

Quality of Education Questionnaire filled by Kedi residential School for Tribal Girls.

March 2011

1. Does the school provide a light, well-ventilated clean space for children to learn in?

Yes, all the spaces/classrooms are airy, well ventilated with large windows, clean and large open spaces for Lab, Library and workshop activities.

2. Are there outside safe spaces for children to play?

Yes, clean, safe and open play areas are available on the campus as well as across the campus. In both the cases, Play areas are not owned by the School.

3. Is the school a stimulating environment for learning? Do displays, pictures and charts relate to what the children are learning or reflect concerns about social issues and the environment? How frequently are displays changed, added to or extended? How could children be more involved in the selection process?

Yes, the environment at schools is very stimulating and inspiring to learning. The displays like charts, photographs, paintings, pictures, craft items are made and displayed with pride, by children. Kedi is a school for girls so we discuss women's rights, self reliance, fight against abuse and social injustice etc. Almost every day. When it comes to display, it is math, science, social study and various arts that takes lead. Environment is a major part of science as well as vocational training like Organic farming and animal husbandry.

4. Are levels of noise a distraction from concentrated learning? Could there be a possibility of creating quiet spaces and quiet times?

Yes, noise and other disturbance slightly affect the concentration, but not to the extent of it becoming an issue.

Students meditate during evening prayer time, as well as during morning Karate practice. They are allowed two hours of free time to rest and be by themselves.

5. Who is responsible for maintaining the physical environment? Can the children be more involved in caring for the buildings and compound?

All the individuals affiliated with the school in any way are responsible for maintain the physical environment. Maintain hygienic condition, cleaning the entire building, mending the garden, arranging library books, kitchen and cow shade area washing etc. are done by various groups of students regularly. These groups rotate their area of responsibility every week.

6. What happens to waste in the school?

Waste from kitchen, farm and garden goes to compost pit and eventually used in school's farm.

Cow dung is being used as a fertilizer as well as in a very near future will be used for Gobar gas plant.

We do sell glass, used metal pieces to recycling vendors and waste like plastic (very small quantity) is given to municipal garbage collectors.

Can this be made part of a learning process?

Yes we already have made it a part of learning process .They learns to recycle, reuse, separate organic waste and use less of plastic.

7. Is there access to toilets?

Yes. There are sufficient number of toilets and bathrooms for all the students on the premises.

8. Is drinking water available?

Yes, this year we drilled a bore- well that has a sufficient quantity of sweet clean water.

9. Does the school provide facilities for children with physical disabilities?

Currently, the schools do not have such children.

Usage of Materials

1. Are materials used efficiently and economically?

Yes. We all are very conscious when it comes to recycle and reuse. Fortunately, the students also respond to our appeal. We use every material very economically.

2. Are natural and waste materials used in creative ways? How could they be more utilized?

Waste from kitchen, farm and garden goes to compost pit and eventually used in school's farm.

Cow dung is being used as a fertilizer as well as in a very near future will be used for Gobar gas plant.

We reuse paper to practice for drawing exams, hands on training for block printing, Warli painting and card making.

3. How far are children responsible for the storage and distribution of materials?

All the responsibility lies with students for storing and keeping log of various material like annual function props, dresses, musical instruments, games equipments, books, solar gadgets, mechanical tools, science experiment material and grains, vegetables etc. of the school work happens through children's committees and teams. Children are responsible for games material, first aid material, cultural material, display, games and sports material etc

Composition of the School Body

1. What is the basis of selection of the pupils?

- Geographical proximity
- Intellectual ability
- Community or religious identity
- Economic background.

The very first criterion is gender. Second is economic inability and third and least important is intellectual ability as it is our responsibility to enhance their intellectual capacity even if they are low achievers or have learning disability. At Kedi, we have students coming from 20 km. To 70 km. distance and from Valsad, Navsary, Vyara and the Dangs districts. Religious identity is not at all a criterion.

2. In what ways could the school include a greater diversity?

- Economic
- Religious
- Caste and class
- Linguistic groups
- differently able children

At Kedi, all the students are tribal girls. Although there are sub-tribes amongst them, they all come from a very poor, mostly agrarian society. At least 20% students are Christian.

We have some students with learning disability but none with physical disability.

3. In what ways do the teaching staff, management and maintenance staff represent diversity in terms of gender, community, and differently able persons?

Details	Male	Female	Differently abled
Teaching staff	5	5	0
Vocational staff/cook	1	2	1
Management	2	1	0
Total	8	8	1

We have 70% of the staff is from local rural tribal communities and 30% from urban communities.

Ethos of the school

1. What are the rules of the school? What purpose do they serve? Are they flexible?

What are the unwritten laws of the school? What do the children understand as the rules and their reasons?

At Kedi, we consciously stay away from making rules that one normally see in similar academic institution because from primary school level, the students are already suppressed and made habituated to obey strict rules and are asked not to express their views or ask any question which leads them to become docile, dull and in turn, rather than enjoying, they lose interest from education.

We like students to communicate with the staff, freely and openly and we encourage them to learn to argue and express their views without any inhibition. We make an effort to create friendly and warm atmosphere that is relaxing and conducive for students with learning disabilities.

We do not discuss small mistakes made by students, publically. We treat all the students equally and with dignity.

Students are free to make their own rules for their convenience.

