

# Contents

## Preface

A Letter From Albert Einstein to His Daughter

S.No.	Article	Page No.
1.	Crisis In Education —V.S. Mathur	1
2.	What Ails Education —Hans Raj Jain	5
3.	Teach Wisdom Not Trade in School —T.M Joseph	7
4.	Business of Education —Sunit Dhawan	9
5.	Caught In Private School Boom —T.S. Rao	12
6.	Forcing School Managements To Return Donations	16
7.	The Burden Of School Education —Modhumita Mojumdar	20
8.	Many Schools Still Believe Sparing the Rod Spoils the Student —Sudha Passi	25
9.	Before They Teach, institutions have Much to learn —Balvinder	29
10.	Parents Attachment For their Children —Swami A Parthasarathy	32
11.	Danger of underage schooling —Jayanti Roy	34
12.	Don't Rush Reading —Dr. Raymond Moore	37
13.	Over The Top Parenting	43
14.	The Deep Anomie	45
15.	Let Kids Be Kids —Toufiq Rashid	51
16.	Schooling Parents About Schools —Surabhi Verma	53
17.	Discipline Do's and Don'ts —Dr. Monika Datta	57
18.	Watch Your Child's Blues —Vidya Krishnan	64
19.	I Only Want You To Enjoy Your Adulthood, My Child —R. Radhakrishnan	66
20.	Watch Out for What Children Watch on T.V —Navtinder	68
21.	Has Your Child taken to Drugs? —T.K. Gill and Harleen Bahga	72
22.	Children And Family Values —Samra Rahman	74
23.	When Teachers Fail —Roopinder Singh	76
24.	Lincoln's Letter to His Son's Teacher	79
25.	Pingalwara Diary	81

## Preface

The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. These views were expressed by Rabindranath Tagore about education.

The word education has wider meaning. According to Edward Thring, “*Education is the transmission of the life, by the living, to the living*”. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, “*By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit*”. All round development means physical, intellectual, aesthetic, social, moral and spiritual development through education. Best in child and man can be drawn out by touching the hearts of the students. Their feelings and emotions should be properly aroused, their healthy sentiments should be developed and their aspirations should be strengthened. Education is a strong weapon to bring about social change.

The pillars of education system are educational policy, institutions, students, parents, teachers and society.

To make the education system successful an educational policy should be designed which includes formation of curriculum for all classes and effective evaluation system.

But today our education system is in doll-drums because of commercialization of education, corporal punishment and biased attitude of parents, teachers and society in imparting education of a child.

Education of a child actually starts from the cradle and the mother’s lap. As it is rightly said by someone that, “When your children desire to talk to you and share their

problems with you, stop everything and listen to them. There is nothing more important than that”. So it is duty of the parents to spend time with their children and become role model for them.

Due to disintegrated knowledge teachers are encountered with a rebellious pupil instead of humble and obedient seeker of knowledge. The teachers due to their disinterestedness to teach their students in classrooms are themselves responsible for bringing an ugly situation for them. Rather than talking about them parents and teachers should talk to them to make them responsible humane being.

A doctor can cure the disease only after diagnosing the patient. Similarly we may solve the flaws in education system if we are aware about working of education system, role of parents and teachers.

This booklet contain the articles selected by **Bhagat Puran Singh Ji** (*Founder of Pingalwara*) and **Bibi ji Dr. Inderjit Kaur** [*President, All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.)*]. As we all know Bhagat ji was passionate about educating the children and youth so he collected different articles to spread awareness among people about the flaws of education system and the role of parents and teachers in it. Just like Bhagat Ji his successor Dr. Inderjit Kaur Ji maintain her spiritual guide’s desire to collect articles related to education and got these articles printed so that future generations can take guidance from them.

Article of **V. S. Mathur** “**Crisis in Education**” explain that crisis in education is due to too much responsibilities of school teachers such as being guardian, moral guide, magistrate, policeman, instructor and

entertainer.

**Hans Raj Jain** in his article “**What Ails Education**” talked about educational policy. According to him educational policy should be designed so as to cater to larger poor segments of society.

The Commercialization of education is discussed in article “**Business of Education It has Become A Big Industry**” by **Sunit Dhawan** discussed that education has become a big industry which thrives on the hard-earned money of the parents. Given the mad rat race of handful of professional courses among the students as well as their parents, this industry holds a promising future.

**Swami A Parthasarathy** in his article “**Parents Attachment for Their Children**” explained that children are the most affected victims of attachment exhibited by their parents. Parents’ love for their children has metamorphosed into dreadful attachment. This is happening universally because of the selfish trait in parents.

Few can claim to be free from parent’s compulsive attachment to their kids. However well-meaning they be, their attachment turns the parent-child relationship sour, traumatizing families with constant confrontation followed by the invariable separation. Blissfully unaware of the consequences, parents continue to dote on their beloved ones.

Parents’ attachment to their children manifests in two distinct ways:

1. Opulent parents pamper their children by showering upon them money and gadgets, amenities and facilities. The children are thus saturated with luxuries and lose their joy content.

2. Another class of parents manifests their attachment through possessiveness towards their children.

They virtually pester them with constant instructions and directions. They turn into control freaks. And their directive invariably falls short of reason or judgment.

**Children and Family Values** by **Samra Rahman** explain the role of family in building the character of children.

Teacher is like a candle which lights others’ lives in consuming itself but some time the teachers failed to impart their role. These views were expressed by **Roopinder Singh** in article “**When Teachers Fail**”. When teachers fail then whole educational system gets deteriorated.

I am sure that this booklet will be helpful for the parents, teachers and society as a whole in solving the flaws in our education system and development of holistic personality of students.

Such books are printed by All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) and distributed free of cost. Kindly donate generously for this work.

*Ms. Ritu Sharma*

*D/o Late Sh. N.K. Singh and Late Smt. Promila*

*C/o Dr. Inderjit Kaur*

*(Mukh Sewadar) Pingalwara*

## **A Letter From Albert Einstein TO His Daughter:**

### **On The Universal Force Of Love:**

In the late 1980, The Lieserf, the daughter of famous genius, donate 1400 letters, written by Einstein to Hebrew University, with orders not to publish their contents until two decades after his death. This is one of them, for Lieserf Einstein.

‘When I proposed the theory of Relativity, very few understood we and what I will reveal now to transmit to mankind will also collide with the misunderstanding and prejudice in the world.

I ask you to guard the letters as long as necessary, year’s decades until society is advanced enough to accept what I will explain below.

There is an extremely powerful force that so far science has not found a formal explanation. It is a force that includes and governs all others and is even behind any phenomenon operating in the universe and has not yet been identified by us. This Universal force is love. When scientists looked for a unified theory of universe they forgot the most powerful unseen force. Love is light that enlightens those who give and receive it.

Love is gravity because it makes some people feel attracted to others. Love is power because it multiplies the best we have and allows humanity to be extinguished in their blind selfishness. Love unfolds and reveals. For Love we live and die. Love is God and God is Love.

This force explains everything and gives meaning to life. This is the variable that we have ignored for too long may be we are afraid of love because it is only energy in the universe that man has not learned to drive at will.

To give visibility to love, I made simple substitution

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in my most famous equation. If instead of  $E=mc^2$ , we accept that the energy to heal the world can be obtained through love multiplied by speed of light squared, we arrive at the conclusion that love is the most powerful force there is because it has no limits.

After the failure of humanity in the use and control of other forces of the universe that have turned against us, it is urgent that we nourish ourselves with another kind of energy.

If we want our species to survive, if we are to find meaning in life, if we want to save the world and energy sentient being that inhabits it , love is the one only one answer.

Perhaps we are not yet ready to wake a bomb if love, a device powerful enough to entirely destroy the hate, selfishness and greed that devastate the planet.

However each individual carries within their a small but powerful generator of love whose energy is waiting to be released.

When we learn to give and receive this universal energy, dear Lieserf, we will have affirmed that love conquers all, is able to transcend everything and anything because love is quint essence of life.

I deeply regret not having been able to express what is in my heart, which has quietly beaten for you all my life. May be it’s too late to apologise but as time is relative, I need to tell you that I love you and thanks to you. I have reached the ultimate answer”

Your Father,

*Albert Einstein*

Written by

*Robert Vancina ,honoured with World Award for Sustainbilty.*

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# Crisis in Education

V. S. Mathur

It has ever been recognized that education can be the most effective weapon for personality development and social change. It naturally can be the means by which men perceive, interpret, criticize and thus bring about a transformation in the world around them. In a country like India, inhabited by huge number of illiterate and ignorant people living in poor conditions, education is specially needed to bring about some awakening and a sense of purpose and identity in the so-far demoralized majority. We urgently need to create a new social order in which education should, besides socialization, prepare people “to deal creatively with reality”. What Paul Freire did in Brazil and Chile becomes relevant in our situation. One needs to combine compassion for the under-privileged with intellectual and practical confidence and a sense of missionary zeal in service. As a result, therefore, of the all-round anxiety, the phenomenon of universal strides, at least in quantity if not in quality. Primary education, although claiming 90 per cent coverage, is a tragedy.

Since long we have had two channels of thought. One, we have benefited from the thinking of philosophers and sages like Maharshi Aurobindo Ghosh, Vivekanand, Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore, who tried to delve into the native philosophy to find roots for an Indian system of education. Second, through sheer administrative and government efforts, we have been running in our school and colleges a system that has had for its model the British pattern as initiated by Lord Macaulay in 1835. The system seems to have been perpetuated even in free India barring some arithmetical combinations and perpetuations.

It was expected that the two trends in thinking

would have met and merged into a healthy synthesis.

Ever since independence we have been talking loudly of a new philosophy in fancy vocabulary but working on the same old pattern of institutionalized education for mere literacy. The five commissions on education appointed in post-independence years and various policies have, perhaps, tried to modernize the concept of Indian education, if not the content and the methodology. Sadly, the delivery system has been defective. As a result, we find ourselves at the crossroads.

Education is facing a profound crisis. No one could be more aware of it than educationists themselves. Serious thinkers now write books with dramatic but depressing titles like “*The school is Dead*” and “*DE schooling Society*”. International conferences and seminars are held to discuss the question: “Is the school an obsolete institution?” Debates have been raging on the themes of re-schooling and de-schooling. Participants in a recent international seminar, which examined the formal system of education in the Third World context, come to the disturbing conclusion that they could not afford any more schools, at least of the present type. There is mounting evidence to suggest that the present school system is unable to provide what it promises and that it may gradually but unmistakably be breaking up.

What is wrong with school education? The formal school system, it should be admitted, is an oversold and idle commodity. Far too many untenable claims have been made for it. Contrary to popular belief, it does not necessarily bring about any social change and or national regeneration. It is now being recognized that the present school is perhaps necessary but not strong enough tool for social change. This phenomenon may continue for some time more for want of something better.

In over emphasizing its own importance the school

system has taken on too many responsibilities, which it either handles inefficiently or not at all. It is amazing that the school tries to perform simultaneously the roles of guardian, moral guide, policeman and magistrate, instructor and entertainer. Being badly ill equipped to play all these roles, it naturally miserably fails in achieving the diverse objectives that it sets for itself. In the process, both teachers and students get frustrated and society continues to suffer.

Most countries, developed as well as developing, find the formal educational system prohibitively expensive. Costs are mounting. In a few developing countries like India are likely to be in a position to bear the burden of the increasing demand for formal schooling. But this is a big question mark.

The dysfunctional aspects of education are becoming increasingly. Rather than preparing students for society, it alienates them from it. To our dismay, we in India have discovered that formal education generates urban values, competitiveness and consumerism. Although it is claimed that education is a mobility multiplier and an equalizer, in actual practice it legitimizes inequality and creates new class differences. The disadvantaged remain and perhaps, become more disadvantaged. A critic has pointed out aptly that the school is a "*Hospital that tends to the healthy and rejects the sick*". Rather than leading to a dynamic transformation of society, the present school system actively works for the maintenance of the status quo. It has very little to offer to the oppressed segments of society, except slogans and gimmicks-programmes like "*each one teach one*" and "*para schools*" (shiksha karamis) and of course, "*functional literacy*" through "*voluntarism*", whatever it may mean.

Finally, the educational system of today provides only a routine information package to those who

pass through its portals, without contributing much to their understanding and problem-solving capabilities. It has not been able to find an effective answer to the problem of obsolescence in an era characterized by the explosion of knowledge.

The deficiencies of the system are being recognized and a haphazard search is no doubt on for remedies. Some educators are pleading to make the school physically more attractive so that it can draw and retain students. Others have come out with plans for school regeneration through curriculum and textbook reform, modifications in the methods of instruction and work experience. A third approach aims at purposive reorientation of the school system and a change in the focus of its activities.

Julius Nyerere's concept of "*education for self-reliance*" is certainly a significant example of this approach. Some thought has been given to relating the school to community needs, developing patterns of out-of-school learning, promoting continuing education for parents and initiating programmes of functional literacy through group activity. Illich has been recommending DE schooling. Freire, on the contrary, thinks that only a political revolution can change the power base of society, through which we can achieve a "*meaningful transformation*" in the education system.

