, Bihar, MP.
- Majority of the families have been living here for the last 18-20 years.
- Larger proportion is Hindu population.
- **Civic Conditions-**
 - Partially paved roads.
 - Open drains, serious sanitation issues with stagnant dirty water brewing germs and infections.
 - Very few people have personal toilets – only in the houses where owners themselves live. Tenants use shared community baths and toilets which are newly built and are currently sufficient for the number residing there.
 - This urban village claims to be cleaner than the other slums. A recent development (done 6 months ago) because of efforts by IIT Delhi students and other NGOs this slum colony was cleaned as part of a cleanliness drive. But ever since then the garbage is again piling up and people are distressed about it.
 - Water shortage is rampant .Despite being a hilly area children were seen carrying buckets of water from the community taps to their houses.
- Children are supposedly enrolled in the nearby Government schools (sec2,3,4 of RK Puram). Few come to SDMC school,Police colony. Kendriya vidyalaya is the most sort after school. Very few children, mostly young boys are enrolled in private english medium schools through the EWS quota.
- Most of the men work in IIT Delhi – as gardener, canteen worker, driver etc. We also came across a few a ex-govt employees who are having to live in the slums post retirement. Working women go as part-time domestic helpers and cleaners to the nearby societies.
- Most of the residents are tenants as after finding jobs and saving money the owners have left the slums for a better living area in the city.
- Most of houses had amenities of comfort such as- washing machine,coolers, TV, mobile phones, cycles/motor cycles.



Discussion with a few families and the insights gained -

Socio-Cultural aspects

Gender -

- In most families both men and women work or want to work.
- Some women chose to stay at home because of the following reasons
 - Young children at home.
 - Illiteracy
 - Caste discrimination affecting choice of work available.
 - Husbands restricting them for security or personal reasons.

Family planning-

- Most of the families have 4-5 children.
- Some women said they want fewer children but have no say in the matter.

Do they want to move back to hometown?

- When asked most of them said "No".
- Reasons given by men as well as women-
 - Villages are more lonely .
 - Women have more opportunities and freedom in the urban settlement.
 - Machines have replaced manual labour in villages .



As educators interacting with that community which is facing numerous struggles in their everyday lives such as migration and security issues, health concerns and stress of keeping themselves employed we felt very empathetic. We were keen to take their feedbacks and point of views regarding Education.

We realised that they all shared a common goal of personal and family upliftment. We wanted to know that in the given scenario what were their beliefs regarding the role and purpose of Education and how do they think it will help them achieve their aspirations in future.

Following insights were gained after our interaction-

Education

Positives-

- Most of them believe in educating both boys and girls.
Reasons for believing so-
 - Personal struggles experienced due to being illiterate.
 - Enabling marriages for girls with educated and employed grooms.
 - By educating their daughters they feel they will make them self-reliant in case their marriage fails and she needs to earn for herself.
 - They want to utilise the facility of free education and mid-day meal provided by the government and make their children employable and capable of contributing to the family income.

(Some examples of high achievers like children from these slums who have managed to get trained in hotel management, nursing training, computer software related jobs have set good role model for the younger children)

Challenges-

- There is a remarkably wide gap between their dreams and the guidance they receive to pursue those dreams.
Most of them believe-
“Angrezi school main padega to paisa kameyega” but due to lack of proper career counselling they are unable to put in the timely inputs that will take them closer to their aspirations.
- Some children have not been enrolled because of no valid identity proof.
- Girls get enrolled much later – some of them over 5 year of age were not yet registered with any school.
- Drop-out rates are higher for teenage girls because of security reasons or their requirement to look after younger siblings.
- On further inquiry we were told that earlier there was a provision for Adult education and vocational training in the slum colony itself but they were withdrawn for some unknown reasons. Given an option they all want to be part of that again.

BAL MELA on the Final Day



There was a lot of buzz in the SDMC school on the second last day of our expedition. We were assigned the task of making all preparations for the Bal Mela the next day. Sumeeta and I volunteered to be the organisers for setting the layout and decorations for the Mela. Some of our batchmates volunteered to join us. We got together and prepared bunting, balloons, Paper origami decorations and props of animal figures to decorate the main courtyard as well as the school entry gates.

Rest of our batchmates made teams to organize the entertainment and games to be held during the Mela.

Two of us – Sumeeta and I also planned a game counter to hold two interesting games – ‘Cookie challenge’ and ‘Lemon and spoon race’.

Both these games were easy to organise with minimal expense for resources. They were innovative in nature to encourage Mind-Hand-Eye-Body balance as well as Focus.

The other game counters added further variety with- Science games, Creativity with Rangoli corner, Art and Craft counter, Tattoo table and Games in the field. A few energising stage dance shows were performed by the IAAT members to which everyone cheered and joined in too.

In total around 200 people (including adults and children) attended the Mela. After participating in the games and entertainment they all sat down to enjoy the served meal comprising of aloo-poori-halwa which they truly relished.

We thanked all of them for coming to the Mela and for being part of our celebration of ‘Education for All’ at SDMC.

Our theme for decorations, which also extended into individual badges for all children, was-“*Khoob Padenge – Khoob Badenge*” (We will educate ourselves to grow in life). This inspiring theme was whole heartedly imbibed by all who attended that day .

Our own understanding of social context as an educator-
Our Personal Experience-

(Citing some here)-

- *Anuradha-*

Children were full of energy, enthusiasm and keenness to learn both inside as well as outside school. They took ample initiative to participate in the Bal-Mela and were not looking for any prizes during the games but just wanted to have fun and go ahead with the drive to prove themselves.

My take away – ***“Never Give-Up.”***

- *Kavita-*

They were humble, open and welcoming. All the questions during our slum visits were answered with warmth.

My take away – ***“Acceptance and Inclusion.”***

- *Ramesh-*

The slum dwellers, adults as well as the children were taking life as it comes without being over-analytical about their own life situations.

My take away- ***“They allow life to happen.”***

- *Sumeeta-*

Experience of their yearning for a piece of biscuit was “overwhelming”.

My take away – ***“Do not let yourself get de-sensitized again.”***



Reflection on our privileges/ self-

On my way back home in the metro everyday I used to feel a bag of mixed feelings in my head.

These were feelings of empathy and compassion for the children in those slums, feeling of Awe towards the adults living there who were battling so many woes everyday to make sense of their lives and finally the biggest feeling of gratitude towards God, my parents and my teachers for giving me all the opportunities in life to achieve much more than I could have dreamt of.

At the same time I felt a serious call of duty to do more for this community in whatever way possible. I noticed a common streak of attitude through all the slum dwellers. They all believed ‘Education’ to be the golden key for their release from all miseries of life. This also made me alert towards the need to sensitise our children from the more privileged societies to not take what they have for granted.

Questions that I would like to explore more or am left with-

I came back from the expedition feeling satisfied that we had managed to achieve what we planned to do. At the same time I felt it was too short a time spent to fully understand their challenges and come up with some solutions to improve the school enrollment status of those young children in the slums who were bubbling with energy and inquisitiveness to learn so much.

We as educators as well as responsible citizens must take all initiatives to make these children a part of an organised system which can help them achieve their full potential. Keeping this in mind I feel encouraged to do what all of us can do at our individual level....begin with the idea of "Each one-Teach one".

Summing it up I would conclude that all of us at IAAT felt fulfilled with a great sense of achievement and encouragement at the end of our four day village expedition.



Wear gratitude like a cloak and it will feed every corner of your life.
- Rumi