Some of the unwritten rules that we encourage students to observe for their own safety are:

- **Never to leave campus without informing The Rector.**
- **If leaving the campus, come back on prescribed time.**
- **Never to cause any disturbance to the Neighbours.**

6. What things are celebrated and why?

At Kedi, we celebrate Diwali, Holi, Uttarayan, Navratree as well as annual day, parent's day, Science day, sports day, Gandhi Jayanti, 15th August and 26th January.

It gives all of us a chance to come to gather and enjoy social time! This also allows management and staff personal to talk to parents regarding their daughter's progress or any other special remark we have made. Annual day and craft bazaar days provide students to show their talents to parents and well wishers. In turn such events boost student's self confidence.

7. In cultural programmes what proportion of children are included? What is the basis of selection?

Teachers encourage all the students to participate, if they desire to do so. We do not force any students but we try to have at least one item per subject per standard. Students are allowed to come up with some good skits and monologues.

The selection depends on student's choice of subject or Item that they like to perform. Teachers act as a helper or a guide.

8. Do the cultural items selected reflect the cultural diversity of the school and the community? What kind of values do we want to communicate?

Student's selection range from most modern drama or poem to local folk dance and storytelling. Fortunately they know many nice modern poems that they can sing very beautifully with a melodious voice, in sync.

We are glad that they have started reading more books and are getting familiar with contemporary literature, at the same time keeping their native tribal culture alive!! They have made a very good collection of local songs, stories, sayings and local art of making Ayurvedic medicines and sure, they are practicing the age old native art of Warli wall painting.

9. What is the purpose of excursions? Are the distance and expense justified? What local places might be visited? How could all be included?

The most primary purpose is to inquire and learn while having fun. This year students visited bank to learn its activities and they also opened their personal accounts. Short trips to the post office, science centre, Folk art museum, back waters of dam reservoir, Nature walk, factories, Sea Shore etc. were scheduled. Longer trip to the Bird sanctuary at Nalsarovar, The desert of Kutchha, Salt pans, Sun temple at Modhera, underground step well at Adalaj, Science city, IMAX theatre, Gandhi Ashram at Ahmedabad was highly educational and enjoyable for the students.

On December 15th we have planned a one day trip to Sardar sarovar dam on the river Narmada. So far for local trips, students either walk or go by local autorikshaw, for medium distance, they go by local state transport bus and for longer distance we rent bus for three to four days for the ease of travel for a large group of 80 to 100 persons.

Coming summer, the school has planned a trip to New Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikree, Manali and Kullu in the Himachal Pradesh, where they will be able to see, experience and enjoy snow and the magnificent Mountain ranges of the Himalaya, for the first time!!

This will be our first experience for out of state trip. We have a well wisher who arranges such trips for other schools professionally and is helping us without charging any profit. We will go by train and state transport bus where we may be eligible to get student discount. We are also thinking to ask for Rs. 250/students as “Look Bhagidari” from their parents.

So far all the trips we have taken has proven very economical for the places we have covered during each trip.

10. What kinds of achievement and success are commemorated? Are achievements in areas other than sports and academic excellence recognized in public? How can we avoid labelling of high achievers and children with learning difficulties and yet at the same time meet their specific needs?

At Kedi our emphasis is on holistic growth of the rural tribal students. All the students that come to Kedi are talented in many different ways. Some of them have a leadership quality, some are good at elocution, others are good with drama and dance and many are naturally gifted artists, and of course they all have a gift of melodious voice!

Along with their academic achievements students are praised for their various achievements during assembly sessions and again during annual day function.

Students with learning disabilities and the teachers and students who help them make progress have earned a very special mention. The staff members and a team of students have made students with learning disabilities, feel so much at ease that all six students achieved 55% to 67% academically and excelled in extracurricular activities.

11. Does the timetable reflect a concern with creating a balanced use of time?

Yes. Apart from academic schedule the timetable allows personal free time, time for extracurricular activities, for Vocational and Craft activities, for Karate and music classes and group task assigned by hostel management.

Learning

Different kinds of learning

1. In what ways does the school try to integrate art, music, craft, drama and movement into other areas of learning?

As we mentioned earlier, the school holds Workshops every Saturday where we use Drama, Poetry recital, singing competition, Maths and Science Quizzes, essay competition, Map reading competition etc.

For Maths and Science, apart from various experiments, teachers as well as students have made many learning aid material using 3D material and craft. Instead of just learning about various measurements theoretically, we hold measurement seminar where students learn the practical application while interacting with guests.

For annual day program students are allowed to come up with some good skits and monologues. Student's selection range from most modern drama or poem to local folk dance and storytelling. Fortunately they know many nice modern poems that they can sing very beautifully with a melodious voice, in sync.

For monthly assemblies and annual day program, the staffs encourage students to make stage sets and props by themselves where they have to show their artistic talents.

Obviously, some students that are very good at art and craft, are already learning crafts like festival decoration, Gift envelop making, Dupatta and dress painting and hand and machine embroidery. In future, his may also help them financially. At Kedi our emphasis is on holistic growth of the rural tribal students. All the students that come to Kedi are talented in many different ways.

We are glad that they have started reading more books and are getting familiar with contemporary literature, at the same time keeping their native tribal culture alive!! They have made a very good collection of local songs, stories, sayings and local art of making Ayurvedic medicines and sure, they are practicing the age old native art of Warli wall painting.

Annual day and craft bazaar days provide students to show their talents to parents and well wishers. In turn such events boost student's self confidence.

2. How does the school include the opportunity for children to respond imaginatively and sympathetically to different aspects of the curriculum, for example to poetry, stories, environmental issues etc.?

For literature please see our response to question no. 1.