Our aim, however, should not be to swap new doctrine for old and make slight modifications here and there. We also do not have to urgently discuss methods of bringing more money for education and to upgrade institutions. We have actually to start from the beginning and look at our children patiently, repeatedly and respectfully. And then initiate a model based on what our children are like and how their minds work and not on adult whims and slogans.

## What Ails Education

Hans Raj Jain

Sir—In the article “*The educational deficit*” (I.E.Sept 12), Mr. B.G. Verghese has correctly underlined the monumental failure on the part of the state to promote universal elementary education as the basic cause of the deeper malaise afflicting our country. According to him, the barbarous Tsundur caste killings, the Ameena episode, revivalism, the Mandal syndrome and the huge social divide that sustains in egalitarian conditions and keeps India poor, is the consequence rather than the cause of this failure.

The stark fact is that either we do not have an educational policy worth the name or we have a vested interest in perpetuating illiteracy and poverty. This is clearly borne out by the fact that there is no paucity of funds as far as higher or university education is concerned and that there has been a sharp proliferation of medical, engineering or degree colleges, whereas elementary education which provides the infrastructure, is in serious default. Myron Weiner, in his book “*The Child and State in India*”, has conclusively proved, on the basis of historical evidence, that most often literacy has preceded industrialization in Europe, America and Japan and even in developing countries like Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

The elite have a vested interest in keeping India illiterate because the present system provides vote banks for politicians, sweated labour for industrialists, more jobs for the middle class etc. As a matter of fact, all these classes have rationalized or legitimized the present system of education which accentuates obscurantism to a modern

socio-economic development. The system determines the future stratification of the society and creates a new hierarchy in which the privileged classes maintain their position by arcane and technical knowledge that is closed off from the rest of the society. It creates a “*meritocratic society*” or a “*credentials society*” in which the college degree becomes the license of higher employment.

And then the present education policy helps accentuate the problem of child labour than solve it, as the richer classes maintain that children are economic assets, for poor families and have not to be diverted to something unproductive as schooling. A queer logic that makes the poor move in a vicious circle of poverty! This factor alone accounts for the tardy growth of the literacy rate which has gone up from 43.56 per cent in 1981 to 52.11 per cent in the current year.

The need is that there should be a thorough overhaul of our educational policy which should be so designed as to cater to the larger poor segments of society than contribute to the privileged classes only. A reversal of the present policy of catering to a select few is what is required. Unless this is done, the present grim scenario will continue.

*(The Indian Express, September 18, 1991)*

## Teach Wisdom Not Trade in School

T.M. Joseph

Education is supposed to build character and preserve the moral and spiritual values of society but the atmosphere prevailing in our schools and colleges seems to contribute to moral decadence and depravity. Educational institutions have become mere shopping centres of knowledge and information and their primary purpose namely character formation take back seat or is completely ignored. Winston Churchill said, “**The first duty of a university is to teach wisdom, not trade; character not technicalities.**” The same idea was expressed by Ruskin when he said “**All education must be moral primarily, intellectual secondarily.**”

If Indian society is plagued by so much violence and corruption in public life, it is to a great extent, due to the absence or lackadaisical handling of character and value education in its educational institutions. For a democratic society to grow and flourish, moral and ethical values are must. Schools and colleges should go out of their way to stress the need and importance of character and virtues in one’s life. For this we need teachers of character, knowledge and wisdom.

### **Multifaceted job**

Historian Arnold Toynbee said, “*of 21 notable civilizations, 19 perished not from conquest from without but from decay from within.*” Educational institutions have obligations to instill in their students values of love, honesty, truthfulness, justice, fairness and the ideals expressed in the Constitution, especially the freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship.

A teacher’s job would be much simpler if he or she has to teach only academic subjects. Teaching academic subjects is only one aspect of the multifaceted job of a

teacher. Education should help students organize their physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual activities, aptitudes, tendencies and habits. When they are well organized, we have a mature wholesome personality. A teacher has to address the whole child his mind and heart. He or she has to teach the children to care about themselves, their classmates, their school, the society in which they live and the world at large. So the aim of education is the integral formation of the student and not just equipping him with a lot of information.

### **Taught or imbibed**

Since values are not so much taught as they are absorbed or imbibed through the prevailing atmosphere in the campus, the principals and the teachers have the bounded duty to create a conducive environment in their schools and colleges. This can be done by making the institution student-centered. In a student-centered school or college there will be discipline but this is enforced in a civilized manner and not through fear or threat. In such an institution, the teachers prepare their lessons well and make them interesting and meaningful and carry out the corrections promptly and properly. Every student is praised for his or her achievement and is encouraged to do better and is made to feel that he or she is a success. Various co-curricular activities are organized so that students can develop their talents. Students experience joy and freedom in such an institution and are increasingly involved in its running. In short, the institution exists for the good of students and anything that goes against it is not tolerated.

Schools and colleges should not be mere centers of information but rather they should be centres of formation. Their goal should be the formation of the student. This will strengthen the moral fiber of the nation.

*(The Hindu, October 14, 2005)*

# Business of Education

## IT HAS BECOME A BIG INDUSTRY

Sunit Dhawan

On a nostalgic visit to a Delhi school at which he had studied, a veteran politician recorded his feelings on the visitors' book thus: "*Whatever I am today, it is due to this school.*"

On seeing the remarks, his political opponent, who was also present there, promptly wrote down a counter comment: "*Why blame the school?*"

Apart from appreciating the wit of the commenter, one might also be driven to find the answer to a deeper question: What effect does our school or, for that matter, any educational institutions where we have studied really have on ourselves?

The question assumes a greater relevance in today's era, when education seems to be everybody's focus and the parents are desperate to ensure that their wards get good education.

However, in the pursuit to provide "*quality education*" to their children, most parents go by the economics' famous thumb rule: "*Costlier is better*". They are ready to pay through their nose to send their children to a good educational institution.

Now that the school of children has become a status symbol for their parents even in small towns, the owners of schools, coaching centres and other educational institutions are minting money.

In fact, education has become a big industry which thrives on the hard-earned money of the parents. Given the mad rat race of handful of professional courses among

the students as well as their parents, this industry holds a promising future.

But the primary question remains unanswered: What are the educational institutions providing to our children? Are they inculcating good moral values, shaping an upright character or teaching the virtues of policies like honesty, integrity, truthfulness, tolerance and patience? Sadly, the answer in most cases is a big 'NO'.

Ideally, good education should help us in becoming better human beings. This philosophy was well understood and implemented by our ancestors.

Our country had a glorious tradition of *gurukuls*, where wards of people from all sections of society used to study together. The students were taught the tenets of simple living and high thinking. Irrespective of their parents' position in society, the students had to lead a simple and self-disciplined life at the *gurukuls*. They were subjected to lots of hardships and multi-dimensional tests to enable them to face the tough challenges of life.

The teachers never "*sold*" their knowledge but passed it on to the desirous and deserving members of the next generation. The students also held their teachers in high esteem and were ready to sacrifice even their life on their command. In sharp contrast, the education sector has been completely commercialized today. Most school owners fleece the parents of their students and exploit the teachers serving at their institutions.

As if to justify the exorbitant fees and other charges extracted from the parents, these schools provide air-conditioned classrooms, hostels and buses; hobby and activity classes and other such facilities to the students.

However, such abundance of facilities at school as well as

home seldom helps the students in knowing or achieving the real goal of their life. What these institutions produce is a bunch of half-baked, arrogant or confused youths whose vision is restricted to the pay package they aim to get in the job market.

Even after completing the studies at school, the students find themselves in the midst of an even more confusing world of coaching centres, professional educational institutes and foreign universities promising them a bright future.

The students undergoing coaching may or may not get selected in the course/institute of their choice but they invariably end up filling up the coffers of their coaching institutes/teachers.

The most intriguing aspect in the entire scenario is that more often than not, the students are made to choose a career from a closed set of options, mostly comprising professional study programmes.

Seldom is an attempt made to understand the real aptitude of a child before pushing him/her into a given discipline; as the parents as well as children are driven by social and peer pressure. In the entire process, the educational/coaching institutes remain the biggest gainers from the mad rush for the few privileged seats.

Instead of considering their responsibility over by getting their child admitted to a “*prestigious*” school, it is high time that the “*aware*” parents should wake up and reconsider their approach before it is too late.

*(The Tribune, November 4, 2008)*

## Caught In The Private School Boom

T. S. Rao

Most of them are started without any investment worth the name and no infrastructure whatsoever. One or two rooms in a flat are converted into a school and students are admitted on charging high fees. There are no blackboards, no teaching aids and no benches for all the children and no room for the teachers. The office, the headmaster’s room and the reception room are all rolled into one. More and more classes are added every year.

Even if the school does not have a playground that does not deter the management from charging high tuition fees and all sorts of special fees. Hundreds of such schools are started but the competition between them is certainly not to the advantage of the parents.

The competition between these teaching shops lies in hiking the fees since the gullible public are of the view that the higher the fees charged the better is the standard of the school.

These schools enter another type of competition amongst themselves. In the absence of the requirement to follow an approved syllabus the schools go about the job without one. Textbook available in the market are prescribed arbitrarily, with an eye more on the commission given by the publisher and the shopkeeper (who many a time sets up a shop in the school premises itself during the days of admission) than on the quality. A large number of books many a time more than one for a subject are prescribed and parents are compelled to purchase them. The nexuses between the text-book publisher and the school are unmistakable. This adds not only to a drag on

the purse of the parents and the fragile shoulders of the youngsters but also to a load on the mind.

The course is made heavy purposely for there is competition between different schools in the neighbourhood. There is a race among them to teach more and more of higher standard material in the lower standards and curriculum meant rightly for the next grade of the primary school is pushed downward to the upper KG or at times even to the lower KG.

The parents in such situations need education more than their wards. They carefully calculate when it comes to buying an article from a shop but when it comes to the education of their children, they go more by fancy than by reason. The fear of non-admission compels them to send the child to any school at an earlier age than necessary. The same thing happens once again as the child reaches the higher grades. The parents for once are faced with the grim reality that the school which their ward has attended is unrecognized. There is now a frantic effort to get the ward admitted to recognized school. Time is totally against the parents and the situation is exploited mercilessly by all schools.

Why it is that parents put themselves in this unenviable position? They are left with no alternative in many cases. They are left with no alternative in many cases. The only other alternative may be to admit the wards in schools run by the local body (Municipal Corporation) or by the Government where the conditions are better imagined than described. These unaided unrecognized schools are thus patronized by all the parents those belonging to the economically weaker sections. There is thus complete bifurcation-the schools run by the local bodies and the

Government cater to the poor, whereas the better off go elsewhere. As long as the bureaucrats themselves do not avail of the education dished out in the schools managed by them the condition in these public schools will continue to be the same.

Knowing fully well the inevitability of private schools existing the managers of the mushroom schools turn this situation to their maximum advantage. While the parents are fleeced mercilessly. On the one hand, the teachers serving there are not spared either. The teachers in hundreds of unaided schools get a monthly salary which a skilled craftsman gets as wage for one or two days' work. The Government approved scales are not applied. The Government also feigns ignorance of the inhuman exploitation.

In fact, the Government feigns ignorance of the very existence of such schools. It may come as a surprise but nevertheless it is true that all the statistics of the number of schools, number of children enrolled etc. printed in the Government publications do not cover these unrecognized schools. Researches are undertaken and grandiose plans are woven leaving out this most important sector which to say the least does not exist for the Government.

These schools are not started with the approval of any Government body. There is no law or rule to govern such schools. They do not come under the purview of the Government departments and inspectorates. Strangely the law of the jungle seems to prevail where exploitation is the only rule.

The only way to set matters right is to compulsorily require every school to register even before it is started.

There may be unaided school but there should not be any reason for unrecognized schools to exist. If the existing rules of granting recognition are stringent and do not permit many of these schools from being recognized, at least it can be stipulated that registration is done first and within a specified period recognition is sought and granted. By the way, this is the only way of ensuing implementation of the much debated common curriculum also.

It may be argued that such compulsory registration and recognition leave no scope for experimentation. Many innovative experiments have been possible only in a free atmosphere. These experiments cannot be possible if they are hampered by rules and regulations. While this is true in a few exceptional cases, it cannot be said that the thousands of teaching shops in our towns and cities are in any way experimental. The only goal of these shops is to corner as much profit as possible. It is high time that this exploitation in education is checked and children, teacher and parents are given a fair deal.

*(The Hindu, November, 8, 1988)*

## **Forcing School Managements To Return Donations**

What began as an isolated protest against an arbitrary decision to change school uniforms in Baroda city has snowballed into a novel movement against unethical practices by the private schools, run mostly by local politicians? A nonprofit voluntary organization is spearheading the movement against corruption in schools and has succeeded in forcing managements to return the “*donation*” money charged from the parents at the time of admitting their wards.

After the current academic session began in June this year, over Rs. 45 lakhs was thus “*returned*” by 53 school managements in Baroda city after the Vadodara Vidhyarthi Hitrakshak Samiti volunteers took up the issue in a big way. What is more, perhaps for the first time in the country the members of a voluntary organization were allowed to accompany government investigation teams during inspection of schools about which several complaints had poured in from parents.

