



by
"The Rite Centre"

Research in Integrated Training & Education

OUR PHILOSOPHY AND GUIDING PRINCIPLE

ALL CHILDREN ARE SPECIAL

A child is first and foremost a child and the ability, disability or giftedness, secondary.

❖ 2 YEAR INNOVATIVE COURSE

❖ Highlights (April - June 2009)

- The **annual examinations** for the First Year and Second Year students of our diploma course were held in April 2009 and the results declared in June. The outgoing batch of students achieved a cent per cent result with one first class with distinction.
- The **10th anniversary of our Foundation** was celebrated on the 9th of April 2009 at the Cricket Club of India, Churchgate. The Chief Guest Mr. Russi Lala, a previous Director of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, presided over the function, while the Guest of Honour - Mr. A.N. Singh, who is the Managing Trustee of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust released a CD containing excerpts of the journey of our Foundation over these 10 years. A power point presentation was then made, which gave the audience an overview of the growth of the Foundation over a decade, as well as its vision and future plans. The function was well attended and included our associates and well-wishers from educational and other institutions, in addition to past and present donors.

❖ Lectures/Workshops/Training Programmes

- A three day orientation programme on "Childhood disorders and early intervention" at Ummeed Child Development Centre, Mumbai.

❖ RESEARCH / DOCUMENTATION

Roda & Janhvi consulted Prof (Dr).G. Kerawalla, Programme Director of Narotam Sekhsaria Foundation for guidance & direction regarding our research projects.

- **Ongoing:**
 - Evaluation of students on teacher attitude, values & opinion of the philosophy of integration, before & after completion of the D.Ed (Integrated) course.
 - Preparing questionnaires - school visits/classroom observations.
- **To undertake:**
 - Attribution of factors related to students' participation in the D.Ed (Integrated) course.
 - Survey for awareness of integrated education among schools of Mumbai.
 - Correlation between Locus of Control (LOC), study habits and teacher effectiveness.

❖ WEBSITES OF INTEREST

- **www.mensamumbai.org** : Mensa, a club exclusively for people with an exceptionally high intelligence quotient, started its Mumbai chapter in 1973 which presently has over 360 members. There is a non-verbal entrance test to screen applicants, the dates of which are announced on the organisation's website. Check it out !!
- **www.pitara.com** : This is a website born out of the premise that it is possible to make education, learning and growing up not only fun, but at the same time promote and reinforce the right value systems. Organised under sections such as games, activities, poetry & stories, it is primarily targeted at under 13 year olds, though it can also be used by parents and schools.
- **www.kididdles.com** : A website that contains lyrics & music sheets of almost 2000 of the most popular children's songs & organized alphabetically for easy reference, it is worth a visit.

❖ PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS

Participated in various seminars/workshops/conferences.

- Mrs. Bhatia was invited as a Guest of Honour at the valedictory function of the Teacher Training course at the **Helen Keller Institute for Deaf and Deafblind, Mhape**.
- Roda was on the interview panel of the **J.N. Tata Endowment** to screen applicants for scholarships on courses pertaining to integrated / inclusive education.
- Roda and Janhvi attended a workshop entitled "Joy of Giving", organised by the **Give India Foundation**

❖ HEROES FOREVER

- **R. Udhaikumar** of Chennai, paralysed by muscular atrophy and confined to bed for almost 18 years, feels art is one way that makes life meaningful for a person with a disability. Though needing to be propped with pillows to keep him steady & able to move only two fingers of his left hand, with which he paints, he has completed at least 700 paintings in the last 10 years. Hoping to showcase his works at an exhibition, he remarks that he would like to be recognised for his work, not his disability.
- 80 year old **Balasaheb Dharap** of Mumbai, has had a 50 year long association with the wheelchair. An accident when he was 29 years severely injured his spinal cord and confined him to a wheelchair, but that didn't stop him climbing the career ladder or making the most of life. He recently retired as joint director of industries in the state government sector & has also been around the world, including Leh and the Niagara falls. His wife recently recorded his experiences in a book titled "Can't Walk ? So what".
- Despite being born with complete hearing loss, **Priyanka Patil's** parents insisted on enrolling her at a regular school. The support provided by the school (R.N. Podar, Mumbai) and her parents, in addition to her own determination to overcome her disability has resulted in her achieving 92% in the CBSE exams this year !!