We have taken many initiatives to make students more sensitive to environmental issues. To bring about awareness for all these initiatives, student's is very important.

The school has installed solar steam cooking system and a team of students are trained to take care and operate the system smoothly. The team is responsible for repair and maintenance of the system. They are made of using less wood as a fuel for cooking. Some of the ladies coming for vocational training are given small family size solar cookers to save them time and in turn save wood.

We are in process of constructing a plant to produce bio gas using gas from septic tank cum gobar gas using cow dung.

The school also offers organic farming as a part of vocational training and whatever is being produced, is used in school kitchen. At present, we have four cows and apart from milk for students, we use cow dung as a manure as well as natural pesticide and also for producing gobar gas.

This summer we are planning to add 50000 gallon rain water collection and storage tank that we can use during monsoon and summer for drinking and cooking.

3. What role does work have in the school? Does the school alienate students from physical work? * Does the work in the local community – such as agriculture or masonry or carpentry have a place in the school? What does this mean from a theoretical point of view? From the communities point of view?

All the individuals affiliated with the school in any way are responsible for maintain the physical environment. Maintain hygienic condition, cleaning the entire building, mending the garden, arranging library books, kitchen and cow shade area washing, Helping cook with cutting vegetables and making chapaties, cleaning dishes etc. are done by various groups of students regularly. These groups rotate their area of responsibility every week. In turn for getting reasonably low charge medical help, students also land their hands in once a year cleaning of the whole of campus.

All the students belong to an agrarian society. During their training for organic farming they all work in the farm and keep a log of their vegetables. In turn they get to eat farm fresh chemical free vegetables and fruits.

Each year the school reopens after the first heavy rain enough to start sowing seeds hence students can participate in family farming.

We emphasize the importance of physical work and the staff members work with the students to provide encouragement.

4. What is the importance given to sports and physical activities? What are the provisions for sports and physical activities? *

Students have formed a cricket team. They also play badminton and volleyball regularly every evening. We have many indoor games too. As we mentioned earlier students do participate in various other physical activities around the school. We hold annual sports day every year.

5. How can we break down the conventional divide between so-called scholastic and non-scholastic learning. For example can craft be integrated into the teaching of geometry or physics? Can the skills of masonry or carpentry be correlated with learning math or science concepts?

In our views both types of learning cannot be differentiated as they are complimentary activities to each other. As language is one of the biggest obstacles for tribal students, only scholastic teaching-learning will not suffice. Therefore we have combined both.

As we mentioned earlier, art and craft are being used for teaching not only maths and science but almost all the subjects.

While students make any article during their vocational training, they apply their knowledge of geometry and maths as they create motif and repeat it, they make various shapes and angels with those motifs, they have apply their knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiply and divide when they go to the market place to sell some of the items made during vocational training.

Supporting independent learning

1. Do children have easy access to libraries and other resources?

Yes we have a very good library where we keep adding more books. We subscribe many magazines for various subjects. The school is also equipped with activity room, Vocational training hall and Computer and Science lab as well as sports area.

2. Does the library include books related to social concerns?

Yes. Many

3. How can the school positively acknowledge and support different paces of learning for example by providing additional and challenging work for some children to work on independently when they have finished particular tasks?

Each year we create a special batch of the students that are either slow learner or have learning disability. We allow them to learn at a slower pace, do more hands on activities and more homework. They have to spend one extra year at school.

Mainly, as we mentioned above, such students benefit from vocational training as it involves practical aspects of otherwise theoretical curriculum.

4. How is the child supported to become an independent reader and writer?

We hold reading seminars for two days, four times a year. Twice a week, they have library hours. These have proven very addictive for the students. Once they get hooked on books, they demand more books, without any prompts. Writing is the skill we are still working on without much success. Although students do participate in essay writing and elocution competition, their writing lacks originality and creativity.

5. How is the child encouraged to access information for example in the regular usage of dictionaries, reference books, maps, newspapers etc.?

Use of dictionaries is taught and assignments are given for during language classes.

The library leaves encyclopaedia out on reading tables and students are free to use it.

Similarly, we teach map making, map and Atlas reading and various usages of maps during workshop and geography class and students are asked to read maps during quiz.

Positive communication

1. Are there spaces for children to share with each other their learning, interests and experiences?

School assemblies, classrooms, seminars, discussions, group activities, celebrations events and even break times provide plenty of space.

2. Is time given for reflection and open-ended questions?

Either when some special situation arises or we may create a situation, we ask students what they will do in such circumstances to solve the problem. We provide them with some time to think and have discussion among them to come up with an answer.

Most of the times when they have to come to a decision about some matter, they are asked to take some time and to weigh the situation and come up with an answer.

During workshops and seminars we deliberately throw in some open-ended questions to spark the debate.

3. How is the child's home experience brought into the school domain?

The school and boarding ambiance is very welcoming and assures students to have warmer and relaxing environment than their own home! The lady rector is well educated sensitive person who is well articulated in striking a good rapport with young students.

Most importantly, they have freedom of expression and they, collectively, come up with their schedules and regulatory rules that allows them to feel at home.

Frequent visits by parents and relatives are allowed during extra school hours. Twice a year, ten days breaks are allowed to spend holidays with their families. Annual day and craft bazaar days provide students to show their talents to parents.

