

# **Report of 6-day educational excursion of MCD Mentor teachers to Pune**

## **Day 1-16/07/2023**

The group of 30 members for the exposure tour reached Pune airport in the morning. From there we boarded a bus and went for sightseeing and lunch. We reached the Sahyadri school campus in the evening. We were welcomed by the Centre head and after that we explored the campus little bit.

## **Day 2 – 17/02/2023**

When the song is real, there is neither you nor I but only the silence of the eternal. "-J. Krishnamurthy.

On the first day of our exposure tour, we all had the curiosity of what is in store for us. With open minds and welcoming hearts, we started our day with the morning walk amongst the swaying trees and the breezy weather. With a healthy breakfast of poha, halwa, sprouts and tea we moved our steps towards the morning assembly hall. The teachers and the students sat on the floor in a round circle with their prayer books. The chanting with the tabla, sitar and harmonium soothed our hearts and mind. 'Om Madhubala', Pratha Kale', and Bhayo Prabhat' were sung by all and then classes 4 and 5 gave a presentation.

Ms. Padmapriya Shiralli, Principal, Sahyadri School, started with the talk on “Awareness of the Self”. With the questioning technique, sensitivity to oneself and understanding of self, we can conquer all the tough situations in our lives easily. The school follows Krishnamurthy's philosophy focusing on the holistic development of the child and not only the career-oriented one. The teachers here are not prescriptive. They do not tell the students “HOW” to handle a situation. The students learn from life by facing the situations of anger, hatred, fear, love and friendship themselves. The children here get a peaceful environment amidst nature so that the child gets not only physical space but mental space as well. “Culture class” is held every week where children talk about the difficult situations, if any, that they are facing here either from the senior children or from their friends. The baseline is to give the child “Freedom” from fear, biases, opinions, notions created by the society.

Respected Principal mam spoke about the timetable that the students follow here, the morning PT, the evening games etc. The pupil-teacher ratio is 1: 5. In the evening, students do homework on their own and if they face any difficulty, the teacher is present to help them. The school follows the ICSE board. On Sundays, students have a video time where they are shown a movie and they can enjoy themselves. Monday, Wednesday and Friday the musical assembly is arranged in the hall where everybody sings together. On Thursday, the teachers present the assembly. On Saturday, there is a documentary or a project work which is discussed with everybody in the meeting. On Tuesday, the assembly is held wherein the senior students are the junior students are enlightened on a particular topic which can be presented either by the students or by the teachers. Vacations here are two and a half months in summer and one and a half months near Diwali. For 8 months the students are here in the school. All festivals are spoken about and celebrated with a presentation, project work,

display or in the assembly. The parents can come and meet the students twice in a semester and they can stay here with the students for two days wherein the parents are given a cottage and they eat in the dining hall where all the students and the teachers eat.

In the session taken by Suresh Sir, a video was shown in which Krishnamurthy ji was questioning the parents, "Do parents really love their children?" He spoke about the meaning of education, the aspects of education and the best way in which we can educate a child but there is no specific way for any child. Each child is different. He spoke that life is like a book of relations, of previous experiences and problems that we have gone through are, life that we have lived is the best way to educate the child and make him independent.

The afternoon session was taken by Ms. Deepa More on environmental literacy and Ecosystem services. In this she spoke about the outreach program which is in the Sahyadri campus since 2016. The essence of the program is that we should stay connected, be in relationship with the environment as we are a part of it and we should understand our role in the environment. The outreach program highlights the relationship with the community.

Mam spoke about how Sahyadri School thought of helping the farmers with the seeds and helping them get better yields. Here they follow the policy of multiplying seeds by natural selection through cross-pollination. We discussed the sustainable development goals, the benefits of black rice and red rice and how organically grown food in the campus is given to the children. We visited the farm where we saw vegetables and rice farming. It was an eye-opening experience for all of us and a whole lot of knowledge imbibed by us will be carried wherever we go. We spoke about the community outreach program where students from the school help the nearby villages with farming techniques and the students also work along with the staff members in the school farm. The teachers have taken a step ahead to teach the ladies in the nearby villages about growing food which will raise their hemoglobin levels as it was found that most of the ladies in the nearby villages are suffering from thalassemia. Desi varieties of cattle were also seen. The school is a member of the "seeds savers network" in India and makes it a point that whatever activities are happening outside the school are imbibed inside and learnt through experience by the students.

The evening session with Milind sir was very enlightening in which he spoke about how groups of children are formed and then each group takes up an activity monthly which goes on rotating amongst the groups. The five activities he spoke about are teaching, campus beautification, farming, cooking and tinkering activities. Sir spoke about the magical outreach program in which the doctor of the school took classes on CPR in 40 schools of Sahyadri. The school is working with the forest department, linking activities with preserving biodiversity and afforestation. We came to know of the solar power project that is on the campus, the energy meters that are installed on every dome which show the energy consumption of each and every dome, the wastewater treatment plant and how the treated wastewater is being used again in the farm or on the campus. He spoke about solid waste management and showed us the bins on the campus at different places in which students put the waste, segregating them according to the nature of the waste. This waste is then recycled in the campus itself.