Meticulously investigating the complaints of excess fees and donations, the Samiti confronted the school managements with evidence in the form of receipts issued to the parents. When several representations to the Chief Minister, Education Minister and others concerned evoked little response, a very successful bandh was observed in the city. Ultimately the Government had to bow to the people’s pressure and instituted a special investigating committee that comprised officials from departments other than Education.

Since primary and pre-primary education has become a promising business proposition all MLAs in

Gujrat, cutting across party lines, have promptly jumped into the education bandwagon. Promising and lucrative it certainly is for making easy money. Not surprisingly, as many as 143 MLAs, according to the Samiti are connected with the managing trusts of private schools across the State.

Enjoying political patronage, it was certainly easy for the school managements to skim money from parents. The parents continued to cough up the money that was being charged under various heads, for want of other options—till the unique movement grew up in strength.

The movement's origin can be found in a spontaneous outcry by parents against an arbitrary decision by 16 Baroda schools to change the uniforms without any rhyme or reason this academic year. Suspecting a nexus between the managements and textile manufacturers the parents rose up in protest against this decision. It was here that some youth leaders, once again cutting across party affiliations came together under the Samiti to fight it out with the school managements.

With humble beginnings on a footpath in the heart of Baroda the Samiti soon won the confidence of the people who began flooding its offices with complaints. *“It was an avalanche of complaints and protests against the arbitrary and autocratic behaviour and functioning of private schools in the city,”* said Mr. Ajai Dave, member of the Samiti, addressing a news conference here on Monday.

Demonstrations forced the schools to cancel their earlier decision regarding uniforms. This initial success galvanized the youth into further action. They decided to take up other complaints of the parents the main issue being donations and excess fees charged by private

managements that invariably had political backing and patronage. Secondary education is free in the State. It is the primary and the pre-primary schools that offer chances for “making money, Mr. Dave said.

The Samiti soon discovered that most private schools were overcharging and collecting fees other than the prescribed ones. The schools were also collecting funds under heads like temple fund, building fund, development and maintenance fund, playground fund and under several others. A peaceful movement with the support of the people took deep roots and the State Education Department was forced to issue circulars to the schools to stop such activities.

After the setting up of the special investigating team of 11 officials and representatives, the Simiti went in depth into the corrupt practices by schools. As 53 schools were investigated. According to Mr. Dave most of them were run by MLAs. The Samiti Members were able to ascertain through voluntary disclosures by parents that nearly Rs. 90 lakhs were collected illegally by the schools. This is considered the tip of an ice berg. Criminal complaints were also lodged with the police. This resulted in some schools returning the money thus collected, which amounted to Rs. 45 lakhs. The money has since been returned to the respective parents.

It certainly is novel that young political activists should take on their political masters. For Mr. Dave, A member of the Janta Dal, political affiliations did not come in the way of probing the alleged corrupt practices of the Lal Bahadur Shastri Vidhyalaya, run by Mr. Manu Bhai Moti Bhai patel, President of the Baroda city Janta dal. *“Yes they (political leaders) did bring pressure on us but we are determined in our fight,”* he declared.

The limited success of the Samiti has led to the mushrooming of similar organisations also, the Samiti itself is branching out into several cities of Gujarat. Mr. Dave announced that the Samiti was seriously contemplating a state-level panel to fight corruption in schools.

“How can the slogan ‘*Mera Bharat Mahan*’ have any meaning when corruption begins from the primary education level? Are we teaching something good to the young minds when their parents have to pay a premium to arbitrary and autocratic school managements when they are only of three years of age?” Mr. Dave questioned.

The Samiti has already formed squads of volunteers to monitor the progress of the movement.

*(The Hindu, August 29, 1989)*

## **The Burden of School Education**

Modhumita Mojumdar

THE Yash Pal Committee was the latest among a seemingly endless series of committees set up to look into various aspects of education which has definitely been sliding from bad to worse over the decades after independence. This time the Human Resource Development Ministry has reacted fairly promptly and announced a package of measures on the basis of the committee’s recommendations, submitted a few months ago, to lighten the burden of school education.

Both educationists and paediatricians had expressed alarm at the kind of back-bending load that small children were made to carry in their school bags and of course, the amount of facts and figures that they were expected to cram in from the pages of these books. Especially with respect to pre-school children, it had been pointed out time and again, that those under the age of five and attending pre-school centres ought not to be taught any of the three “R”s at all. Pre-school centres should be the place, where the children would learn how to adjust themselves to an alien and organized environment, sit with other children, play with them and learn to treat the adult “*teacher*” as a friend and guide who would lead the class in the matter of playing games, reciting nursery rhymes and so acquiring a feel for words and a sense of rhyme and rhythm.

These centres should be places for the further socialization of the child especially in this day and age of the small family norms and the phenomenon of both the parents going out to work. Here, they would also learn how to hold a pencil and draw marks on a piece of paper, perhaps learn to make simple objects of fun and play by

folding coloured paper and draw whatever they feel like drawing, even if it squiggles, rather than be forced to imitate the teacher and copy down the “*typical*” house with a sloping roof and a smoking chimney that is so alien to our culture but which every child is senselessly made to draw. Such pictures also figure in the child’s first books. And the nursery rhymes he or she learns, especially in those exalted “English medium” nursery schools, make no sense at all. In India, we tend to throw away the watery stuff after curdling milk. And we call the solid stuff “*Paneer*” or cottage cheese not curds.

But with regular schools interviewing and giving tests to children seeking admission to Class I, where they ought to begin by learning the alphabet and the numbers, the pre-school centres are forced to teach the child how, not only to spell B-A-T and C-A-T, but to count up to 100, add and subtract, if not exactly memorize the multiplication tables.

The Central Government has now banned admission tests and interviews for pre-school children and issued orders to the States to do likewise. But has it banned these things for children seeking admission to Class I in regular schools? For, unless this is done, the child will continue to be subjected to learning by rote at the pre-school centres.

The burden of exercises in the primary classes is also being sought to be reduced. This too, is welcome. However, parents will continue to coach their primary school-going children at home (or pay private tutors to do so) unless there is a definite improvement in the quality of text-books and school teaching. One pre-requisite for this would be smaller classes. But far more crucial to teaching is the job of finding good, dedicated teachers—men and women who enjoy teaching, have infinite patience and

love for children. Unfortunately, although school teachers are better paid now, teaching is the last resort of a lot of incompetent people, mainly women who do not take it up as a challenge or recognize the demanding nature of their work but consider it a “soft” job that they can easily combine with their primary vocation as house-wives.

NCERT despite its existence over several decades now, has not been able to convince school authorities or teachers that school teaching is not a cul-de-sac and a job where one need not keep abreast with the latest—either in the line of teaching techniques or in relation to the subjects taught. It is true that NCERT itself has brought out text-books that are inexpensive and affordable and which attempt to teach certain basic concepts and develop these as the child is promoted from one class to the next. But these books are shoddily written and extremely unattractive and whether this is so because the money they pay to the experts who are commissioned to write the books is too paltry to attract better talent or whether such contracts are farmed out to favourites for a consideration, nobody seems to know.

School authorities put the blame for the heavy load that the school-going child must carry today squarely at the door of NCERT. In a way they are very right; because, if one uses only the traditional methods of teaching, depending largely on forcing the child to remember historical dates, definitions from the grammar books and generally acquire certain mechanical skills of the mind rather than imbibe learning almost invisibly, through a process of osmosis as it were, teachers will have to use new techniques and be made of better stuff, with an inquiring mind of their own, than are to be found in most of the schools.

NCERT has, of course, prepared guidelines for

teachers which tell them how exactly to teach a particular subject to a particular class. But not only do the school (whether they are private ones or run by the Government or the municipality does not seem to matter) not provide their teaching staff with these, even the teachers themselves never bother to find out about them or buy them for their own benefit, although these teachers' guides are very modestly priced. And of course, NCERT is happy to remain in its isolated splendour doing whatever it is supposed to do mechanically, so as to meet the target and the quota never reaching out to individual schools, let alone the individual teacher.

Whether it is admission tests or test to judge a child's performance in class, they are bound to instil in the child an unhealthy spirit of competition making him determined to stand first—by hook or by crook. So, we have the class teacher giving tuitions for a very heavy fee to certain students in whom she takes undue interest even in the school hours, we also have learning by rote not only from text-books, which is bad enough but also from made easy question and answer books, keys, guides and what have you. Needless to say, this fierce spirit of competition also lies at the root of the increasing tendency to fool the invigilator and copy at the time of examination.

Until such time as a child leaves the primary school, there should be no tests, not even of the weekly variety and no ranking of children according to the order of merit which is almost impossible to judge accurately and which lies at the root of a lot of evil, insecurity and jealousy. Indeed, the very institution of one teacher taking charge of the class and teaching most of the subjects should go. For here, there is a distinct possibility of favouritism creeping in and some children being discriminated against. Instead,

if each subject were to be taught by an expert who were to write her account of the child's ability and performance in a six-monthly report to the child's parents, things would automatically change for the better. A house system could be introduced in schools to replace the institution of the class teacher, the only justification for which is that the child can relate to one teacher and bring to him or her all her woes. A house-mother or a house-master, incharge of groups of children from several classes, could do this job and if he or she were to take the help of the older children in the same house, then, perhaps, do an even better job than what the class teacher is capable of in this sphere.

A committee headed by the NCERT director has been set up to see whether the guidelines laid down by the HRD Ministry are being strictly adhered to. However, the letter of the law and the laying down of rules cannot make much of a difference for the better. It is the spirit of teaching that seems to be absent or warped beyond recognition over the years. In order to untangle this mess, not only the HRD Ministry but also the NCERT and its director will have to do a lot of soul-searching. For, without the right kind of motivation and commitment teaching merely becomes another name to cram and get by in the business of collecting certificates.

*(The Statesman, August 7, 1994)*

## Many Schools Still Believe Sparing the Rod Spoils the Student

Sudha Passi

Corporal punishment stands abolished in schools today and most teachers admit that caning spoils the child, yet beating students continues to be one of the most common methods of discipline.

All public and government schools have strict rules prohibiting teacher from physically assaulting students and have alternate methods like imposing fines and cards to prevent students from misbehaving. Teacher say that although the trend is *“declining”*, it is not completely out.

*“It has come down very much since our days.”* Says H.S. Bedi, a senior teacher in a government school, *“but the practice persists and is quite common.”*

Instances of slapping and caning, especially adolescent boys, abound and children usually take it in their stride unless there is an injury, says Santosh Arora, Principal of a Government Secondary School.

Having been caned themselves as students, parents also refrain from taking the matters up with school authorities, for the fear of being shown the door as *“good schools are less”* and admissions difficult to get, says Shashi Birla, with two children in a public school.

But for stray cases which make news some times, Arora says there is no official data recording the number of teachers taken to task for beating children.

Teachers are increasingly being counseled against corporal punishment and encouraged to talk to students to get to the root of the problems. *“Beating or imposing fines only makes them stubborn,”* says Arora adding

that handling a child psychologically has proved more successful than beating him to submission.

Rishi, a student of class 10, says caning happens to be the most common punishment in his school. Recently his class was *“badly thrashed”* for breaking school furniture and fined differently for *“active”* and *“passive”* participation in the melee, he recalls.

*“Teenagers vie for attention and recognition,”* says Anju Arora, a student counselor explaining rowdy and abnormal behaviour among students.

Most teachers in her school have stopped handing out physical punishment, claims Arora describing *“the very few”* of her community wielding canes to discipline children as ones suffering from *“psychic problems”* themselves.

Sonam, a class eight student in a leading public school, says that only one or two teachers resort to mild beating. The school, she says, has a system of issuing cards if a pupil remains absent without informing when a student tells lies or steals or misbehaves. After thrice being booked for misbehaviour, the student is issued a card and his parents called. *“This is itself is a deterrent,”* she adds.

The boys, specially the older ones, *“are thrashed like cows,”* while the girls are beaten *“very rarely and that too only with a foot-ruler,”* she says.

Chavi, a class 12 student in another public school, says canes are not used in her school but girls, although more talkative and equally mischievous, are less shouted upon.

Santosh Arora says children in primary school are treated with affection. Generally oral threats are enough to make them fall in line. Children between sixth and 10th

standard are mainly at the receiving end of beatings.

A friendly attitude is adopted towards older students, says Anju Arora. *“They could hit back.”* Boys, however, say teachers who use the cane are seldom guided by age.

Beating was banned *“sometime in the 70s”* after a study revealed that corporal punishment instilled in children a permanent, psychological fear. It is defined as beating a child mercilessly when he is in-disciplined, says Arora.

According to Arora, only the head of the institution and the physical training instructor, *“are allowed”* to use the cane and teachers are advised to *“adopt alternate means.”*

The principal, however, admits that in most cases there is little stringent action taken against teachers who still believe in *“spare the rod and spoil the child.”*

Most of the time, the principal and colleagues orally advise such teachers to desist from beating and a memorandum is issued when *“the parents complain or a child is thrashed badly. After three such memos, a written complaint to the Head of Education Department is sent for necessary action.”*

The principal, not being the appointing authority, cannot suspend an erring teacher, says Arora. Moreover, strong unions also protect teachers by forcing the heads of institutions to be lenient.

*“Sometimes we ourselves pacify the complaining student or parent by telling them that the teacher did not hit hard intentionally.”*

Adolescent girls in her school, she claims, are not subjected to any kind of beating and students are encouraged to discuss their problems with her fearlessly.