4. Is the child's home language (s) acknowledged and used as a resource when it is different from the standard language?

Yes, but this causes a dilemma for both students and teachers. The dialect that students speak is a mixture of 25% Gujarati and 75% Marathi languages, while the medium of instruction for the board exam is a pure Gujarati language. We do not allow students to converse in their native dialect as long as they are on the school campus. However during Anandmela, festival celebrations, annual day and parent meetings, we do allow students to converse in their home dialect.

Another problem is not having one native dialect. There are as many dialects as their sub-tribes.

During their primary school years, no emphasis was given to learning Gujarati hence even at middle school level; written Gujarati is a serious problem for tribal students in south Gujarat.

6. Is there a serious effort to understand dialects as different rather than deficient and to make the necessary bridge to use standard language?

Please see the answer above.

7. What are the issues involved when English becomes the medium of instruction?

What are the advantages of a multilingual classroom?

We may face multiple problems if English becomes the medium of instruction. To begin with, unlike urban parents, tribal parents are illiterate or have attended school up to primary level hence there is no exposure to any language other than their native dialect. Secondly, tribal parents are still not aggressive enough to raise required seriousness for education in the mind of their children, at least in this part of the tribal belt; hence students shy away from giving much needed importance to education. One of the many reasons for this problem is a lack of a good grip over Gujarati, let alone English, that makes it even harder for them to understand fundamental concepts. Unfortunately, this scenario may continuous for next five to ten years until the next generation of the existing students start attending schools.

At Kedi, from the initial stage, we made sure to provide an exposure of other foreign languages, with special emphasis on English, to all the students, as it is fast becoming a second widely used language for businesses both locally and globally. We have designed a very good teaching method using five skills to learn any new language easily, and student's responds well to it.

Every year we do have volunteers and guests coming from many different countries like Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, France, USA and UK. They stay at the school for two to four months where they directly interact with students, compelling students to respond in English and in turn learn that language.

If English is the medium of instruction, the teaching learning process becomes difficult. Concepts cannot be learnt well. Already there is the unfamiliarity of language and added to that, learning new concepts in the foreign language is not suitable for the children from rural back grounds. Neither they can relate nor their parents and communication becomes difficult.

Multilingual classrooms make the children learn language easier. It will help them to connect to the world, especially in this new unified world.

The curriculum

1. Does the school as a body take a critical view of the prescribed curriculum and voice its concerns about the inappropriate or excessive demands on children when necessary and possible?

Yes, we take a critical view of the prescribed curriculum. The teachers discuss prescribed curriculum in depth and either break it down to create a cohesive flow of the topic that can be completed within one school term for the ease of learning or use only the relevant portions especially when they find the matter less important or very difficult to learn and in turn may create apprehension to the students. For Students of std. X, that takes Board exams, the schools follow the syllabus as it is.

2. Can the school take a critical stance towards the textbook in detecting bias, prejudice and stereotyping?

Yes, the school takes a stand. All the teachers are Tribal and have experienced the curriculum written with prejudice and stereotypical thinking of nontribal class and financially more affluent class, during their academic years. Now that they are the teachers, they do point out incidences that show prejudice and are not relevant or unjust to the underprivileged class of the society. The teachers discuss such topics with students and make students aware of its consequences for the coming future. During workshops we discuss all such issues with students to provide them more information and start their thinking process.

3. How can the content of the text book be made more meaningful for the Children? How can it be supplemented? Can those ideas be shared with other teachers?

It can be made meaning through bringing in new, creative and innovative methods in the teaching learning process, using library, internet, arts and crafts, experiments, outdoor projects, visits and group activities. These ideas are discussed among teachers to get better inputs.

Evaluation

1. How is the purpose of evaluation understood

The purpose of evaluation is to find the level of understanding and retaining the information imparted during teaching/learning sessions among students. An entrance exam is taken by the school to know the academic standard of the new students entering in std. VIII (in most of the rural tribal student's case it is very poor). At the end of their second year this score helps us to evaluate the progress of all the students. For the very first term of Standard VIII, we evaluate students by observing their behaviour and responses during various class room sessions and workshops, extracurricular projects and trips to judge their learning and analytical speed. This helps us decide which class level a student should be encouraged to join. Students are given unit test, Oral tests and longer written exams starting from standard IX as they have to get in habit of writing for final board exam in standard X.

2. Do assessments test only memory retention and reproduction or do they test for cognitive understanding and application of concepts? *
(This could maybe expanded to include the complexities of understanding and application and not be too reductionist by posing it as an either/or question.)

Our teaching methods are very innovative and students learn new concepts by hands-on and experiential methodology hence they can retain whatever they learn with ease and for lifetime. Occasional and surprise tests are designed in such a way that students cannot fall into any one predictable way of writing an answer. The oral exams have more weight as it gives teachers an opportunity to assess student's level of confidence and whether they have understood the concepts clearly and in turn can explain it or not.

3. How could the school provide learners and parents with feedback on what is happening vis a vis learning? *

Parents meetings are conducted once during each term. Parents are regularly briefed regarding their daughter's progress on various levels and in different subjects and inform them about their daughter's achievements. During meetings we invite questions and provoke parents to ask questions to management and teachers. Their concerns are later on discussed among teachers and management and whenever relevant, incorporated. However, as mentioned earlier, most of the parents are not much literate; hence they cannot make serious suggestion regarding curriculum and academics activities.

It is our observation that in last five years, awareness to educate a girl child has increased many folds among parents. There was a time when we had to go door to door to convince parents, to send their girl child to school for higher education. Now parents are asking us to encourage their daughters to pursue even college graduation and post graduation.