It was an interesting and an enriching day.



### Day 3 - 18/7/2023

The second day in this beautiful place started with the morning assembly held at two places. In the assembly of senior students, the students presented a powerpoint presentation on the topic of Customs duty and the taxes given to the Government of India. Various points regarding this were covered in the presentation so that the student's knowledge is updated. In the assembly of younger students, of class 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, there was a discussion on Dining Hall etiquettes. Students came up with various points like silence time, washing plates, table manners, serving, food waste and many more. Students gave various answers which were summarized in the end by Akka(their teacher).

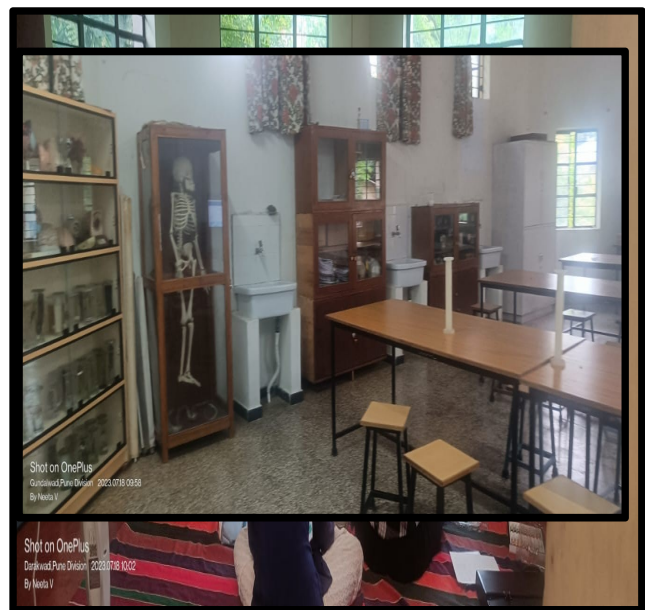
After the assembly, we all were taken for a campus tour where we were shown various academic areas or clusters. The school has 4 clusters:

1. Class 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>
2. Class 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>
3. Class 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>
4. Class 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

In these clusters, they have their classrooms and their activity ground. The School has a Physics lab, Chemistry lab, Biology lab, Tinker room, 2 music rooms, Art and Craft room, SUPW area, Library, Study rooms and Computer labs. Most of the school area is built using bamboo and natural products. All the academic areas are designed keeping in mind the student's safety.

A video session was organized by the school management on the topic: What is the cause of corruption? In this video J.Krishnamurti ji is seen discussing this topic with the students of the school. He was answering questions asked by the students on this topic. Students were participating actively. After the video, there was a discussion session on it. Mentors asked various questions regarding the topic and representative of school answered to the best of their capacity.

Next session after lunch was on topic: Going beyond the curriculum. Principal ma'am of Sahyadri school, Ms. Padma Priya told us about the academic structure of the school. She told us that there are no formal exams of students till class 8. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> term of 8<sup>th</sup> class, the students attempt formal exams for first time. From 9<sup>th</sup> class, they give regular exams. School organizes regular remedial classes for weak students. After every 2 months, review of every student is done by all subject teachers and the parents. From class 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, a subjective report is prepared of each student. School has fixed period wise time table and has a spiral curriculum. Last session of the day was taken by Sh. Shrinidhi on ESD ( Education for Sustainable Development). In the session, first we played systems game. ESD is a global trend started by UNESCO. It has 17 goals which have to be achieved by 2030. Main goal of ESD in Sahyadri school is first hand learning, connecting it with immediate surroundings and learning beyond textbooks.





#### **Day 4 – 19/07/2023**

The schedule for workshop started at 9:00A.M. with Music Assembly in the Assembly Hall. After a few prayers and an inspirational song by all students, the students were dispersed to their respective rooms turn by turn.

After that, all of us assembled in the Study Center for the first session of the day. Suresh Sir was heading the session where he started with the statement “It was a beginning of a new day and a new start for anything begins with oneself”. We should accumulate knowledge by being open-minded, by being vulnerable and posing impossible questions and not by leading a protected life. Suresh Sir also discussed about the importance of DIALOGUE - Listening, thinking and then speaking, which has largely been emphasized by Krishnamurthi Sir too. Then there was a general discussion on the above ideas among the participants and the facilitation team.

After the tea break the session was continued with a new topic included. WHAT IS ART? WHAT IS THE ART OF SEEING? WHAT IS THE ART OF LISTENING? AND WHAT IS ART OF LEARNING?