Defending corporal punishment, Bedi says, there is hardly any time for individual attention. He, however, says that beating without reason is uncalled for and admits that few of his clan are misusing their power.

A strict teacher definitely commands more respect, says Chhavi. She is unable to say whether the respect originates from fear.

*“Behavioural aberrations among adolescents are manifestations of identify crisis and their craving for recognition.”*

*“Their (students) unfulfilled desires and needs are reflected in the indiscipline,”* says Anju Arora adding that her 14 years in the job shows that most of the time talking helps.

*“If sparing the rod spoils the child, using it does more damage.”* Extracurricular activities where students creative skills can be tapped, must be encouraged to prevent them from slipping into in-discipline, says Santosh Arora.

Teen-age is a very sensitive and impressionable period during which a student must be helped and not subjected to a stress that may have life-long repercussion, says Anju Arora.

Today, she counsels her colleagues to adopt a sympathetic view towards pupils and devote more time to them. *“Everything depends upon the teacher’s attitude.”*

Refusing to get along with fellow teachers, who argue that they have no time to shower personal attention on each child, she retorts. *“If we have time to beat them, we also should have time to listen to them.”*

*(The Times of India, August 30, 1996)*

## Before They Teach, Institutions Have Much To Learn

Balvinder

The tail end of the long queue that I had joined to buy ticket to Madam Taussad's Museum in London was far from its main entrance. With no one jumping the queue or creating any other kind of chaos the waiting time did not exceed 15 minutes or so. During my month long visit in London, I did not see anyone violating traffic rules and no one rode motorbike without wearing a helmet on.

What are the reasons that make Indians personifications of in discipline? Why most of us are habitual offenders of rules? It is not that we are unaware of the regulations. For, the number of signs announcing do's and don'ts are pasted everywhere from walls to vehicles. There are kind of signs that you won't find anywhere else in the world.

What surprises one the most is the fact that we disobey with impunity even those rules and regulations that are for our own protection and benefits like wearing seat-belts while driving car. The blame for all this can safely be put on the defective education we have been getting from homes to schools to colleges to universities.

Every morning, one confronts innumerable number of parents going to drop their children on two wheelers. A huge number of them don't wear helmets and often carry three to four children to school, with their bulky school bags of course. When you see them jumping red light, one can well imagine the kind of lessons the parents would be giving to their impressionable children.

This is an example of teachings we get from home but schools/colleges not far behind. After being associated with the so-called higher education for a long

time, I can quote an instance or two from that life too. Punjab University, in a recent meeting of the Syndicate, strongly castigated a local college for running a study course without its mandatory approval and did not permit the college to continue the same. This is not a solitary or rare happening.

Many colleges affiliated to this university have been committing similar irregularities without any guilt or fear. The reason for such recurring irresponsible behaviour is the fact that the university is well known for rolling back its own decisions even if the decisions go against the laid-down norms.

As expected a backdated approval, after imposing a nominal fine on the erring college for running the earlier disallowed course was granted later. If such giant irregularities that have intense ill effects on academics are made a routine, every little norm will be mauled in no time.

Youngsters through these places of learning for getting apart from the textbook knowledge the larger lessons of life that would mould them into well organized and disciplined citizens. What do they learn instead?

Through habitual bending of their own rules, the universities and colleges expose their deeply ingrained weaknesses and pliable toothless-ness. No wonder that the student community exploits this, by taking to *Dharnas* and demonstrations.

Be it a case of allowing late admission or giving more chances in examination than are stipulated, rules are often ignored "*in the larger interest of the students*", which really is a wrongly perceived cliché.

The institutions, perhaps, never realize that by doing so they not only lower their own credibility (if any) and academic standards but also prepare the outgoing

students for treating every civil law with the same disdain and defiance with which they have been treating the various codes of educational and moral conduct.

Imbibing the prevailing incompetence of our educational institutions, the students soon graduate to new territories of violation and offence. Apart from gathering worthless degrees, what the students have, of late, been getting from their weak-willed institutions, is a scant love for rules and regulations, rather, a defiant attitude towards these.

It goes from the rules for attendance in classes to the regulations for holding student elections, which grows deeper indiscipline into their impressionable minds.

The future citizens that these institutes of higher learning churn out year after year emerge as defiant challengers of rules, which embolden them to erect illegal structures and run unauthorized schools, colleges and courses.

Would our educational heads rise from their slumber and take the onus for the general indiscipline amongst our youth and start teaching not by book but by example. Will they ever deal sternly with offenders?

For, bending of the rules may seem profitable initially but it ultimately harms the social fabric. The temporary “*orderliness*” breeds a fat and unmanageable social disorder.

*(The Tribune, April 18, 2006)*

## Parents Attachment for Their Children

Swami A Parthasarathy

Children are the most affected victims of attachment exhibited by their parents. Parents’ love for their children has metamorphosed into dreadful attachment. This is happening universally because of the selfish trait in parents.

Few can claim to be free from parent’s compulsive attachment to their kids. However well-meaning they be, their attachment turns the parent-child relationship sour, traumatizing families with constant confrontation followed by the invariable separation. Blissfully unaware of the consequences, parents continue to dote on their beloved ones.

Parents’ attachment to their children manifests in two distinct ways:

1. Opulent parents pamper their children by showering upon them money and gadgets, amenities and facilities. The children are thus saturated with luxuries and lose their joy content.

2. Another class of parents manifests their attachment through possessiveness towards their children. They virtually pester them with constant instructions and directions. They turn into control freaks. And their directive invariably falls short of reason or judgment.

In the first manifestation, parents indiscriminately shower money and sensual objects upon the kids without restriction. The pampering starts with toys, tricycles and bicycles, later with Ferraris, yachts, jets—the works. Through indulgence in luxuries, kids lose direction and purpose in life. It corrodes and ruins their lives.

Neither parents nor kids conceive the negative effects of such indulgence, that it could lead one to a state

of neutralization. A state where one loses any pleasure and joy derived from sense objects. One could even become so bored that one is driven to commit serious blunders, even suicide. Nevertheless; well-meaning parents continue to pamper their children with sensual luxuries not realizing the possible impending damage to them.

With regard to the second manifestation, parents' attachment and possessiveness traps their kids in an iron casket. The kids are fettered, shackled by forceful directions and instructions. And when parents constantly dictate their doctrines and dogmas to the kids to the extreme, the children reach a point where they cannot take it anymore.

Children buckle under the pressure. Then one of two dreadful consequences follows. Children become either vegetables or rebels!

Becoming a vegetable means that the kid turns inert, inactive. And would hardly react to the external world. The kid reaches this state if his nature is passive and submissive and succumbs to the continuous onslaughts of his parents' directions and dictations. If, however, the kid is vocal and aggressive, he becomes a rebel. He would argue, swear, counter the unsolicited advices showered upon him. Further protest, turn violent and even leave home.

In either case it is a curse upon innocent children to turn them into a vegetable or needless rebel in the prime of their youth. It may sound ironic but the fact remains that this trauma emanates from well-wishing, well-meaning, caring parents!

Parents ought to realize the blunder that their love and care lack the support of a strong intellect. And their rigid controls flow from their emotional attachment rather than a discerning intellect. They must visualize the damage done and the dire necessity of developing the intellect in themselves and their children.

*(The Times of India, September 3, 2016)*

## **Danger of Underage Schooling**

Jayanti Roy

If I ask you, "Are you ready to marry off your daughter before she turns eighteen?" You are surely to answer, "Oh no, it is not legal and she is not physically and mentally prepared for marriage!" But if I ask you, "Would you send your daughter to school before she is physically and mentally prepared to start serious studies?" most of the parents will find no issue in it.

It's that time of the year again when we find parents leaving no stone unturned to get their child admitted to the so-called 'topnotch' school, even if it means goading three-years-old into cramming irrelevant bits of information for school admission interviews.

However, this is only the lesser evil. Another very harmful practice is going on rampantly in school admissions—schools are admitting underage children to higher classes. This is not even discussed openly as the parents are only too happy to cooperate, unaware of the damages this can cause to the child's overall development. In most of the schools, there is a cut off date for admission at the entry level, say, September 30, to count the age of the child. By this date, the child should have attained three years of age. This means all children who are not yet three will not be admitted that year even if they are younger by only a week or even a day. On the sly, schools are admitting such kids too through an indirect route by not admitting them that year to the entry level class but taking them in the next higher class next year.

For example, the child can get into nursery without having studied in pre-nursery. Parents are happy because

they have saved on the school fees of whole one year and they think that the child has saved one year. Schools are happy because they have admitted more children without burdening their entry level class and without breaking the rule of admitting less than a 3 year old child. The only loser is the child struggling hard to be at par with other kids of his class who are now well versed in the basics of alphabets or numbers having practiced them for full one year in the previous class.

This focus on teaching 3 to 4 yearold has become a thing of past in most of the developed countries where regulations regarding age of the child at school entry level of 6-8 years are strictly enforced. It is a well researched fact that the child's brain is yet to make the neural connections at this age, which will anatomically enable him to develop the skills and concepts needed to learn. Before a certain age, their hand muscles are not developed to perform fine motor skills. However, in our schools, if we have a casual look at the syllabus of kindergarten, one will be surprised to find that it includes lists of 20 each names of animals, birds, flowers, body parts, modes of transports, days of week, months of the year, five-six line compositions, opposite words, counting in numbers and figures etc. The child has to mug up all these lists. We as parents and teachers are totally oblivious of the danger we are putting our children in through this pressure situation.

What this underage child will do in the classroom? When the child is not able to pick up things as fast as his classmates, he feels like a failure. A child cannot differentiate between effort and ability. When they try hard to learn and fail, they conclude that they

are good for nothing and can never accomplish anything. They feel depressed, stressful, loose confidence, resort to cheating, start hating schools and give up on learning and subsequently give up on their own selves. Thus, the seeds of a problem child and a problem adult have been successfully sown.

In our hurry to give the children a head start in life, we are on the contrary making them handicapped for life—emotionally and mentally. By forcing them to read and write in spite of their physical and mental inability, we are breaking their spirit. How many children need to suffer before parents and teachers consider this issue serious enough to be examined and pursued with urgency?

*The Tribune, December 29, 2009)*

## **Don't Rush Reading**

Dr. Raymond Moore

Early childhood research has long pointed away from nursery school, kindergarten and other out-of-home care. It is ideal for little children if they can be provided a sound home. Some advocate schooling as early as age three. But recently research has been brought together from a number of child development areas brain, vision, hearing, perception, socio-emotional and its impact has been too great for anyone to ignore.

A recent report from the Stanford Research Institute in the U.S.A. confirms the now widely published findings of the Hewitt Research Centre. Hewitt's warning against unnecessary preschool and out-of-home care had questioned any schooling before age's eight to ten. The Stanford report suggests ages 10 to 14 as the time when children finally develop the full range of their mental capacity.

There are, of course, many children, who are so acutely deprived or seriously handicapped that they must have care beyond their family's doors. And there are many parents who financially or physically or psychologically cannot cope with their children's needs. Some of these are well-to- do. But for mothers to work unnecessarily and to export their children daily to institutional care before they are ready for school is a serious breach of motherhood and a serious risk to the little ones. Many mothers have been reading research findings recently and rearranging their personal lives and home budgets to stay home and be mothers! The reasons for their actions are simple and clear. And there is little, if any, clear cut research to the contrary. Take several examples:

## **Brain Development**

One of America's most conservative and reputable experts on the young child's brain, David Metcalf of the University of Colorado medical school, suggest that the *"the division of labour between the two sides (of the brain) isn't well established until somewhere between eight and nine"* years of age. Thus while the normal young child has all of the tools of learning by age five or six or seven earlier, the tools are not sharpened or fully developed until he is older. Many research neurophysiologists and psychologists support David Metcalf's conclusion.

### **Vision**

It is quite clear that the more a child is forced to read before he is eight, the more likely he is to develop myopia, nearsightedness. Also the more he is held within a room, glued to a T.V. or away from distant vision, the more likely his vision is to become abnormal.

Experiments have repeatedly shown also that children younger than eight cannot read perceptively, nor even follow the words readily on a page. And when they cannot read without frustration, they often turn against reading with sad results in the classroom and in life. Eight appears to be the earliest risk-free age.

### **Hearing**

Children in general cannot easily discriminate between sounds until they are at least eight or nine. This discrimination is highly important to reading. Dr. Jerome Rosner of the University of Pittsburgh, on the basis of careful testing, suggests that, for good reading habits, hearing is more important than vision.

In order to do normal school tasks reading, arithmetic, language, arts, etc. with understanding, instead robot-like repetition, a child must be able to

reason consistently. If he cannot do this, he will be erratic, frustrated, or even anxiety-ridden in his learning. Yet studies by Jean Piaget and others, repeated many times, clearly show that a child only begins to develop a pattern of consistent reasoning around seven or eight. And many including bright children do not develop this ability of balance until they are past eleven.