4. Could there be other way of assessment than individual written uniform tests for example an explanation, project work, group presentation etc? ?

Please see answers 1 and 2

5. How could assessment become a positive tool for teacher and child?

For teachers it is an opportunity to see if their methodology was effective or it requires any modification. For student, this provides an opportunity to see whether they have understood the concepts clearly or not.

6. What is the understanding of failure and success?

When all of us, teachers and students tried to work on new languages, namely Gujarati and English and met with only lack lustre success, we thought we have failed and it will be very difficult for students to imbibe the fundamentals of language and in turn other subjects too!! But the same problem turned out to be a catalyst for inventing new and different ways of teaching that turned out to be very effective.

This and few such experiences have made us think a fresh regarding what we call success and failure.

Yes, we admit that at times we have gone wrong and hit the dead end but most of the times we have succeeded in turning such opportunities in to innovation.

We never see any failure on student's part. There may be some slow learners but not a failure. This proves that unlike other regular schools, if we work with perseverance and pay individual attention coupled with effective teaching methods, we can meet with fewer disappointments.

7. What kind of healthy perspective could be nurtured of external assessment systems when there is a conflict with another way of evaluation promoted by the school?

If someone comes out with such an effective method, it will be most beneficial to both staff as well as students. The assessments done by external system are most welcome.

Relationships

School and families

1. In what ways are parents and family members included in the school?

Kedi is a residential school, hence parents come frequently to meet their daughters. We interact at every visit and come to know them more closely. The parents also participate in meetings, trips, annual day, exhibitions, anandmela etc. Parents of students do encourage their relative's daughters and other girl students to attend school at Kedi.

2. What provision is made for individual parents to meet teachers and voice concerns?

Please see answer above.

3. Are parents consulted when school policies are changed? How are they informed?

Yes, school consults parents when ever any changes are introduced and after some discussion, occasionally, we ask parents to sign a written rule.

4. What are the kinds of problems that arise because of differences in expectations

Of parents and the school's vision? How are these differences addressed?

How do parents perceive the cultural and social ethos of the school when it is different from a mainstream cultural context?

- *Ram's note here is particularly relevant and captures some of the ambiguity

and complexity of the challenge.

Balancing the parental aspirations and the aims and objectives of the school is one of the most difficult tasks in running an effective school. The school cannot alienate the parents; it needs their active participation in making the school successful. But the school cannot simply capitulate to all parental demands. The vexing situation in India now is the issue of medium of instruction in the primary school. Viewing English as the means for social and economic mobility all parents want to send their children to English medium schools, but educational theory strongly points to the effectiveness and appropriateness of mother-tongue as the medium of instruction in primary school. How does the school balance these opposing demands?

The only such difference we came across is the age limitation imposed by education board for external students. Sometimes, because few parents do not know the correct birthdates of their children, it is entered wrong on school leaving certificate and as a result, student may not meet the required age of 15 years at the time of the board exam. Parents find it difficult to comprehend and get disappointed to learn that their child will have to wait one more year to clear 10th grade.

We have started informing all the parents ahead of time to correct this problem.

School and the community

1. Does the school serve or contribute to the community in any way?

Maths, Science and English teachers of Kedi are also teaching, Voluntarily, at one other school, located in a remote hilly area of Dharampur, where the school could not find qualified teachers.

The students do go to various villages to learn about the issues and problems their community is facing and what can be done to resolve such issues for future to come.

Students also participate in Tribal communities meetings and seminars where they get an opportunity to hear various leaders and concerned people of their communities from many different states and in turn students serve in the Kitchen and help clean the campus. This year, on an invitation, students took active part in Tribal Students Science Congress, held at Vishakhapattanam.

Students are active volunteers during “Kishori Mela” each year, arranged by arch, an NGO working on the same campus.

The multipurpose hall designed to hold Vocational trainings, are now used by few other NGOs for the same purpose.

The first term of the school year is always occupied with various vocational trainings for few ladies from surrounding area.

Are pupils encouraged to contribute to the welfare of the local community for example

by care of the elderly?

We can share couple of anecdotes regarding this question.

There is a young student, Vanita, now in grade XI, who took a cause to her heart to counsel a young lady, whose boyfriend had dumped her upon hearing that she is pregnant. Vanita is feeling socially responsible and shares her knowledge with young adolescent girls of her village, Singarmal, who are less self confident and become a victim of social injustice. She VOLUNTEERILY continued to talk to other young girls of her community about many new things that she had learned in school, and have succeeded in bringing awareness about hygiene, literacy, income generation, Childhood marriage, self reliance etc. When we heard the story, we praised her concern for the community and encouraged her to continue her kind work.

In an interview by Times of India Journalist, Divya, Rashma and Sita told their stories of how they try to raise awareness for education in their villages by informing other young students about the importance of education and its future benefits.

There are many bright students who tutor younger students during their long vacation periods. A journalist from Zee news was in tears after interviewing Deepika. “In our village, Khanda, we do not have coaching classes and all of them cannot afford it. When I go back home during each vacation, I provide free coaching to all the students of my surrounding falia (area).” informed Deepika. To which Nilesh reacted, “I must congratulate all of you. Your message has reached across the students. Your student’s answer reflects a desire to carry on social responsibility to spread awareness for quality education.”

And they all help out their parents in farming. Each student was given five fruit trees that they have planted around their houses.

3. How is the community and local environment used as a resource for the school?

Children learn from their immediate local environment by visiting agricultural fields, ponds, tanks, gardens, forest and also use the available material in crafts and arts. Local people help the school in events as resource persons and judges.