Art of seeing is observing things as they are without having any perceptions or pre notions, without any judgments and prejudices. Art of listening means to just listen without translating into one's own terminology, without judging, evaluating, agreeing or disagreeing. Art of learning means not memorizing, storing or recording. Rather it is much more than that. Art of learning refers to constant observation, not going back to memories and acting accordingly. There there was a small discussion on these aspects by participants. A few questions of the participants were also dealt with the facilitation team. In the end, the session was concluded by the understanding that art of seeing , art of listening and art of learning together are art of living; conflicts destroys the brain and learning is always continuous.

After the sessions, we had our lunch at Sahyadri school and then we proceeded for Nigdi for our next school visit.



#### **Day 4 – 20/07/2023**

##### **VISIT to JNANA PRABODHINI NAVNAGAR VIDYALAYA**

Today our group of 30 officials, 3 officers and 27 mentors from MCD visited The Gyan Prabodhini Navnagar Vidyalaya ,Nigdi, Pune .

We were welcomed with the tilak ceremony by the school staff and had breakfast there. The introductory session was held in the Drama hall with Om chanting, patriotic song and details about the foundation of this school . Founder of this school was an educationist and believed in traditional ways of learning through Vedas and Upnishads with new innovations too. Here education system is based on development of Panchkosha .This is a Marathi and an English medium school with a strength of nearly 2500 students from Pre-primary to class 10. The school emphasizes on activities like Yoga, Pranayam, Sports, Music ,Dance, Computer Education, German language, Love for own country and Good Citizenship .

We all visited different classrooms which work through the House system based on names of flowers, birds, sun and planets, floor wise. Teachers were giving experiential learning which is activity based and integrated with the curriculum. Art Education is being given to the children wherein in Visual Arts, students were making flowers, diyas through clay modelling, different drawings and paintings. In Performing Arts, we saw the expertise of the students in Singing, Dance and Drama, Tabla and Harmonium. Ms. Sheetal emphasized on the importance of expression, creativity and stage exposure for each student. The best thing is that the teachers are giving equal chance to every student from class 3-7 and after that the student can choose his/ her interest in the senior classes.

We visited the section on GURUKUL which was started here in 1997, based on the PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT through five layers of learning. Students are in the school for 12 hours ( 7a.m. - 7 p.m.). Students performed yoga, Surya Namaskar, chanted



mantras and the prayer song was beautifully sung by them. Students were engaged in different projects like Rakhi selling project, House survey project, visit to nearby local area and many more which develop their communication skills, confidence to handle new situations. Students who worked on Rakhi project, earned more than Rs.10 lacs last year. They also had a Kreedakul (sports academy to develop national and international players).



Day



6-

**21/07/2023**

Our primary purpose in Jnana Prabodhni is to observe real classroom teaching. In groups, we went to see the pre-primary sections today. In the first group, we were thrilled to witness an inseparable integration of physical activities and academics, which engaged the students happily. The teachers were welcoming and willingly addressed our queries regarding their pedagogy and teaching methodologies. In this section, we found the students sitting in a circle on mats, each holding colorful beads and thread while participating in counting activities. Moving on, the next classroom comprised approximately 20 students who were seated on the floor with clay. They demonstrated their creativity by rolling the clay to make rotis as well as crafting other imaginative objects.

In another classroom, the students were engaged in sand activities. The teachers provided them with sand and funnels to fill tumblers, and those who had practiced well enough were allowed to fill the tumblers directly with sand. According to the teacher, this exercise helped develop the students' eye-hand coordination and prewriting skills. The subsequent classroom presented a unique activity where students were given mixed whole grains of different colors. They were asked to separate the grains into different bowls based on their colors, types, and sizes, promoting both learning and enjoyment. Few students demonstrated the daily life skills being given to the students like sweeping the floor, ironing clothes with a model iron and folding them.

Furthermore, in the following session, the school's Principal joined us as slides were presented to highlight the salient features of the school. The Pre-primary section consisted of 17 dedicated teachers and one Sangeet teacher, maintaining a pupil-teacher ratio of 20:1. The school operated in two shifts, with the morning shift from 8:15 am to 12:15 pm and the second shift from 12:15 pm to 3:45 pm. The school displayed an active participation of students in various festivals, showcasing their enthusiasm. During the session, a video clip of a cultural program was played on an LCD screen, and an evaluation report was shared with the mentor teachers. The evaluation comprised 60% marks from formative assessments and 40% marks from summative assessments, with both objective and subjective questions included. The Head of School (HoS) also contributed by framing two-mark questions.

Finally, all the mentor teachers and officials gathered in the Manohar Hall of the school. The session commenced with a beautiful prayer led by one of the school's teachers, in which all participants joined. Following a warm welcome speech by the school staff, respected DDE mam and ADE sir, along with Co-ordinator Neeta Verma mam, addressed the group. Teachers from the school and the participants shared their feedback, expressing gratitude for the hospitality they received during the visit.



We must say that children are like flowers and the school is really helping them bloom. We were very happy to see the culture being taught, the values and the traditions being practiced



here. With heavy heart and a bag full of experiences which we will implement in our schools, we left for Delhi.