### **Socio-emotional Development**

Many parents think their children need nursery school or kindergarten to become sociable. They do this at considerable risk. In the first place, most mothers and fathers can readily, provide for all the social action a child needs between home, marketing church and the neighbourhood youngsters. Considering the normal social outlets around the home some ghettos or isolated areas expected the great problem is to provide the child with solitude. This is more often likely to be the child's need in industrialized society. He needs to be alone with his fantasies, running his own world in the sand pile, with his dog, or bossing his toys around.

The mother and the father who take their children into the chores as well as the play of the home are the ones who build into them strong value systems industry, dependability, integrity, prompt-ness, order, cleanliness and responsibility. Their children feel needed. They are conditioned to service for others. They develop the all-important assurance of self-worth. These are the ingredients of true sociability.

Those parents who send their children off to school early and without the above experiences introduce them to factors they are not ready to handle. They must compete for the teacher's attention and will seldom succeed in this fully. Teacher is too busy with too many little ones to

identify with one alone. Yet that oneness is exactly what the child needs and the mother can usually best provide this.

Mother and Dad have delegated their parental responsibilities to others. The earlier they do this, the greater the potential for loss or disaster. They should not wonder when they see this teenager rebel. If they had been warm, consistent companions to their children, even in a more limited environment, they would more likely enjoy affection and respect during the difficult teen years.

Those parents who worry about their children being bright, stable, sociable and fast learners should look at studies that tell how children are brought up in Africa and Guatemala. Infants from low economy tribal families in Uganda average above Western children in physiological maturation and coordination, adaptability, sociability and even language skills. Yet higher class Ugandan children fall below Western averages in these responses. The principal differences noted by researchers seemed to be that the tribal mothers give their children much more caressing and cuddling than did the more formal mothers among the well-to-do Ugandans. In addition says Jerome Kagan of Harvard, the jungle babies of Guatemala generally are skin-close to their parents and have little other social contact. Yet by the time they reach puberty they are well-balanced youngsters, full comparable with their Western peers.

Dr. John Bowlby, world authority on mothering, stresses that children often become anxious and fearful when they have to leave home. This leads to an array of potential troubles, including anxieties, neuroses, frequent instability and rejection of parents. Dr. Bowlby points out that parents may risk such reaction in their children to the

ages of eight or ten by turning them over to the school during these early years.

### **Sex Differences**

It must be remembered in all this that the general development of boys lags behind girls from six to nine months. Yet both sexes are supposed to obey the same school entrance age laws! Is it any wonder that there have been so many more learning problems and delinquencies among boys than among girls?

Notice that through all these developmental areas the differences in maturity levels fall with astonishing coincidence at about eight to ten or eleven years. This interrelating or integrating of levels was recently documented by the Hewitt Research Centre staff. We call it IML for integrated maturity level. It may well be as important a guide to readiness for school as IQ is to school counseling.

### **What Mothers Can Do**

As suggested earlier, mothers and fathers can provide for most of the child's needs at home around the apartment or the house. There should be a combination of chores, story time, play in solitude, walks to market or in the park and of course, much sleep much more than most children know. Father should join Mother in sharing chores with the little ones. There are beds to be made, toys to be kept in order (or at least in a box), floors to sweep, plants to water, table to clear (or to set) and electric plugs to fix. And so on, ad infinitum. By age six or eight such children will be competent homemakers. Both boys and girls will be able to cook and sew and care for the pets.

But above all, warmth, consistency and responsiveness will be better educators than any school at this age. Indulgence is not necessary. It only tears down.

But affection with an awareness of the child's needs is, as it has always been, a beautiful medicine for the ills of children. Starting children later to school is unlikely to hurt children if done carefully. When they do start late, they should be started in the grade appropriate to their age. Thus, if most of the eight year olds are in the third grade, the late entrants should start there. Studies show that they usually catch up quickly and eventually perform better than their comrades. They should not be made to start in first grade. Age and general maturity should be the general criteria. Size is too risky a standard. Many small children at eight are as mature as their larger eight year old peers, or possibly even more so.

Parents need not worry about teaching their children before school enrolment. Just be friends. Let them become acquainted with many things, including books but mostly the world around them. They will know measures from helping you in the kitchen and at the sewing table. They will understand colours, textures and shapes. They will likely be reading, too but it will not necessarily be planned or forced. And they should not do too much before they are eight or nine.

Then wherever possible their values should be wrapped up with a brief but interesting family worship in the morning and at night. Point them to the God who made their world and gives them life. Make His standards their standards. Let them learn His forgiveness, love and kindness. Let them see how He is always at work helping others and making things more beautiful. Such a family will not have to worry about rebellious, delinquent kids.

—*Monthly Journal*  
*Herald of Health, Poona, May 1976.*

## Over The Top Parenting

The umbilical cord of some kids doesn't seem to snap off after birth with parents hovering like a helicopter, scrutinizing and dictating every small decision of theirs throughout life. These pushy moms and dads overdo the parenting bit a little to much, making life difficult for the little ones. We delve into the parents' psychology and scan the repercussions it might have on their overprotected kids.

### REARING ROBOTS?

Rajshree Sarada, a psychologist from Sector 7, Panchkula, warns against helicopter parenting "Such attitude can prove fatal for a child's confidence level and success rate. With parents taking all big and small decisions for him, the child starts feeling like a robot. Also such parents are never satisfied with the child's performance and pressurize him to look at the world from their eyes."

Citing a case study, she adds, "A child who came to me said that with his father taking all the decisions for him, he felt no more than a '*comma*' interspersed in his father's speech. This destroys a child's independence level and problem-solving skills."

### LET LIVE AND LEARN

Agrees Ira Jairath, a post-graduate in psychological counseling and teacher with a Chandigarh-based private school, "*Helicopter parenting is a phenomenon that arises out of parents*" need to re-live their life and dreams through their child. They need to realize that they cannot create baby Einsteins. A child need creative liberty to live his life and learn from mistakes. Only by falling once he will realize the importance of getting up and starting all over again. I saw a child become averse to reading as his mother would

force him to read everyday.

### UNENDING INTRUSION

Simran Bains, a practising psychologist from Chandigarh, adds, "This concept of helicopter parenting extends to interference in career choices of children too. Now, I had a case where the boy wanted to be a media professional but his mother wanted him to pursue the civil services. The Pressure was so much that eventually he had a nervous breakdown. Even parents of newly weds force them to plan their family also specifying the number of kids they should plan. In one such case, the couple got so frustrated that they failed to conceive under all that pressure."

### CORKING CONFIDENCE

Suveechi Chaudhary, who runs her personality development kids club, Aadeep, in Sector 34, Chandigarh, avers, "Helicopter parenting is nothing but a slow poison for the child's development. If parents keep forcing their children to do things in a certain way, the child will never be able to stand up for himself. A student from Parwanoo had come to me with zero confidence because both his parents had ego hassles and forced their decisions on the child. After counseling, the child cleared his entrance for Mayo School in Ajmer and is doing great for himself."

### TIME TO WAKE UP

Speaking more on the issue, a principal from a private school, adds. "In today's competitive times, every parent wants his/her ward to excel in everything—right from studies to extra-curricular activities. Excess pressure makes them lose the zeal to excel. This robs the child of his confidence level and ability to perform. Parents need to wake up before the child loses out on his natural abilities and succumbs to becoming a puppet in their hands."

*(The Hindustan Times, May 22, 2009)*

## The Deep Anomie

Gurgaon, Satna and Santiniketan have been able to draw media attention to criminality among those members of society who supposedly do not have any criminal background.

In Gurgaon and Satna, children studying at the school level took to firearms for taking revenge on their friends for apparently very flimsy reasons. In Santiniketan, a young man killed his fiancée and then ended his life.

Murders and killings have become an everyday affair in modern society. A recent study indicates that more than half of the news print and coverage provided by the print and electronic media contain reports on tension and violence—both within and outside the ambit of a household.

The way apparently innocent people, especially children, have been resorting to violence shows that a deep anomie has engulfed our modern society and norms are lacking. At the international level there is no imminent danger of a great war, but tension within society is mounting by leaps and bounds to a very alarming level.

Quarrel among school going teenagers and broken love affair are nothing new. But it is a matter of serious concern that the young members of the modern generation have become so restless and daring that they have the least hesitation in resorting to such acts of criminality which even a hardened criminal would have had second thoughts to commit. Sociologists have been airing divergent opinions and it needs a serious introspection for every member of the society, especially the parents of the teenagers, about ways to mitigate this growing social malaise.

Teenagers have become largely self-centred and

consumerist in their lifestyle. This may be owing to the social impact of the all-pervading globalization. Secondly, most of us now live in nuclear families and the parents normally have one or two children. This gives ample opportunity to the younger generation to obtain more affection and attention from the parents.

In such a family-fold, parents hardly say “no” to the various material and non-material demands of their off springs and this creates a mind-set among them—that virtually everything is within their reach. If they are unable to get anything, it creates frustration, desperation and finally aggression and outbreak of a violent behavioural trait. Members of the young generation react violently even on trivial matters as many of them do not have the temperament to accommodate negative responses to their aspiration.

Sheer restlessness in the psyche of the young members of society is a definite fallout of globalization. The social impact of globalization is multi-faceted. But the most pressing and easy penetration of the fallout was happening through the proliferation of the electronic media—television has become a part of every modern household.

A few years back, a teenager was arrested in London for killing his friend. The culprit was caught by the city police after a very long endeavour. The boy confessed that he had murdered his friend with a knife and chopped the body into small pieces. The pieces were stored in a refrigerator for months together. But the most important part of the revelation was that he had emulated what was shown in a T.V serial aired by the BBC.

Not many months ago, a Western T.V channel

televised a programme which showed ways to end one's life with the minimum pain and misery.

It perhaps goes without saying that the methodology of killing is being shown in a very sophisticated manner as if glorifying the act and many of the viewers incidentally belong to well-to-do families with an innocent track record.

The media in the 18th and 19th centuries proliferated with the task of spreading consciousness, morality, education and pricking the conscience of members of society. Gandhiji was himself a great propagator in this regard and upheld the great impact of newspapers in educating the masses during the freedom struggle.

The role of the media changed since World War I. The process of change got a further fillip after World War II when the media was used by various state powers to serve their strategic interests. This robbed the ethical and moral sanctity of the media to a large extent and it did become an instrument for the state powers to satisfy their machinations.

The Success of the media tycoons in terms of deriving huge pecuniary surplus started from this period of time and the media became an important way to draw astounding profits for various business and industrial houses.

The colossal rise of Rupert Murdoch, owning about 70 per cent of the global media, is a case in point; he is one of the wealthiest persons in the world and also one of the most important manufacturers of public choice and popular consent in the contemporary society.

In the last 30 years or so, a wide section of the print and electronic media has been playing with soft

pornography items—aided by pink and sexy presentations—providing a way to gain substantial penetration in the emerging sexcrazy readership/viewers in an era of liberalization, privatisation and globalisation.

The trend has become global and India is not beyond this realm. Studies have indicated that many of the leading national dailies have taken a policy decision to present soft pornographical illustrations and a number of pink stories each day.

But it is hard to understand that when the authorities pulled down signboards, glow-signs and placards for exhibiting vulgarity, they are found to be wanting in showing similar determination against a section of the media.

Anthony Giddens in “Sociology” said that vast amounts of research have been done to try to assess the effects of television programmes. Most such studies concerned children—understandably enough, given the sheer volume of their viewing and the possible implications for socialization.

The three most commonly researched topics are television's impact on propensities to crime and violence, the effects of news broadcasting and the role of television in political life.

The incidence of violence in television programmes is well documented. The most extensive studies have been carried out by Gearner and his collaborators, analyzing samples of prime-time and weekend day television for all the major American network each year since 1967. The number and frequency of violent acts and episodes is charted for a range of varying types of programme. Violence is defined in the research as the threat or use of

physical force, directed against the self or others, in which physical harm or death is involved. Television drama emerges as highly violent in character, on an average 80% of such programmes contain violence, with a rate of 7.5% violent episodes per hour.

Children's programmes show even higher levels of violence, although killing is less commonly portrayed. Cartoons contain the highest number of violent acts and episodes of any type of television programme.

Robert Hodge and David Tripp emphasize that children's responses to T.V involve interpreting or reading what they see, not just registering the content of programmes. They suggest that most research has not taken account of the complexity of children's mental processes. T.V watching, even of trivial programmes is not as inherently low-level intellectual activity.

Children read programmes by relating them to other systems of meaning in their everyday lives. For example, even very young children recognize that media violence is not real.

According to Hodge and Trip, it is not the violence as such in television programmes that has effects on behaviour but rather the general framework of attitudes within which it is both presented and read.

The social impact of globalization on people's aspirations, values, attitude and lifestyle does have a wide connotation. But the impact of the print and electronic media was found to be more profound in our daily life. This makes eminent French scholar in media studies Jean Baudrillard to comment that we all now live in a global village.

The use of firearms by teenagers is not very

uncommon in the West. This makes the West a "*haven for juvenile delinquents*". The West is the epitome of modern civilization but its society, homes, social relationships are in peril.

India is desperately trying to catch up with the West. But can we—leaving aside their broken homes and broken society? Civilization contains both material and non-material enrichment. Otherwise, modern civilization, as Tagore suggested, may well end up in an exacerbating crises.