Within the school

Between children

1. In what ways are older children responsible for younger children, newcomers or guests?

Older girls immediately provides warmth and support to new students, and more so

if they are from the same village. They do share their resources with each other and take care of younger and newer students during their ill-health, take them to a clinic next door, make sure that the sick student take medicine on time and inform the rector if sickness last for longer period of time. Older students do share their notes and books with younger ones.

The guest committee take care of the needs of guests, resource persons and volunteers.

2. Are there occasions for exchanges and sharing between classes of different ages?

Yes. During workshops, Sports day, Annual day, Anandmela and School trips they do share many tangible and non-tangible things and emotions. Also please see the answer of Q.1 above.

3. In what ways are group activities fostered in non-competitive ways?

Leaders of groups are changed and others given opportunity. Any corrections to be made are suggested to the groups in a non competitive way.

Between teachers

1. Do teachers of different subjects and classes interact in constructive ways to enrich the curriculum?

Yes, teachers, not having class sit in the library where they either get ready for next class or discuss new project among themselves. Maths and science teachers have divided the curriculum between them and help each other out when conducting experiments and workshops. Similarly All the language teachers continuously discuss the strengths and weaknesses of students and search new ways to improve their methodology. The teachers for Social studies hold map reading workshop and student body election to explain the governance when all the teachers help out to make the event a success.

2. Are teachers encouraged to reflect on their classroom practice and how it affects children positively and negatively?

*A number of Ram's questions are pertinent here but could possibly be re-phrased to invite a discussion.

Yes, very much so. Kedi students are lucky in a way because their teachers continuously discuss their own classroom activities and ask for the feedback and help from each other.

3. What is the workload of the teachers? Do they have preparatory time and correction time during the school hours? Are they expected to work beyond school hours?

Teacher's workload is moderately heavy. Unit tests, surprise tests, Workshops,

cultural and sports activities, Seminars, exhibitions etc. keep them very busy.

So far except for four to five days a year for extracurricular activities, teachers need not work extra hours or longer hours.

We have divided time for academic activities and vocational activities and have separate teachers for both.

4. Are the teachers able to manage the expectations of the school management, parents and the students?

Yes. Most of the teachers are successful at not only meeting management's expectations but some are more creative and capable to even share responsibilities of administration of daily activities. The management of Kedi is fortunate to find such teachers with volunteer spirit and enthusiasm.

Many parents utter words like, "We are lucky that we need not worry about our daughter's future, as long as they are studying at Kedi" is an evidence of parents comfort level for their daughter's education.

"I don't think I would like to study in a Government or any other high school now, which I will have to enrol in to, to continue my study for 11th and 12th grade. I would consider that a step back because I've seen here how the crew of teachers works and what kind of relationship they can have with the students. I get a chance to acquire various vocational skills that no other institution offers." says Kalpana, who is a student at Kedi for last four years.

These excerpts of some of the students provide the glimpse of the ability of teachers.

5. Has the school provided adequate number of teachers to deliver quality education? Is the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) low enough for teachers to provide individual attention to students in a child-centric learning environment?

The PTR is sufficiently low. Paying individual attention is the core objective of the school's management and staff for students well rounded growth.

6. Are the teachers being provided opportunities for professional mobility and growth?

At Kedi, we hold in-house teacher training every year. Teachers are promoted and given salary raise according to their overall performance during the year. At present there are two teachers appearing for the undergraduate degree in Education (B.Ed) and vocational training. Teachers are offered paid leaves for attending seminars and workshop for enhancing their academic qualifications.

The management has promoted one teacher to manage daily operational flow and one teacher as an additional rector. Teachers are praised and rewarded for their achievements during parents, student and staff meetings.

7. How is the professional contribution of teachers valued by the system? What are the mechanisms for recognizing and appreciating teacher contributions?

By evaluation of student's academic as well as non-academic progress, workshops in their subjects, educational material prepared with the help of students and teacher's participation in various activities and trips are the modes we use to value teacher's contributions.

Also please see the answers #6 and 7

8. What is the self-perception of the teachers? Do they look at themselves as professionals who are capable of functioning autonomously or do they perceive that they are mere functionaries who are implementing the plans of the 'management' or the school system?

There is no hierarchy at Kedi school. All the teachers enjoy equal status. This idea has helped form an accord amongst staff members. Management members are also teaching faculty and come to school regularly 3 or 4 days a week. Management acts as a guide whenever there is any need for it.

The teachers have volunteer spirit and assume responsibilities willingly. The members of management team were absent for six months period, twice in five years, while teachers managed school very efficiently, and autonomously without any problems.

9. What are the provisions for increasing the autonomy of the teachers? How much of their work is prescribed and what is the flexibility available to them to perform their professional duties?

The faculty members are allowed high degree of flexibility and are already empowered with autonomy.

10. In what decisions of the school are teachers involved? Are they involved in academic decisions, management decisions, financial decisions, and enrolment decisions?

Teachers are involved at all the levels and they have developed their own methods for decision making and financial accountability

11. What are the accountability structures for the teachers? Are they held accountable to not just the school management and school system but also to the students and parents? Is the structure transparent and non-arbitrary? *

The teachers are always present at the parents teachers, students meetings and are answerable to all. The structure is completely transparent and very objective.

12. What are the terms and conditions for employment, payment and security and termination of services?

The primary condition is their passion for teaching and improving teaching methods and jargon of curriculum to make it more palatable for students. Having volunteer spirit, love and deep concern for students and flexibility are some of the important traits we expect to have in a candidates.

