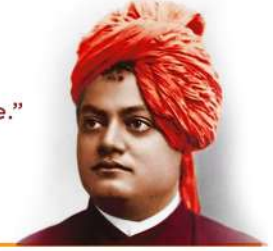




"The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive — for money, name, or fame; his work must be simply out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large."

Swami Vivekananda



A TEACHERS' SPECIAL EDITION, written by teachers for the VIVA newsletter

Challenges and Satisfaction as a Teacher by Chitra Bhardwaj, PM Shri KV Pushp Vihar (2nd Shift) Delhi

Swami Vivekananda declared that the goal of education is to enable individuals to realize their inherent potential and manifest it in their lives. Teachers work towards this goal every day. Managing diverse learning styles and abilities using personalized approaches, keeping students engaged and motivated, meeting curriculum requirements and deadlines; all require a great amount of effort. Staying updated with curriculum changes and technological advancements along with balancing teaching and administrative tasks sometimes becomes cumbersome.

But this doesn't deter teachers from their path. They derive immense satisfaction from their profession, particularly seeing students learn and grow. Witnessing "aha" moments and breakthroughs is incredibly rewarding, as is making a positive impact on students' lives. Receiving appreciation and gratitude from students and parents reinforces their dedication. Continuously learning and improving teaching skills keeps them engaged and motivated. Ultimately, feeling a sense of fulfilment and purpose is the greatest reward, knowing we're shaping minds and inspiring future generations.

The challenges and the satisfaction I got as a teacher serving in Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan by Mrs. Shanthi Ravishankar (retd. English teacher), KV Ashok Nagar Chennai

Teaching at Kendriya Vidyalaya has been a journey filled with both challenges and immense satisfaction. The diverse student body, with children coming from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, posed a unique challenge. Catering to their varied learning needs required constant adaptation and innovation in teaching methods. Managing large class sizes while ensuring individual attention to each student was another significant hurdle. However, these challenges also brought a deep sense of fulfilment.

Witnessing students grasp difficult concepts, grow in confidence, and excel in their academics was incredibly rewarding. The bond formed with students and the respect and trust they placed in me added to the satisfaction. The collaborative environment among teachers at Kendriya Vidyalaya further enriched my experience, offering opportunities for professional growth and exchange of ideas. Despite the challenges, the impact I could make on my students' lives, in helping them shape their future, made every effort worthwhile. Programs like Adolescent Education Program (AEP) and Awakened Citizen Program (ACP) have significantly impacted students, especially in our digital era. Serving as a master trainer in these initiatives has not only enhanced my teaching abilities but also deepened my passion for education, resulting in a strong sense of accomplishment.

Previous issues of VIVA newsletters (in both English and Hindi) can be accessed at <https://viva.rkmm.org/>



VOL No. 3. Issue No. 9 VIVA NEWSLETTER (ENGLISH MONTHLY)

Vivekananda Institute of Values (VIVA)

Practical Spirituality for All

My journey in the field of Education by Bornali Ghosh from Gurugram

Since I was in standard 1, I wanted to be a teacher and since standard 4, a Geography teacher. I took up part time teaching in 1986, when I was pursuing my masters in Geography. Since then, I understood that teaching to impart knowledge was important but to help my students to develop self-respect was even more important. Incidentally students whom I taught were mostly Indian or from south-east Asia. The mindset being similar – to them education and human values were equally important. To us, education is a ‘Preparation for Life’. As a volunteer I then went to Rwanda in east Africa as a School Leadership Advisor where I had to train Head Teachers in education and administration as well as contribute in the country’s New Education Policy. My interest in Values Education urged me to ask probing questions. For them, education meant financial development and prosperity. Though educationists were talking about depleting human values they accepted it as the inevitable result of modernization. For them, modernization was essential and they argued that when the needs of the people were fulfilled, they would go back to their roots in terms of values. I believe though, that both character and financial independence are essential outcomes of education.

The Inner Venture by Tanaya Maitra, Facilitator from Apeejay School Nerul, Navi Mumbai

Life is a seed of possibilities by the virtue of which it draws all forms of energy through which it can nourish and flourish itself to achieve its ultimate destination- “the journey towards completion”. In this journey of self-exploration every human heart weaves a story of its own- “the tale of experiences”, which is the ultimate teacher of a living being.

The experiential learning which I received from my teacher motivated me to walk on the same lines and rejoin those who can accompany me in my journey of self-discovery, better known as my “students”. Their curious minds and innovative ways of approaching problems deepens my desire and passion towards my profession and continuous learning endeavour. I get satisfied by being a student among my students and this is a divine blessing.

I visualise a shining opportunity in every adversity. To keep myself in sync with the ever-changing domain of modern technology yet be connected to others has been my aim. My source of might is the Almighty through the connecting node called “meditation”.

The Journey of a Teacher: Challenges and Satisfaction faced by Radhika Bhardwaj, Amrita Vidyalayam, Pushp Vihar, New Delhi

Being a teacher is a journey filled with both challenges and immense satisfaction. The challenges range from understanding the unique needs of each student to balance the curriculum with creative teaching methods. The responsibility of shaping young minds and fostering a positive learning environment is a task that requires patience, adaptability, and constant self-improvement.

However, the satisfaction that comes from seeing a student grasp a difficult concept or watching their confidence grow, makes all the challenges worthwhile. Every smile, every "Aha!" moment, and every small success story is a reminder of the impact we have as educators. The bond we form with our students and the knowledge that we are contributing to their future is the ultimate reward.

However difficult, we try and educate each student according to their learning capacity. We also ensure that we offer a ‘honey pot’ of values, for them to come like bees and sip regularly.