We must remember that human culture is not always universal. Thus, there is the prevalence of "*our culture, their culture*". This perhaps provided the germinating ground for pathological cases of Gurgaon, Satna and Santiniketan to flower. This may be happening owing to a hiatus between material and non-material culture, a phenomenon which sociologists may call "*cultural lag*".

Are you national policy planners listening?

*(The author is Reader Department of Sociology, Presidency College, Kolkata)*

*(The Statesman, February 15, 2008)*

## Let Kids Be Kids

Toufiq Rashid

The cure for stressed-out kids, says a study in U.S is no cure. Instead of get-smart videos and forced special courses, what children really need for healthy development is more of good, old-fashioned playtime.

### What The Study Says

Many parents load their children's schedules with get-smart videos, enrichment activities and classes in a drive to help them excel, says the study by the American Paediatric Association. The efforts often begin as early as infancy. Spontaneous, free play whether it's chasing butterflies playing with "True toys" such as blocks and dolls or just running around with mom and dad is often sacrificed in the shuffle.

The unstructured, says the study, has many benefits. It can help children become creative, discover their passions, develop problem solving skills, relate to others and adjust to school settings.

### How Boring Can the Planned Be?

Experts say the study holds true more in urban India than anywhere else. "children are getting regimented into a strait-jacketed living especially by parents who believe in what they think is perfect parenting or more specifically, successful parenting," says; Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist at VIMHANS in Delhi.

According to him, scheduled activities don't help the child's development as they go against the essence of being a child. "*Nature has created children in such a manner that observational learning is important. Observation has emotional colouring for children,*" he says. "*These*

*days' schools are regimented. Even activities like eating and sleeping are regimented. There is tuition; there are special activity classes so nothing is unstructured.*" Lack of spontaneous playtime, the study says, can create stress for children and parents. It increases obesity risk and may even lead to depression.

### The Solution

Numerous studies have shown that scientific unstructured routine is very important. "There has to be some structured regimen but you can't have everything structured. Childhood is all about curiosity and if childhood becomes predictable there's a problem," says Nagpal. "When a child is day dreaming, he is still working. Even while watching a tadpole, he is not wasting his time. Don't make rules and regulations for everything."

### Dos and Don'ts

Dr. Nagpal's take

- \* Don't nag your child on everything.
- \* Each child is different. Don't compare-even in terms of eating or sleeping.
- \* Simple ground rules are okay but it is important to preserve some space for the child to be a child.
- \* Children should be allowed to explore.
- \* Play with your kids, spend more time with them.
- \* Don't impose your dreams on your child.

## Schooling Parents About Schools

Surabhi Verma

In a developing country like India, where regular schools are a scarcity, conditioning our authorities to make schools for special-needs children, well equipped with all facilities for these children, seems to be a farfetched dream. Schools that cater to special-needs children are much less in number. And since these children need more attention, the student to staff ratio is quite less, making these schools an expensive option. As a result most of these are private schools available only to a handful since these institutions are expensive.

Parents are often confused whether it is fair to send a special-needs child to a mainstream school or not. Would he/she be able to cope? A major concern of every parent having a special-needs child is whether to choose a mainstream school or pick out a school meant for special-needs children. Though the constant debate will prevail, here is a little assessment that might trigger a clearer picture to support the option of making a special-needs child join a mainstream education or not.

### **Pros and cons of sending a special needs child to a regular school:**

#### PROS

\* Ideally it is believed that once a special-needs kid joins a regular school he/she is bound to gain confidence and become more interactive because he/she feels no different than the other children.

\* These kids would learn how to communicate with the peer group and even learn how to adapt to varied situations.

\* There are great chances for special-needs children

to come out of their shell and achieve higher success than anticipated.

\* Though special-needs children may not be able to function at the same level as their peers but then it holds true for most children in a regular classroom, too. However, children can learn many skills if they get positive role models and help from sensitive teachers.

#### CONS

A Mainstream school, in some cases can adversely affect a special-needs child's mind. The teachers might lose patience with slow-learning children in a classroom of 40 to 50 children. Very often mainstream schools are ill-equipped to handle and provide required care to special-needs children. There are also possibilities of special-needs children getting teased and made fun of as well as being bullied by other children. This might cause low self-esteem and varied psychological setbacks. The child may not want to attend school or lose motivation to go to school in such circumstances.

### **Pros and cons of special school:**

#### PROS:

\* The benefits about special-needs schools are that these are best equipped with all kind of infrastructure and trained staff members to educate and interact with special needs children.

\* They follow a curriculum that special-needs children can easily cope with and do not feel any sort of stress. Rushing to finish syllabus is the least of concerns, what is imperative is positive learning and development of the child at a pace he/she is not beleaguered by.

\* Teachers and other staff are patient and caring as they are trained and aware of the different needs of

children in the school and are prepared much in advance.

\* Bullying may be less as all kids are similar in one way or the other plus the level of tolerance towards each other would be a lot more.

#### CONS

However, parents may also feel that their child is being segregated from other children from having mainstream education and will not be exposed to normalcy in society. Isolation from the world around him/her could make the child vulnerable. A special-needs child also needs to grow up with all sorts of people around just like any normal child; so it is better for such children to learn to cope up with society. Limiting a child to special-needs school might deprive him of many experiences life has to offer as the environment would be overly protected.

Earlier, It seemed that these two kinds of schools were the only two options. But now a special-needs child who is not able to fit in at either of these places, his/her parents can also opt for home schooling. And in home schooling the parent can opt for the curriculum as per the interest of the child. For providing peer social skills learning, the parents can enroll the child in various extracurricular activities for interaction with other children.

#### THE RIGHT CHOICE

The parent and the therapists who have been working with the child and know him/her the best and thus know him/her the best and thus should take the decision in joint consultation whether to send the child to a special-needs school or the mainstream one. Such decisions need thought and sensitivity.

\* When choosing the type of education appropriate

for your special-needs child, study all the options.

\* Consider the number of trained staff available to work with students, the types of services provided in each setting and types of accommodations available at the school.

\* Consider what you want to be the main focus of your child's education—academic, social or emotional.

\* Talk to the school authorities about their expectations for your child in the short and long-term. Be specific when speaking about your child's strengths and areas of difficulty.

These measures will help you to determine the right placement for your child and provide a great academic achievement.

*(The Tribune, 6 December 2015)*

## Discipline Do's And Don'ts

Dr. Monika Datta

With increasing behavioural problems in children and adolescents, the need for inculcating discipline right from early childhood is important. Discipline is the structure that the adult sets for a child to enable him to fit in happily into the world. The habits instilled by parents are the foundation for the development of a child's self-discipline later on.

According to Freud, basic human needs are "*lieben and arbeiten*" to love and to work. Children also feel these needs for healthy emotional development; they too like to feel loved and complete in their esteem of themselves. The structure of discipline should promote these goals for the child.

If parents are to really '*know*' their children, they must have love and commitment that goes beyond the arbitrary. Talking and listening to children is central to understanding how they organize their experiences, cognitively and emotionally, once they are verbalized. To be held in positive regard by an adult love and care that endures over time is basic to the disciplining structure set up for the child.

Development of the following skills can provide some guidelines to parents to help their children sail through their formative years and prevent the development of negative and maladaptive behaviour.

### **Promoting a child's sense of well-being**

\* Being observed and attended to by parents the people they value the most indicates that the children are important from earliest infancy. Even toddlers look up to

their parents every few minutes for signals of assurance and interest. Give immediate attention, however, brief. Simple eye contact, perhaps a touch, a nod, a smile or a small comment is enough to satisfy them and they return to their play.

\* Apart from this brief immediate attention, while you are busy with your chores, keep some '*special time*' for your child. While spending this time with your child, do not be judgmental or authoritative.

\*Do not try to teach or correct behavior during the '*special time*'. The sharing of such quality time should involve active interaction rather than passive activities like watching T.V.

\* Don't postpone this uninterrupted '*exclusive*' time from one day to the other with promises of increased special time to the next day. Keep a reasonable length of special time which you can give your child regularly, without fear of boredom on the child's part.

\*If not attended to, children learn to obtain attention through whining, fighting with siblings, sulking and by using foul language. Even negative attention from inattentive parents is welcome. Don't wait for the development of negative behaviour to respond, because that actually promotes further negative behaviour.

\* Reward positive behaviour in order to increase its frequency. Minor misbehaviour is better ignored in many cases. It avoids secondary gain for the children and eventually eliminates most minor negative behaviour.

\* Active listening. Try to find out the children's wants and feelings directly, by asking and listening. Do this without initially judging either the contents or the emotions of their message for this also gives children an

opportunity to answer their own questions and solve their own dilemmas as their development allows.

\* Convey positive regard by *'labeling the act, not the child.'* For example, instead of saying "You are bad", one can say "It was a bad thing to do". Labeling the child as bad or stupid is both insulting and demoralizing as it suggests a permanent condition without room for improvement. Children may react to these labels by being defensive, discounting everything else the adult says or striking back verbally or with actions. Some children succumb to labels, believing them to be true and by living up to them.

\* Good labels equally become a handicap to their development. A child may try to live up to an image fearing the withdrawal of positive regard. Here, the choice of its actions is guided by the adult he values rather than by his or her own independent choice. This hampers judgment and decision-making later on in life.

\* Frequently convey to the child the impact of his behaviour in short, simple, specific terms with emotions consistent with the message. Be specific without comparing him with other children.

\* Acknowledge your children's contribution with frequent thank you messages. This makes them feel that they matter.

\* Apologizing to children conveys that their feelings count. It models humility and the ability to resolve conflicts and change views as well as give children an opportunity to experience forgiveness. Some parents make the error of apologizing after punishing children and even offer *'treats'* to compensate. This usually comes after harsh impulsive punishment meted out to them. Such apologies

can only be counter-productive.

\* The other major need of human beings is to feel capable. Children too need guidance in learning what the rules are now work how to do things well and the opportunity to practice in real ways. A system of discipline should include guidance over a long period of time to adjust to the child's changing developmental needs and abilities. The aspects of discipline that promotes a sense of capability include routine models, instructions, progressive expectations, being offered a choice, role-taking opportunities, praise and the consequences of action.

\* Regular time and rituals, for meals sleep and chores provide a sense of security to children.

\* Models of appropriate behaviour are powerful teaching tools. These include models of manners, cooperation, emotional expression, conflict resolution and how to do specific tasks. Even toddlers copy adult behaviour in excruciating detail.

\* Instruct as to what the rules are and how to do things in steps and language in keeping with the understanding abilities of the child. Keep the instructions simple, clear and direct, without judgmental overtones.

\* Progressively increase your expectations appropriate to the child's development and acknowledge each expectation fulfilled with attention, praise, touch and other rewards. Parents must also accept the need for teaching the same behaviour repeatedly. As the child grows, the task should become more demanding in keeping with its development. If a five-year-old is confined to task that a three-year-old can carry out, the child may conclude that he is not capable of more advanced performance.

With the result that the child does not try and the parents do not instruct. This can damage self-esteem about as dangerously as high expectations in the face of repeated failure.

\* Give your children relevant choice, which is appropriate to their stage of development. This teaches them the art of decision making while respecting the children's individuality and need for autonomy.

\* Praise and rewards or motivation by positive feedback is preferable to criticism and punishment. A smile, increased attention, praise or material rewards-all serve to reinforce a child's actions. Do not misconstrue this for a bribe as even adults continuously need such feedback.

\* Although parents can allow children to learn many things from natural consequences, they have to be protected from damage, social disgrace and some of their own impulses. For example, a child running too fast on a slippery ground slips and accepts this lesson without any resentment. Though he can be allowed to learn this lesson of gravity, he cannot be allowed to learn about cars by experimenting in a traffic-filled street.

\* One request, then move: When instructing a child to do a task, parents should wait for the young one to conclude what he is engaged in. After catching attention, give the instruction clearly. If the child does not respond within 10 seconds, he can be quietly shepherded to the task. The adult should then perform the task with or without the child's participation. Parents actually teach their children to ignore their requests when they give repeated commands without following up with action. It is essential that they limit their requests to those that the

child is willing to comply with to improve compliance.

\* Threats versus promise: When parents tell their children not to do something and they ignore it, parents tend to threaten. If they still continue to ignore, parents generally increase the consequences and the bad behaviour continues. As a result, no action is taken after the initial request and the consequences threatened may finally become too enormous or vague to be carried out. A parent, who feels helpless and out of control, may actually go ahead and enforce large threats and regret them later on. Shorter and smaller consequences carried out after initial defiance is better and more fruitful. Interestingly, promises and not threats are more productive.

\* The mistake to avoid is having one parent interfere with what the other has already started, to handle a given situation. While this suggests weakness on part of one parent, it also creates tension between parents and child and distracts from settling the problem. As long as no parent is abusive, it is better to let the person, who starts, finish handling the situation. The adults should discuss management strategies later, out of the child's hearing.

\* Time out: Just as attention is the most powerful feedback for a child removal of attention is a highly effective consequence. Time out serves to stop misbehaviour, convey disapproval and give both parties an opportunity to regain composure and decreases the likelihood of repeated misbehaviour. Only two or three priority behaviours of aggression to people or things should result in time out. One warning should be given and for aggressive behaviour no warning is needed. After a brief statement of the offence, time out can be enforced. During this period, which should best be brief, the child is restrained in a non-scary and

disinteresting place, for example, a straight backed chair placed near the parent with the freedom curtailed to do the interesting things he wants to do and with no interaction or attention forthcoming from the parent. After the time out is over, the child's first positive or neutral behaviour should be attended to, with no lectures or discussions of the offence.