Although we do not pay a high scale salary that government teachers get, but we compensate them moderately and much better than other private school in the area. We give decent salary raise according to their performance, each year. Teachers enjoy substantially discounted payments for educational trips.

The management reserves a right to terminate services of any staff member if he/she is found irresponsible or are drifting away from the main goal and objectives of the school. In such cases they are given one months notice. Any staff member may leave by giving two months notice to the management.

Between teachers and children

A point for discussion:

What we are teaches the child far more than what we say, so we must be what we want our children to become. Joseph Chiltern Pearce

1. How do teachers listen and talk to children? What kind of questions are asked and by whom?

“I don’t think I would like to study in a Government or any other high school now, which I will have to enrol into, to continue my study for 11th and 12th grade. I would consider that a step back because I’ve seen here how the crew of teachers works and what kind of relationship they can have with the students. I get a chance to acquire various vocational skills that no other institution offers.” says Kalpana, who is a student at Kedi for last four years.

“Teachers are different here. They’re extremely patient, pay attention to you and your problems, and give you as much time as you need if they see some potential in you,” says 20-year-old Shaku, one of the student. Parvati the 16-year-old says, “Once the math teacher explained the same thing six times to someone in the group. The whole class was tired of it, but the teacher was patient even the sixth time! At a normal school that student would have been told to go and take private classes in the afternoon and labelled as stupid.”

Mangal, the past Kedi student, now a XI grade student says “Kedi teaches you that you have a place in this world. It doesn’t tell you where that place is, but helps you find it. It provides you guidance to chart your own path.” She aspires to make her place.

Such remarks by students show the kind of rapport teachers have created with

students and the quality of staff. Questions are asked by both the sides equally.

2. How can teachers more effectively scaffold learning to meet the child's present understanding and recognize the next step ahead?

One of the major issues is of students with learning disability. The teachers of Primary schools in the rural area are neither sensitized nor equipped to teach such children. Students are promoted, year after year, to maintain the required number of students on the school register to qualify for grant, without any concern for their academic abilities and progress.

Kedi school welcomes and gives priority to students who have failed in any standard, Academically have scored very low, or have learning disability to stop them from dropping out.

At Kedi, our education is about addressing issues of hands on learning versus textual learning, experiential learning versus rote learning, and learning for life versus learning for the moment. We are trying to develop a scientific perspective.

The staff members constantly assess student's progress as well as allow freedom and comfortable ambiance for learning at her own pace. Periodic evaluations help decide the next stage ahead for each students, individually, at initial stages in standards 7th and 8th.

Once they are in 9th grade they have to become more independent student and pickup their pace at a faster speed as they have to start preparing for 10th grade board exam.

Areas of conflict

1. How are children encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their actions?

The school has only girl students hence the good and bad incidences are of a different type than that of a co-ed. or urban schools. All the good and bad incidences are openly discussed during assembly as well as PTS meetings.

All the students come from rural tribal families and they are the first generation attending school or acquiring any type of academic training. Therefore the staff or management try, verbally, to explain the consequences of any mischief or wrong doing done by students and try to reason with them. If the problem still persists, we involve parents and ask them to come up with the needful disciplinary action.

It is schools policy to ask parents to sign a written rules paper upon enrolment on the very first day. In the first meeting we discuss and explain school policies to all the parents and students and ask them to sign it. The rules are as follows:

- **When coming to school and going back home during and after vacation, students travel by themselves by bus and taxi. The school staff and management are not responsible in any way if any undesirable incidence occur, once they are outside of school campus. [Like: One 10th grade students fell in love with a person**

10 years older to her and he asked her out, escorted her to and from school and used to call her on school phone twice a day, for long chat. We informed parents as soon as the matter came to our attention. Eventually the student got married right after the board exams and is now heavily regretting for her irrational behaviour.]

- **If any student intentionally damages any school property, they are responsible to compensate for or replace the damaged articles or parts. If the school do not impose such rule, students tend to take things for granted. They cannot comprehend the denotation of two distinctly different words 'freedom' and 'uncontrolled self rule' and sometimes behave irresponsibly to the extent of damaging the school property that is for everybody to use. We do discuss such incidence with parents and ask students to reflect on their behaviour and work on improving it. So far we have met with success.]**

2. What happens when rules are broken?

What is considered appropriate punishment? Who decides?

The school staff and management as well as parents take such matters very seriously as we need to guide young children to learn to reflect on their mistakes, at this early point in their life. Making students aware of their behaviour that is hurtful and damaging to fellow students or school is an important part of academics. The teacher play very important role in moulding children's thinking and psychological discipline for their healthy future. Therefore we invite parents and arrange a private meeting where teachers, student, parents and management sit together and come up with a solution that is agreeable to everyone and beneficial to the student. There are no unreasonable punishments.

Management

1. In what way does the management support teachers' initiatives, autonomy and creativity?

The teachers are given warmth and support for implementing new ideas, taking up more responsibilities and showing initiative, being creative and innovative with teaching methods and sometimes even handling failures.

The faculty members are allowed high degree of flexibility and are already empowered with autonomy.

2. In what ways and to whom do teachers feel accountable to?

The teachers are accountable to management, students and fellow teachers for the daily duties and curricular/extra-curricular activities.

As mentioned above, teachers are accountable for students progress, fulfilling the

requirement of curriculum, additional activities for holistic growth of students and the institute, financial expenses etc.