❖ TAKING STRIDES

- **Jamie Osborne**, a transit planner and accessibility co-ordinator with the San Francisco Municipal Agency in California, has been developing **technical solutions for people based on their specific needs and abilities**. He believes that simple changes can make a huge difference to the lives of people with disabilities. He also remarks that the contribution of the talented rehabilitation engineers and therapists available in India could change the way India provides accessible transit to not only the local population, but also to the growing tourism industry.
- Speech therapist, **Neela Govindraj** of Chennai, quit her well-placed corporate job to nurture her hearing impaired son and was later encouraged to start a trust - **Sadhya** - to help children with a similar condition. She emphasizes the importance of early intervention along with therapy and has helped many hearing impaired kids integrate in normal schools at the pre-primary stage.

- **Udhavum Ullangal**, a public charitable trust in Chennai, not only conducts spoken English classes and organizes educational camps for children, but also provides financial assistance in the form of scholarships and other aids such as uniforms, notebooks and bags to many needy students. This has helped a number of students to continue their education inspite of economically adverse circumstances.

❖ CONCERNS

- A recent **Government resolution** (GR) expected to be implemented from the following academic year across Maharashtra, aims to make **Marathi compulsory in all non-Marathi schools from Std I to IV**. The State education minister insists that it is applicable to all schools irrespective of the boards they belong to, leading to mixed reactions from principals - some welcome the move while others are apprehensive that a third language at the primary level will impose an added burden on students.
- The **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme in Tamil Nadu** hopes to expand its sphere of action to include state run juvenile remand homes as well as observation homes run by NGOs. The SSA officials are of the opinion that children in these homes are given moral education, not formal education and would like to address this aspect.
- A petition lodged in the Bombay High Court has brought to light that the Thane Municipal Corporation's education board included members who had studied only upto the 4th or 7th std. Expressing concern that **appointment of underqualified or non-qualified persons would have a drastic effect on the quality of education provided**, the State has been given 3 months to make changes to the 62 year old Bombay Primary Education Act of 1947 that sets guidelines for induction of members on the education board of local civic agencies.
- Schools in Mumbai are taking active steps to **lighten the school bag**, following a directive from the Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission to implement a government resolution. Any complaint against the school could result in levy of a monetary fine or even withdrawal of recognition !
- Academicians are disturbed by the deemed university status conferred on almost 55 medical colleges nation-wide in just the last five years. They believe a major factor is the lack of clarity in the UGC Act in defining criteria applicable. In contrast, only 29 colleges were granted this privilege between 1956 and 1991.
- According to press reports, parents and schools are increasingly concerned about the recent **decisions taken by the Education Ministry of Maharashtra**, which has led to tremendous stress for students seeking admission to junior colleges - the latest being the furore over the percentage of seats allotted to various boards.

❖ OVERHEARD

- All the nine **central prisons in Tamil Nadu have schools** equipped with library, meditation hall and resource persons to encourage prisoners who would like to pursue their studies. The State has now introduced an incentive for inmates who score good marks in the public examinations by a remission of sentence at the discretion of the Director General of Police (Prisons).
- The Tamil Nadu government is planning to **introduce Information Technology from Class 6 to 10 in government schools** across the State. As part of a Central government scheme, the required hardware has already been provided through Central and State sponsorship. This initiative hopes to equip children to deal better with the changing educational and employment scenarios.
- Tamil Nadu is proposing to streamline **procedures pertaining to starting new schools** as well as getting mandatory renewal. Renewal is required every three years, but presently there are inordinate delays in getting the necessary clearances and certificates, sometimes taking even upto 2 years !

- From June this year, almost 100 youngsters from different walks of life, who are accomplished graduates and young professionals, will be placed in around 45 low-income private and municipal schools in Mumbai and Pune to teach for 2 years. This is part of the **Teach for India campaign** where the volunteers have been driven by a range of reasons, from altruism to enhancing their leadership and managerial skills.
- Many homemakers in Chennai have started turning their spacious homes into a **summer camp** for neighbourhood children, offering education, recreation and a place for them to unwind. They share their own creative skills and make innovative use of their time.

❖ FUTURE PLANS

- The Foundation plans to develop this centre into an INSTITUTE OF INTEGRATED EDUCATION with –
 - A Demonstration School
 - A Teacher Education College
 - A Research and Documentation Unit and
 - A Resource cum Pedagogy Centre



NEWSLETTER

The Rite Step

Sir Shapurji Billimoria Foundation

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