\* Physical punishment: The use of inappropriate physical punishment increases aggression in the child can lead to deviousness and lying to avoid it and may result in fear of parents, or anger towards them, which can last a lifetime. Therefore, physical punishment should at best form only a very small part of the structure of discipline for children.

*(The Hindustan Times, October 16, 1996)*

## Watch Your Child's Blues

Vidya Krishnan

12% students need psychiatric help

Does your 11- year- child return from school only to retreat into his room with a frown? Does he refuse to talk about school and then fly into a temper at the slightest of provocation? Every teen and pre-teen has a bad day. But when the tantrums have a pattern, take heed of those silences and outbursts. Watch your wards; point out specialists at a workshop on Child Psychiatry Services at AIIMS on Tuesday, growing up in the city is not easy.

The numbers they throw at you are startling: 8-12 percent of students need a psychiatrist "*to deal with emotional, behavioural and learning problems*". Don't brush aside symptoms like mood swings, small attention span, refusal to go to school and constant complaints of body ache and illness.

Says Dr. Rajesh Sagar, secretary at the Central Mental Health Authority and associate professor in the department of psychiatry at AIIMS: "When a class IV student snuggles up to her mom and innocuously asks, 'how do I compare with others in my class?' it is ominous. I have patients from 7-18 years who are simply not able to deal with competition.

Peer pressure on one side, parental expectation on the other. Teens caught between them become stressed out and then slowly link into depression. "*The need for acceptance and the fear of rejection by friends are a constant sources of teenage depression,*" explains Sagar.

Every year AIIMS has about 500 students coming for treatment for clinical depression while VIMHANS has more than 100 of them. Every day VIMHANS gets two or three cases of behavioural disorders among teens.

Dr. Jitender Nagpal, consulting psychiatrist in

VIMHANS, asks parents to watch out for behavioural changes in their children.

*“Even apparently small changes-like different sleeping patterns or recurring nightmares-need to be taken seriously,”* he says. Especially when 50% of psychiatric problems have their origin in some childhood trauma. The onus is not only on parents but also on teachers.

However, the city schools are not ready for these complex adolescents. Only 10% schools have counselors to help children. Adults should be sensitive towards children’s blues and the education system should have a programme on mental health. But there is something that doesn’t need government planning or funding-just make them laugh.

*(The Hindustan Times, January 12, 2006)*

## **“I Only Want You To Enjoy Your Adulthood, My Child”**

R. Radhakrishnan

No, my dear son, you should go to school. You are five-years old and see what your friends are up to? They have already been introduced to maths and science. It’s cut-throat competition out there and you have to have a head start from the word go to be on the top.

Why do you want stories now, my son? You have heard so much of them when you were in my foetus. And you have had so many trips outside when I carried you along during my first trimester. Time is running short, honey.

Why do you aspire to climb a hill and catch a cloud now? You would have experienced all the fun and the adventure in my system itself; is it not? The journey you had from the fallopian tube to the uterus, formation of an embryo, the connection made by the umbilical cord, tell me, what’s more adventurous and exciting than all these? Don’t you remember I took you to a museum with your father during my second trimester? You had some visits to cultural places too. You said you are too tired of studying just for marks without really understanding the concepts. I tell you, my son, how much you score is the criterion and please do not push yourself too hard to understand the intricate concepts; because, if you do that, you will lose on your ability to score high. Can’t you recollect that I have wondered so many times why your father spends much of his time and energy for a deeper understanding of the issues? Always remember, Kanna, that’s why he ended up with moderate ranks in his examinations.

Honey, if at all you want to sing, swim or play

cricket, you should aim to become Unnikrishnan, a Michael Phelps or a Sachin Tendulkar. I want you to hit the best always. Decide you option fast. Time is too short, my dear. And don't worry about the size of your school bag. The kids in the neighbourhood seem to carry a few kilos more than what you carry. Probably, they learn much more than what you learn. Catch up with them. Can't you realize that the competition has already commenced?

Be Patient, honey. You can learn to understand volcanic eruptions, deep sea inhabitations, learn about tadpoles, butterflies and much more in your higher classes. You also said about nature trips, playing with paper boats, puppies, running etc. You can very well experience these on the way to your school, my dear. With the monsoon at its peak and thanks to the poor civic amenities in our area why paper boats? Even the much bigger vehicles passing by would appear to you as if they are floating in the rain. Not only puppies, my dear, even men and women would be jumping and hopping negotiating the inundated waters. And for those swimming fishes you wanted, you can always see them on the brand new fish tank that we bought.

I have pinned all my hopes on you, my loving son. Your father wants to make an engineer of you and as usual, his choice is mediocre. I have chosen the best for you, a doctor. Don't you feel excited at being called a doctor? Your monthly pay in that case will be more than that of your father's annual income. Now, have you understood honey? Never afford to waste your time in enjoying or relaxing, my dear. Just have one ambition that is to become a doctor.

*(The Hindu, 13 December, 2009)*

## Watch Out For What Children Watch on T.V

Navtinder

The '*bang-bang you are dead*' scenario that we so often see on T.V or in films communicates nothing about the reality of death or dying. Media violence is typically unrealistic, simplistic, glorified and even presented as humorous. Despite the debate the subject of violence on television has generated, television has been labeled a culprit.

When a five year old girl in Norway was beaten senseless in 1994 by three small boys and left to freeze to death, a Swedish satellite T.V network stopped the T.V series Mighty Morphin Power Rangers on March 24, 1998, four school age girls and a teacher were killed in schoolyard during a false fire alarm. The two boys responsible for this act were only 11 and 13. On December 1, 1997, three students were killed and five injured as a fourteen year-old opened fire on a prayer circle in West Paducah, Kentucky. These are only a few examples of the increasing violence recently seen in younger children.

Television producers feel the need to show violence on T.V for two reasons. The first is that they feel it is the only way to retain the audiences' attention. Higher viewer interest brings them higher ratings and advertisers are willing to pay more money for advertisement spots. The second reason is that they have the audiences' attention and are making money the station will continue to beam violent shows.

We love TV and watch a lot of it and yet our pleasure is tainted by a profound sense of unease. What is TV doing to us? Dr. Sunita Gupta (Psychology Dept. GNDU) says, "*There is no doubt that violence in media*

*lays the foundation of aggression in children. Not only this, research has concluded that excessive watching also causes many physiological problems, some of which may appear in later life”.*

Here is what you, as a responsible parent, can do to counter the influence of the media.

#### **Raise your children to resist violence**

Research has shown that violent or aggressive behaviour is often learned early in life. However, parents, family members and others who care for children can help them learn to deal with emotions without using violence. Parents and others can also take steps to reduce or minimize violence.

#### **Give your children consistent love and attention**

Every child needs a strong, loving, relationship with a parent or some other adult to feel safe and secure and to develop a sense of trust. Behaviour problems and delinquency are less likely to develop in children whose parents are involved in their lives, especially, at an early age.

#### **Supervise them**

Without proper supervision, children do not receive the guidance they need. Studies report that unsupervised children often have behaviour problems. Insist on knowing where your children are at all times and who their friends are.

#### **Show your children appropriate behaviours by the way you act.**

Children often learn by example. The behaviour, values and attitudes of parents and siblings have a strong influence on children. Remember to praise your children in a way that they learn to solve problems constructively,

without violence. Children are more likely to repeat good behaviour when they are rewarded with attention and praise. Parents sometimes encourage aggressive behaviour without realizing it. For example, some parents think it is good for boys to learn to fight. And most importantly, don't hit your children.

#### **Be consistent about rules and discipline**

When you make a rule, stick to it. Setting rules and then not enforcing them is confusing and encourages children to see what they get away with. Adapt your approach to the age of the child. With younger children rules could be set without much discussion. But when the child enters adolescence, allow them to make more of their own decisions. Also be prepared for the possibility that for your children's sake you may have to change your own TV-viewing habits.

#### **Keep violence out of your home**

Violence in the home can be frightening and harmful to children. A child who has seen violence at home does not always become violent but he or she may be more likely to try to resolve conflicts with violence. Keep in mind as well that hostile, aggressive arguments between parents frighten children and set a bad example for them.

#### **Try to not expose your children to too much violence in the media**

As a parent, you can control the amount of violence your children see in the media. Here are some ideas:

Limit television viewing time to 1-2 hours a day. Make sure you know what TV shows your children watch, which movies they see and what kinds of video games they play.

Talk to your children about the violence that they see on TV shows, in the movies and in video games.

Help them to understand how painful it would be in real life and the serious consequences that follow violent behaviours.

Discuss with them way to solve problems without violence.

### **Help your children stand up against violence**

Help them understand that it takes more courage and leadership to resist violence than to go along with it.

Help your children to accept and get along with others from various racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Warn your children that bullying and threats can be set-up for violence.

Of concern to many is not what TV is doing but what it isn't doing. Dr. Sunita Gupta says, "*This medium has the most powerful ability to shape our perception. It can educate its audience, combat stereotypes and provides models of pro-social behaviour and attitudes*". But for the most part television and other media too have not picked up the challenge.

## **Has Your Child Taken to Drugs?**

T.K. Gill and Harleen Bahga

"*Is my child a substance abuser?*" this is a very scary question that many parents worry about these days. Unfortunately, many parents don't know about the bad habit towards which their child has been dragged into. In fact, no parents can imagine that their child is a substance abuser. However, the fact is that the impact of the West and peer pressure are pushing teenagers in this direction.

This problem has to be dealt with very carefully. Parents should keep an eye on their children and notice the changes in his/her personality and behaviour. The change in personality can be the onset of puberty also but it gets worse due to the substance abuse.

Parents should notice if their child sits staring into space a lot, not focusing on anything, etc. These changes in the behaviour of your child and his outlook towards life should alert you.

Be careful if your child's friends are drug abuser and he is spending too much time with them. If he remains isolated for a long time, look out for reasons. If he comes home very late and cleans out refrigerator but still there is marked weight-loss or he disappears into the bathroom immediately after eating and starts vomiting, there is a cause for the parents to worry.

If the eyes of your kid are red and you find eye drops in his room or pockets, he is either smoking or possibly sniffing, which can cause very serious damage to the brain. Finding breath fresheners might indicate an attempt to hide smell of alcohol or smoke. You need to check when a peculiar smell regularly keeps coming out of teen's room. The road to substance abuse is easy

through sniffing, as there are easily available at home such as sniffing petrol from the fuel tanks or vehicles or inhaling perfumes by dousing cotton or cloth. Too much use of cold and cough medicines can also be indicative of substance abuse. If your child is on medication, check to see if he takes the medicines or not.

There are many other things around the house that parents might not suspect that their child is using these to get a high. These can be pure vanilla extract, mouthwash such as Listerine, nutmegs which is called poor man's LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide) and household products like hair spray, paint strippers, nail polish remover, Iodex, shoe polish, etc.

The Internet serves as a source of information for the kids to find out which household products to use as drugs. By keeping an eye on the activities of your child, you can prevent him from a great danger. However, if he has entrapped and is having serious problems, you need to consult a professional.

*(The Tribune, April 22, 2008)*

## **Children And Family Values**

Samra Rahman

What are family values? The answer to this query depends on the point at which a family draws the line as to what they can and will do and what they cannot and will not do, individually and collectively, no matter what the temptation and irrespective of all consequences. Not what they profess and proclaim but what they *do* and *don't* do. It has nothing to do with the highly inflated self-images, entertained and projected by some families, about their *izzat* or their (often enough, imaginary) aristocratic or noble lineage.

All such values are imbibed at home to begin with and in childhood. Not by sermonizing but by what the child sees and observes in the conduct of his parents and the family group; a process as simple and natural as breathing. And they last a lifetime. A child that has imbibed the right set of values may stray but something from within will not let him rest until he retraces his steps back to the path of rectitude.

Let us now come down to specifics. Life, today, is a relentless rat race. A child's success in later life hinges, not on his character and other sterling qualities but the marks he secures, in school and college. Age exams conducted in a manner that is above board? There have been enough cases where the question papers (of even the CAT exams, in which people had implicit trust) have been on sale. So many candidates resort to unfair means, often enough aided and abetted by those entrusted with the conduct of exams. In all such cases, the real criminals are the parents, who provide the funds to buy question papers or use their power or influence to enable their children to indulge in

malpractices.

And yet, even in this dismal scenario, there are a few families, who despite possessing money and position and knowing full well that they are treading a suicidal path, nevertheless, stay determined and stick to their principles. They just cannot do otherwise.

What about the behaviour of the child, in school and outside? What is the attitude of the parents, when they receive complaints that their child has been bullying and ill-treating other children? Or has gone and bashed up some child? Do they at all try to get at the truth and punish and discipline their child if he is really guilty? In most cases they will blindly backup their child for all they are worth, until he goes too far and then it is too late. How do they react to complaints that their boy has been misbehaving with girls? *“Oh! Boys will be boys.”* The girl must have been cheap in her behaviour and asked for it. But when it is their daughter that has been at the receiving end, they get all worked up and go to any lengths in defense of their family honor!