3. Is the school well networked in terms of academic support? *

Yes, fortunately, there are few such institutions that depend on each other's support and share their resources. The school is also connected with few online groups that inform each other about teacher's training, workshops exhibitions, books, reviews, educational videos and annual meetings to exchange ideas and experiences.

4. Is the school well-networked in terms of financial support?*

Yes, but we constantly have to appeal donors and well wishers, locally. We do get by.

Outreach

1. How does the school endeavour to share its resources, expertise and strengths?

Before starting the Kedi school, trustees used to go to remote rural schools, where students never used to have any visitors, to teach maths, science, English language and art. We have continued the same pattern.

For last 10 years, trustees are invited as trainers and resource persons at various schools and NGOs. We do share our experiences and experiments with other like-minded schools.

There is a school in the hills, about 22 kilometres away from Dharampur, where they do not have maths and science teachers, this year. Kedi teachers travel every Friday to that school to teach both the subjects so that students can appear for the Board exam.

There are groups of students opting for home schooling and the school helps them not only by providing resource persons but allows them to use the science laboratory to do all the science experiments.

2. Do children share their experiences and learning beyond the school setting for example in a science mela or a marathon run or workshops that include other children?

Yes. Each year we hold science as well as social science workshops and exhibitions in collaboration with other schools, home-schooling students and health workers

3. How could helpful reading material in different languages be made more available? Who could help in the task of translation so that more books could be accessible to more teachers?

We do have books in Hindi and English languages. The trustees know few more languages but due to time constraints may not be able to work on translation.

There are many helpful books already translated in Gujarati or Hindi and

available in India.

Active engagement in raising levels of awareness

1. How can the school further develop a critical view for social transformation in terms of :

- a. Gender
- b. Caste
- c. Communalism
- d. Nationalism*
- e. Consumerism and the impact of the media.

(It should be noted here that levels of consumerism have been seriously suggested as a criterion to measure success of education by the World Bank report in their publication Primary Education in India.)

- f. Health and well-being

Many of these issues are integrated into the school's curriculum and activities are based on these issues.

We know that the girl students of Kedi school are future mothers and that they will be the catalyst for transformation for their community.

We primarily emphasis the gender inequality issue. Providing opportunities to the girl students and empowering them with thinking power are main reasons, the school was established.

Though our students are not aware of cast system hence have no communal mentality, We do have 20% Christian students in the school but so far they are not considered any way different as they also celebrate all the festivals as one community.

Health and well being is another major issue that we are addressing and we have not only incorporated it in our curriculum, but we also collaborate with other NGOs working in healthcare field. We educate and inspire students to raise awareness in their community against unhygienic conditions of water, food and living conditions. We also inculcate knowledge about using scientific ways to remain healthy and not

to fall prey to taboos like black magic and witch-doctors.

Though on a small scale, Consumerism and the impact of the media are difficult issues that we are encountering. Tribal community of Dharampur and the Dangs are not just confined to their native forest areas. They are now spending seven to eight months in urban area for earning livelihood. They have already become victim of consumerism. It has penetrated into their families and the students are no exception. At Kedi, we always try to make them aware of the misguiding advertisements of fairness creams, expensive soaps and toothpastes, make up, cloths etc. and give them the right information. Most of the students are from very poor families and cannot afford to spend money on luxury items. But they do aspire to own what they see on television and shops.

2. How are children prepared for functioning within a democracy? (Eklavya 's discussion and publications on the teaching of Civics is particularly helpful here.)

The focus of Kedi Residential School is on bringing about a transformation in the quality of learning in the classroom and thereby in the school and community so that the change is sustainable and it will benefit all members – the children, the teachers and the immediate society.

The most satisfying impact of interactive methods of learning has manifested in their strong and secure emotional growth, capacity of choosing and pursuing goals in life with vigour, creativity and responsibilities, Desire to be something and be an independent person

Students are showing leadership in facing issues and solving problems on many levels. Exposure to different culture, interaction with volunteers from various countries, Educational trips, Students forums and workshops by resource persons from many different fields have created an enormous desire in students to know and learn more.

Sita Chaudhari was an average student, academically, but she quickly started absorbing lessons taught in the Social Study subject for civil rights and democracy, that stimulated her to take leadership initiatives both in her village's public welfare as well as her personal life struggle against early child marriage. Gita's story is even more inspiring a reason to start, run and expand an institution like Kedi. She aspires to become a non-corrupt police-woman and serve the community she is a part of.

3. Is there any reflection on the rights and duties of citizenship?

(Note the book; Steps in the Rights Direction would be a good resource to share with teachers.)

At Kedi, we know that our students will have power to mould their future generation when they become a mother. We want to arm them with the awareness about their rights and duties towards their family, community and country so that we can contribute in offering few good citizens.

The teachers and management has created a very open and democratic environment in school. There are no hierarchy in school staff. We not only treat all students equally, but also encourage them to argue their case to inform their views to us. They are also made aware of their rights as a citizen and that any government body is designed to work for their citizens.

We teach them to write an application or complaints to any civic body. We actively try to inculcate the value that rights and duties go together to make them aware of their share of duties towards their country.

In conclusion each and every school has strengths and weaknesses. Sometime the particular context that a school is in acts as a constraint in realizing something more ideal for example the choice of having a more diverse student body for a variety of reasons may not be possible. Sometimes a school may not have access to people with particular skills or resources, which limit possibilities.

--

Tel Land line: +1.201.484.0095

Cell Tushar: +1.917.403.7713
