

DESIGNING VARIOUS CHILD CENTRIC PROJECTS FOR VALUE EDUCATION AND EXTRACURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT

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Mrs. Vanita Rathod has been serving in Government School for 15 years as HTAT Principal, including the last seven years in School No. 93 in Rajkot. The number of students in the school was 300 at the time she joined and the infrastructure was extremely poor. There was no separate arrangement for sanitation for boys and girls. The school had “D” grade in Gunotsav. Given the lack of infrastructure, facilities and motivation, students’ attendance was very low.

Details of Innovation Experiment

Observing the current status of the school, Mrs Rathod thought of implementing different projects and with that aim in mind, formed a committee for each task. These committees consisted of only student members and each student was assigned a task to complete. The aim was to ensure their involvement and build in them a sense of responsibility. The committees took full responsibility for the implementation of any project. The following projects have been implemented.

Creating a positive and inspiring atmosphere. Motivational speech is organized every fortnight. Well-known people who have achieved

success in their respective callings are invited to address the students and inspire them to dream and turn the dream into reality. Students are encouraged to make notes and set their own goals.

School library. Instead of distributing sweets on birthdays, the children were asked to donate a book to the library. Similarly, teachers were asked to donate ten books each on their respective birthdays. Other NGOs in the vicinity also donated books to the school. In this way thousands of books were added to the school library every year. Donors have donated five cupboards for the library.

Improvement in physical facilities. Starting from 2012 and till 2020, the school has received more than Rs. 18 lakh donations, physical facilities have been developed based on private and public participation. Water harvesting arrangements have also been made for rainwater harvesting. A smart class has been created with funds received through a donor. Two projectors have been received through Gyankunj. Each class has a green board and water cooler; lesson diary, school shoes, school bags for each student and gifts at various festivals.



Children and teachers discussing in a prayer meeting



Children learning while playing



School garden

Book Exhibition Book Rally. In order to encourage reading habits in the students, book exhibition named Granth Pooja, is organized in the school on 14th February every year. Students form a human chain and hold books in their hands to encourage people to read.

Green school. More than two thousand plants have been planted in plastic bottles, PVC pipes, green coconuts, waste tires, waste jeans pants, shoes, earthen pots and plastic containers. A vertical garden of 250 bottles has been created on the two walls of the school. More than 200 medicinal trees have been planted. Before the mid-day meal, the students use soap-nut grown in the school for hand washes. The school has also built nests, watering pots, swings for the birds and also arranged bird feeders. Each student is assigned the responsibility of taking care of one tree and they are required to water them after school hours.

Child health. The school arranges a separate school health check-up for students twice a year. The students undergo physical check up to test eyesight and dental hygiene amongst others. They are also tested for hemoglobin and students with low hemoglobin are given iron and folic acid tablets. Students with low hemoglobin also have a thalassemia test and a ferritin test every year. Several seminars are organized to spread awareness about health-related issues. Parent-teacher meetings are also held to discuss the subject for each child.

The FIRST AID BOX of school is also innovative. It contains things like tea powder,

turmeric, alum, fennel, sugar, and ajown to treat students by naturopathy.

Girl child education. To encourage girl education, the school has set up a separate toilet for them with a vending machine to dispatch sanitary pads for girls of Std. 6 to 8 free of charge. There is also an incinerator donated by a donor.

Sports. A sports project has been introduced by the Sports Authority of Gujarat. The students of Std. 6 to 8 are provided special sports training when they come to school in the morning and from 3 to 6 in the afternoon. Starting from 2015 and till today, students have shown excellent performance with some achieving winning positions in Khel Mahakumbh held at the state level every year. The school has got two coaches from the Sports Authority, in addition to the two full time coaches for training students in athletics and basketball.

Creativity Development. Notice boards have been installed in the school for students to display their own work. This activity helps to stimulate their creativity and increase their confidence. The students can post material related to their subjects and other areas of interest.

Honesty Shop. The school runs an honesty shop comprising of all the stationery items that students need in their class. There is no manager to run the shop. All the items are available at wholesale rates and students run this shop on their own.

Short Film: Art Development. So far 13 short films have been made about school students for the art development among school students. In 2015,

“Sacho Saharo” film was appreciated, “Punya” was screened by NCERT in 2018 and “Sachi Duniya” was honoured by GTPL in 2019. School students have started giving their programs on television and radio stations. “Ladko Baal” drama was aired on the radio with school students to bring out the child’s dormant powers.

Spread of Gandhian thought. On Gandhiji’s 150th birth anniversary, 150 school students enacted the role of Gandhiji. They drew a 50-meter-long map of India in the school ground with a portrait of Gandhi ji fixed at the centre. Each of the 150 students who enacted the role of the great leader, presented one of his thoughts to the gathering.

Other activities. A Special Training Program (STP) class was initiated in the year 2015. About 250 out-of-school students have been benefited from it till date.

The number of students in the school has increased from 300 to 650 over a period of eight years. The students have demonstrated excellence in competitions held at the district and state level, for instance, science-maths exhibition and Khel Mahakumbh. The school’s reputation has gradually spread across the Town Primary Education Committee, Rajkot. All the students of the two closed private schools in the area are now enrolled in this government school. It is now rated A grade in the Gunostav.

Awards and Recognition

Ms. Vanita Rathod has received a number of awards in recognition of her efforts, such as the Shri Aurobindo Society, New Delhi’s National Unity Award 2019, and the state-level award of the best H-TAT principal of the Government of Gujarat for the year of 2020, among others.

She has been honoured for her children’s stories (Gujarat Sahitya Academy), poems (Akshar Maitri Sahitya Vartul), work on Ghayal Saheb the ghazal writer, and her work on Gujarati (Gujarat University, Ahmedabad).



Students and teachers than planting plants



QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. What physical facilities must a school have?
2. Why is it important to pay attention to the teaching ability of children?
3. How is the use of digital media useful in education?

QUESTIONS FOR TRAINEES

1. What activities can be done to develop the creative power of children?
2. What activities can be done to develop qualities like honesty in children?
3. Why is it important to be aware of children’s health?