What values does a child imbibe, when it sees its parents smilingly accepting cash and gifts by way of bribes? It will think this is the most natural thing in the world to do so and get well trained to become a corrupt official or corrupting businessman, in its own turn. The child that sees its parents spurn such gifts and throw out favor seekers will worship its parents and follow in their footsteps.

It is the family that shapes the children's character and inculcates the values or turns them into a future menace to society.

*(The Hindustan Times, July 27, 2004)*

## When Teachers Fail

Roopinder Singh

Schools in many parts of the nation are closed because of cold weather conditions and thousands of students have enjoyed an extended vacation. In Paraiya Block of Gaya district in southern Bihar, some students who strayed into their Government School were shocked to see their teachers making a bonfire of their Urdu, Sanskrit and Mathematics textbooks. The Teachers' deplorable action has landed them in a hot seat as the police registered a case and other authorities launched an investigation.

Our teachers shape us and most students are very fortunate in that their teachers leave such an impact on them that they retain an idealized impression for a long time. However, what happens when teachers fail to live up to the standards expected of them?

What the teachers in Paraiya did was bad enough, but then there is this case of a Class II student in Korba (Chhatisgarh) who was not able to answer her teacher's question. The student was poked in the eye by the teacher as a result of which she lost her sight in her right eye. A case has been registered and the teacher is absconding.

Iftesham, a Class II student in Mominpur (west Bengal), died after she was slapped by her teacher. The school was a private one, as was the institution in which the student had lost her eyesight; so, it seems that such incidents happen in schools run by the government, as well as those privately managed.

While there is no doubt that these cases are aberrations, they do cast a slur on the profession. What is particularly distressing is that the number of such incidents in which teachers behave in a manner which

is a travesty of all that they are supposed to stand for, is increasing and this is definitely a major cause of worry to the society at large and all those concerned with education in particular.

Children tend to idolize their teachers, who are role models for students. Which parent has not been corrected by their child who said: 'But my teacher said...? When teachers falter, students stumble. Their trust in their teacher takes a beating and this causes them acute distress.

Corporal punishment is wrong. Psychiatrists maintain that corporal punishment can mar a child's psyche and make him or her insecure and depressed. Childhood memories of beatings cast a shadow on relationships which the children forge as adults. Bullying and ragging are offshoots of corporal punishment and they can set off a viscous cycle of similar behaviour in successive generations of students.

Every time examples of such inhuman behaviour surface in the media, there is a knee-jerk reaction calling for more accountability among teachers, as well as strict action against the guilty. But we need to look beyond that.

First we need to understand what is it that drives some teachers to such extremes. While individual peccadilloes are, of course, an obvious answer, for people who actually cross the line and get physical with their wards, there are also other, deeper causes that need to be recognized.

Over the years, the position of the teacher has eroded in our society and while we pay lip-service to them as the people who have our future generations in their hands, we do precious little for them. School teachers in general and primary school teachers in particular, are among the lowest paid professional, contrasting starkly with the position in Germany

where school teachers are paid very well.

It is no secret that over the years, school teaching in general has not attracted the best of talent. Overall, government teachers are better qualified than their counterparts in the private sector. They are better paid too. However, when it comes to performance, the fact that the most of the parents want to send their children to private schools, even as they pay high fees, speaks for itself about the faith of the public in the quality of education imparted in Government Schools.

We need to recognize that government schools are still the only means of education for a vast majority of our population. Given that the teachers in the system are better qualified, it is obvious that more monitoring and better administration would make a significant difference. This is indeed so and various institutions that stand out, do so because the staff is better motivated, administered and made accountable.

In an unusual case of holding oneself accountable, Meenakshikutty Amma, the Principal of Model Residential School in Pynavu, Kerala, canned herself last year after a staff member reported money missing from her purse. The guilty students soon confessed. She refused to identify them or meet out any punishment to them, saying that they had been punished enough. While no one will expect a repeat of Amma's action, it shows another way of dealing with difficult situations.

Teachers who cause bodily harm to students, or are callous enough to burn textbooks to keep themselves warm have no place in the school system. They must be given exemplary punishment that would serve as a deterrent.

*(The Tribune, January 13, 2009)*

## Lincoln's Letter To His Son's Teacher

**He will have to learn, I know,**  
that all men are not just,  
all men are not true.  
But teach him also that  
for every scoundrel there is a hero;  
that for every selfish Politician,  
there is a dedicated leader...  
Teach him for every enemy there is a friend,  
**Steer him away from envy,**  
if you can,  
teach him the secret of  
quiet laughter.  
**Let him learn early that**  
The bullies are the easiest to lick...  
Teach him, if you can,  
The wonder of books...  
But also give him quiet time  
To ponder the eternal mystery of birds in the sky,  
Bees in the sun,  
And the flowers on a green hillside.  
**In the school teach him**  
It is far honourable to fail  
Than to cheat...  
Teach him to have faith  
In his own ideas,  
Even if everyone tells him  
They are wrong...  
Teach him to be gentle  
With gentle people,  
And tough with the tough.  
**Try to give my son**  
The strength not to follow the crowd  
When everyone is getting on  
The band wagon ....

Teach him to listen to all men...  
But teach him also to filter  
All he hears on a screen of truth,  
and take only the good  
that comes through  
**Teach him if you can**  
How to laugh when he is sad...  
Teach him there is no shame in tears,  
Teach him to scoff at cynics  
and to beware of too much sweetness...  
Teach him to sell his brawn  
and brain to the highest bidders  
but never to put a price-tag  
on his heart and soul.  
**Teach him to close his ears**  
to a howling mob  
and to stand and fight  
if he thinks he's right.  
Treat him gently,  
but do not cuddle him,  
because only the test  
of fire makes fine steel.  
**Let him have the courage**  
to be impatient...  
let him have the patience to be brave.  
Teach him always  
to have sublime faith in himself,  
because then he will have  
sublime faith in mankind.  
**This is a big order,**  
but see what you can do...  
He is such a fine little fellow,  
my son !

Abraham Lincoln

# PINGALWARA DIARY

(UPTO AUGUST, 2016)

Services rendered by Pingalwara Institution for the service of the suffering humanity are:-

## 1. Homes for the Homeless

There are 1764 patients in different branches of Pingalwara now a days:-

(a) Head Office, Mata Mehtab Kaur Ward, Bhai Piara Singh Ward	374 Patients
(e) Manawala Complex	854 Patients
(b) Pandori Warraich Branch, Amritsar	82 Patients
(c) Jalandhar Branch	39 Patients
(d) Sangrur Branch	228 Patients
(f) Chandigarh (Palsora ) Branch	94 Patients
(g) Goindwal Branch	<u>93 Patients</u>
Total <u>1764 Patients</u>	

## 2. Treatment facilities

- (a) **Dispensary & Laboratory:-** Pingalwara has a dispensary and a laboratory for the treatment of patients. It has an annual expenditure of about Rs.90 lakhs. Medicines are also distributed free of cost to the poor and needy people.
- (b) **Medical Care Staff:-** Experienced medical staff like Nurses, Pharmacists and Laboratory Technicians are available for the care of the Pingalwara residents.
- (c) **Blood-Donation Camps:-** A Blood Donation Camp is organized on Bhagat Ji's Death Anniversary every year. The blood is used for Pingalwara residents and road accident victims.

(d) **Ambulances:-** Ambulances with basic Medical aid are available for victims of road accidents on G.T. Road, round the clock and provide facilities for taking Pingalwara patients to the hospital.

(e) **Artificial Limb Centre:-** There is an Artificial Limb Centre at Manawala Complex, dedicated to the memory of Bhagat Ji which provides free of cost Artificial Limbs to Polio-affected and amputee cases. 8137 needy people have benefitted till April 2016.

(f) **Physiotherapy Centre:-** A Physiotherapy Centre equipped with State-of-the-art equipment is functioning in the Manawala Complex since June 2005. On an average 80 patients are treated everyday.

(g) **Operation Theatres:-** There is a well equipped Operation Theatre in Bhai Piara Singh Ward Amritsar for general surgery and A Micro Surgery Operation Theatre in Manawala Complex where Cochlear Implants and major operations are carried out.

(h) **Dental, Eye, Ear & Ultrasound Centres:-** These Centres have been set up to provide these services to Pingalwara residents, sewadars and their families.

## 3. Education

Pingalwara Society is running five Educational Institutions for the poor and needy children.

(a) **Bhagat Puran Singh Adarsh School, Manawala Complex:-** This school provides free education to 723 students from the poor and deprived sections of the society. They are provided with free books and

uniforms. Children being brought up by Pingalwara Society are also studying in this school.

- (b) **Bhagat Puran Singh Adarsh School, Buttar Kalan (Qadian):-** This school is dedicated to the sweet memory of Bhagatji. 452 students are getting free education under the able guidance of well qualified teachers. The school also provides financial help to students who have finished their school studies and are aspiring for higher studies.
- (c) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education, Manawala Complex:-** This school is providing Special Education to 205 Special children.
- (d) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for the Deaf:-** Bhagat Puran Singh School for Deaf Children is functional at the Manawala Complex since May 2005. The school is equipped with state-of-the-art training aid and has 150 children on its rolls.
- (e) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education, Chandigarh (Palsora):-** This school caters to the needs of Special adults of the branch.
- (f) **Vocational Centre:-** This Centre is providing free training in embroidery, stitching, craft work, making washing powder, candle making, painting, etc. Young girls from the villages of surroundings areas are the main beneficiaries.
- (g) **Computer Training:-** Computers are available in all the schools for academic and vocational training.
- (h) **Hostel facilities:-** There are separate hostels for boys and girls in Manawala Complex. Many girls are

pursuing higher studies in different colleges.

#### 4. **Rehabilitation**

- (a) **Marriages:-** After being educated, boys and girls at Pingalwara are married to suitable partners. 40 girls and 4 boys have been married off till date.

#### 5. **Environment Related Activities**

- (a) **Tree Plantation:-** Bhagat Puran Singh Ji was deeply concerned about the degradation of the environment. A vigorous campaign of tree plantation is started every year on Bhagat Ji's Death Anniversary. Each year 15,000 to 22,000 trees are planted in various schools, colleges, hospitals, cremation grounds and other public places. These include Amaltas, Kachnar, Behra, Champa, Arjun, Sukhchain, Chandni, Zetropa, Kari-patta were distributed to different institutions.
- (b) **Nursery:-** Pingalwara has its own Nursery where saplings of various plants and trees are prepared. Every year, the aim of nursery is to grow more than 54 different kinds of saplings every year.

#### 6. **Social Improvement Related Activities**

- (a) **Awareness:-** Pingalwara has played an important role in spreading awareness about the evils in the society. This has been done by printing literature on religious, social and environmental issues at the Puran Printing Press Amritsar and is being distributed free of cost. It has an annual expenditure of printing and publicity is about 1 crores 50 lakhs rupees.
- (b) **Puran Printing Press:-** The Printing Press has been updated with an Offset Press.

(c) **Museum and Documentaries:-** A Museum, and a number of documentaries have been prepared on Pingalwara activities as well as on zero budget natural farming. The C.D.s are freely available from Pingalwara.

A feature film produced by Pingalwara Society Amritsar EH JANAM TUMHARE LEKHE (Punjabi) on Rev. Bhagat Puran Singh Ji, founder Pingalwara and his struggle not only for selfless services of wounded humanity but for Environment Crisis also, will prove a beacon for the generations yet to come after us.

#### **7. Help to the victims of Natural Calamities**

Pingalwara makes an effort to provide succour to the victims of natural calamities like floods, earthquakes and famines. Aid was sent for the earth-quake victims in Iran, Tsunami disaster victims, Leh landslide and flood affected areas.

#### **8. Cremation of unclaimed dead-bodies**

Pingalwara cremates unclaimed dead bodies with full honour.

#### **9. Dairy Farm**

180 cows and buffalos at Manawala Complex provide fresh milk to the Pingalwara residents.

#### **10. Old Age Homes**

Old age homes at Sangrur and Manawala Complex of Pingalwara caters to the needs of elderly people.

#### **11. Projects Completed and Under Construction**

Since 1997 ambitious projects of Sangrur, Palsora at Chandigarh and Manawala Complex have been completed. In the year 2009 new buildings—

Administrative Block, Puran Printing Press, Deaf School, T.B. Ward at Manawala Complex and at Head Office and a New Administrative Block have also been completed.

In the year 2013, a new modern Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education in Manawala Complex of Pingalwara and a new Block for Pingalwara patients in Pandori Warraich Branch is under construction and is fast coming up.

#### **Other Details:**

- a) All India Pingalwara Charitable Society is a Registered Society, registered by Registrar of Companies vide letter No. 130 of 1956-1957 as amended vide No. A-28/4540 dated 07-07-1998.
- b) All donations to Pingalwara are exempted under Section 80 G of Income Tax-II Amritsar letter No. CIT-II/ASR/ITO (Tech.)/2011-12/4730 dated 11/12 January, 2012.
- c) PAN Number of the All India Pingalwara Charitable Society is AAATA 2237R
- d) FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) 1976 Registration No. of Pingalwara is 115210002

Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa

Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh

***Dr. Inderjit Kaur,***

***President,***

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