Vivekananda Institute of Values (VIVA)

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Challenges and Rewards of Teaching: A Personal Reflection by Geetanjali Malhotra, Mt Abu Public School, Rohini, Delhi

Teaching is a journey filled with both challenges and profound satisfaction. One of the most significant challenges I've faced is keeping young minds engaged and curious, especially in a world brimming with distractions. Creating lessons that are both educational and captivating requires constant innovation and a deep understanding of each student's unique needs.

Another challenge is managing diverse learning abilities within the same classroom. Ensuring that each student grasps fundamental concepts while also nurturing the advanced learners is a delicate balancing act. Additionally, the administrative tasks and the pressure of meeting curriculum standards can sometimes feel overwhelming.

Despite these challenges, the satisfaction I derive from teaching is unparalleled. Witnessing the spark of understanding in a student's eyes or their excitement during a hands-on experiment makes all the effort worthwhile. A noteworthy addition to our curriculum has been the Awakening program by the Ramakrishna Mission. This program has significantly helped in focusing on building moral values and life skills among students. It has provided a structured approach to character development, emphasizing empathy, integrity, and resilience. For example, I've observed students as young as five displaying remarkable acts of kindness, such as helping a classmate with their work or sharing their snacks with others. Older students have shown increased responsibility by organizing classroom activities and taking care of the school environment.

Observing these values practiced at such a tender age is incredibly heartening. Seeing students grow not just academically but also as conscientious individuals is a source of immense satisfaction. The most profound satisfaction comes from knowing that I'm playing a small part in shaping future minds and inspiring a love for learning. Every small achievement and every moment of connection with my students reaffirms my passion for teaching, making all the challenges seem like stepping stones to greater rewards.

ASK SWAMI SHANTATMANANDA

A reader writes:

What is the difference between a Guru and a teacher?

Swami Shantatmananda replies:

'Guru' is a typical Hindu concept; a Sanskrit word. 'Gu' means darkness, and 'Ru' means to remove. So, Guru is a person who removes the darkness of 'agyana' /ignorance from our lives. Guru has been given an extraordinary place in our scriptures. A guru is a person who helps you progress in the right direction in your spiritual endeavour – a spiritual guide, a spiritual mentor who helps you cross the ocean of 'samsara'. In English, it gets translated to the word 'teacher' for want of a better word. A teacher, could be for any subject whether music, language, sciences, arts. But the concepts are poles apart. The earthly teachers can be changed. If you find one not good enough you can choose another. But a guru is a choice for life. The choice is quite often not made by the individual but it depends upon circumstances, his/her spiritual need or spiritual position in life – because a guru is supposed to show the path for spiritual redemption of the individual. So, a teacher and guru are vastly different concepts.



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Practical Spirituality for All

MOVEMENT – VIVA Events and Updates

Special experience at JNV Schools by Uma Kaikini, teacher at Neev and volunteer at VIVA

On this Independence Day I would like to pen a few lines on what is most dear to me, my country, education and values. I saw this wonderful blend blossoming all at one place when I had the good fortune of going to three Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) in Kanpur, Anantnag and Agartala recently to share with the teachers our value education program viz., Foundation of Citizenship Program (FCP).

There is one JNV in every district of our vast nation. The schools are primarily residential for students from the rural interiors and as such provides them with access to good education. Meritorious students are admitted after proper screening. The stay, studies, food, every extra-curricular activity and medical care is totally free. The academia takes total responsibility of the student's overall wellbeing, safety and nurturing besides the mandatory studies, which is highly commendable. It's based on the ancient Gurukul system. Both boys and girls of class 6 to 12th study together but live in different hostels. The day begins early at around 5 am with sports followed by breakfast and classes around 8.30. With a short break of an hour after lunch they again engage in various activities, remedial classes and evening sports. They round off at 6.30 or 7 pm.

It opened a totally new vista of rich educational ethos our country is proudly carrying on for the last 20 years or more at the grassroot level. It was the dream of Shri Rajeev Gandhi that was given life to by Shri P V Narsimha Rao. The schools have a unique feature where the students get an opportunity to go to another State JNV in class 9, where they recognize true unity in our diversity, as they study their whole 9th class in the totally new and different environment than where they belong. They learn the specific State language for 3 years prior to shifting, to gel well in the process. So, students from Bihar go to Kerala, Manipur to Kanpur, Bengal to Kashmir and so on. What better way than this to actually love our vast nation's diversity. The teachers get transferred similarly, ensuring a good amalgamation of teachers from all over the country at any JNV. I salute the dedication and determination of teachers who live 24/7 along with the students in the campus free from the ills of the modern materialistic world where the youth are lost in gadgets, addictions and malls, where the primary focus on education and sports takes a hit. Here, their most crucial years are spent building team spirit, and skill sets to handle everyday situations and crisis independently away from their parents.



(Images of students in various activities. Source: navodaya.gov.in)

Our 3-year ACP program or the recent 1-year FCP program is taken up by almost all JNV's across the length and breadth of India. It feels good to learn that this segment of students is getting to live and engrain Swami Vivekananda's teachings at the right age, and can connect to it naturally, something that will help them truly be the strong foundation of our Country, the empowered citizens of tomorrow. I wish the exemplary work done for the Country's youth through our program reaches out to every citizen. Our readers from the city really need to know something beyond the State Boards, CBSE, ISCE, IB and ICGSE, which everyone fawns upon.

We should all be proud of our Country's undying selfless efforts in the field of education and the JNVs stand tall in this worthy effort.

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