

WHY WE DO IT

The Education Crisis

As per various reports like NAS, ASER, PROBE, SIDH report (a matter of quality), various researches by NCERT, UNICEF etc. we come across multiple problems and challenges which trouble various stakeholders (primarily the child) on a day to day basis. For example -

- Primary school students – disconnect with language and concepts used in school, poor literacy and numeracy skills, fear and boredom in school, poor learning environment & teacher student relationship, etc.
- Upper primary students – low learning levels, education less practical and disconnected from daily life experiences/curiosities and challenges etc.
- High school/college level – less exposure and opportunities, lack of adequate knowledge & skills, less employability, stress, lack of leadership abilities, conflicts with parents and peers, less participation in etc.
- Others – poor quality of teacher training programs, less innovations in teaching, etc.

We tried to explore further during our interaction with children and parents in Mathura and Vrindavan. We came up with following observations:

- During our interaction with children, parents and teachers we realized that government schools in Mathura are not able to deliver as per the aspirations set by policy documents. NCF 2005 expects the children to have age-appropriate learning levels, critical thinking abilities, imagination, creativity, awareness about self, local environment and culture. Contrary to these expectations, most of the children in primary schools are struggling to do basic reading, writing and arithmetic. Further, children in secondary schools are not able to find practical implications of concepts being learnt. Learning English has become an aspiration but children are not able to comprehend or express in the language. Large number teachers and children are struggling with learning processes and completing the syllabus. In this situation, teachers are not able to focus on personality development of the children.
- During our interaction with community and parents we realized that education is primarily considered as a medium that will help a child earn his livelihood and is seen as an investment for his 'secure' future. People have realized that modern education helps to develop a big resource pool of information (bigger memory) and some dimensions of intellect. Most of the people know - 'this kind of intellect further leads to bigger salary and income'. Livelihood is such a tangible loud issue that other issues related to a person's life are mostly neglected. For example – self awareness as a concept & practice/process hasn't yet reached most of the schools of Mathura. Here, most of the students are not aware of their strengths, limitations and problems - within and outside. This lack of

awareness further leads a bad habit of compromising with anything and everything till the time it negatively affects priorities of their lives. This ignorance and negligence lead to a habit of fire-fighting in their lives whether it is relationships, civic responsibilities etc. Consequences of this kind of education can be commonly seen when a student doing a PhD doesn't know about the area or subject in which he has to do it, or similar things happen for PG, UG or even arts/science/ commerce 10+2 courses.

- In the current scenario, totality of life is not being properly considered while designing and implementing curriculum and practices related to children. It is mostly concerned with immediate responses to immediate challenges. For example – students shared that interaction with teacher is limited (we also didn't see them asking questions, sharing thoughts and experiences, etc. mostly its administration mode with minimal participation and learning), science teaching is mostly done through textbooks and rote method (very less scope and resources available for experimentation & dialogue), social science teaching also revolves around the textbook, etc.
- Even if some parents think of their children being educated in other dimensions of life (physical, emotional, spiritual) there is a lack of such an education in Mathura. The cost of this negligence and scarcity is later paid by the person, family, society, nation and nature. This negligence shapes the way our current educational and social system is running. This is also creating various mental and physical problems in people.

“Fire-fighting becomes a habit in most of the students if they remain surrounded by problems at individual, family and society levels.

A larger consequence for the nation/society is - we are left with a few people who can come with effective solutions to a given problem.”