



Members from 'Association for Early Childhood Education & Development', November, 7th



Participants of 'Perspectives on Learning Course', September 9 to 14

*Digantar Shiksha Evam Khelkud Samiti, established in 1978, is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation dedicated to improving education. Digantar operates two schools — a primary school in Kho Raibariyan with 55 students and 2 teachers, and another in Bhavgarh Bandhya with 132 students and 10 teachers. These schools not only provide quality education to underprivileged children but also serve as training sites for education professionals and student-teachers. They act as practical sites where innovative educational practices and theoretical perspectives are implemented and observed. TARU, a core part of Digantar, conducts training programs for teachers and educational workers, organizes short-term courses and workshops, and engages in research and material development. Through capacity-building initiatives, TARU promotes meaningful educational practices, contributing to educational theory, discourse, and teacher professional development, drawing from its extensive field experience.*

## Vidyalaya

### Children and Books : A Growing Bond

Over four months, 2,406 books were issued to 187 children across both schools, with various storytelling sessions in continuity, enhancing library engagement.



### Sports and Games



Football



Judo & Karate

The Sports Academy was activated in October 2023. The idea behind activating the sports academy in the name of Founder President of Digantar, John Singh was to allow students to get good coaching in various sports and games activities, like football and self-defense (Karate). At *Bhavgarh*, approximately 75-80 children participated in self-defense activities, regularly learning judo and karate three days a week. Additionally, they practiced playing football every day.



## Celebrating Special Days

On September 5th, the Vidyalaya celebrated Teachers' Day. Upper primary students took on the role of teachers, leading group activities in the morning. Later, during a gathering with teachers, Digantar members, and students, the children shared their teaching experiences and reflected on the day's significance. The event concluded with a screening of Gulzar's movie *Kitab* for the teachers, followed by a discussion.

On October 2, 2024, Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated in both schools. The children performed a play and sang songs and poems depicting key events from Gandhi's life.

On November 14th, 2024, Children's Day was celebrated across both schools. The children learned about the life of Nehru Ji. A variety of group activities were organized, including an open stage for singing and poetry recitations, as well as traditional games like Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, and Jalebi Lapak, fostering fun and team spirit among the students.

On 31st December, a get-together was held among all the Digantar members at the Vidyalaya to celebrate the upcoming New Year 2025.



Gandhi Jayanti celebration, 2nd October



Celebrating the upcoming New Year 2025

## Guest Visits

Between September and December, Digantar Vidyalaya hosted observation visits by B.El.Ed students from prominent Delhi colleges. From September 19th to 27th, 38 students from **Jesus & Mary College** participated in a 9-day observation. This was followed by a 3-day visit by 72 students from **Miranda House**, held from November 7th to 10th. Finally, from December 3rd to 6th, 62 students from **Lady Shri Ram College** undertook a 3-day observation.

These visits are part of an ongoing collaboration where students regularly come to Digantar Vidyalaya to gain insights into its unique approach to education. The goal is to bridge the gap



Jesus & Mary College Group



Miranda House Group



between the theoretical knowledge acquired in their B.El.Ed programs and their practical application in real-world teaching contexts. The visits begin with an orientation session, followed by immersive daily school observations. During these sessions, students engage with the Vidyalaya's teaching-learning processes, school culture, and interactions with teachers, parents, and the local community. On the final day, students present their reflections and learnings, often through skits, group presentations, and other expressive formats, making their experience both impactful and memorable.

Over the past four months, Digantar Vidyalaya hosted several groups and organisations keen to explore its ideas and approach to education. On September 27th, 17 Gandhi Fellows from the **Kaivalya (Piramal) Foundation** visited the school. In October, representatives from **Abercrombie & Kent (A&K)** visited twice - first, the coordinator on the 15th, followed by a group of guests on the 17th. November saw a 20-member delegation from **Association for Early Childhood Education & Development (AECED)** on the 7th and 25 guests from the Drishti Foundation on the 22nd. Each visit included observations of ongoing school activities, interactions with teachers and parents, and in-depth discussions with the Digantar team about its history and educational philosophy. On October 5, 2024, **Zeba**, an artist, visited the Vidyalaya for two days to conduct art activities with the children.



Guests from Drishti Foundation



Guests from Abercrombie & Kent

## Continued Professional Development

A two-day workshop on the Nature and Pedagogy of Mathematics was held for Digantar Vidyalaya teachers from September 28th to 29th, facilitated by Swati Sircar from Azim Premji University, Bangalore. The workshop included a review of Digantar's *Ganit Bodh* and Mathematics Education as outlined in NCFSE 2023.

To enhance the library's role as a meaningful space and to optimize its usage, our librarian Mr. Ganpat Sain has joined the '*Library se Dosti*' programme organised by Eklavya. This programme included a four-day workshop, online sessions, and assignments in between. We hope that such capacity-building programmes will help visualize the library's use in an effective manner.

The pedagogy packages for language and mathematics are being revised by reviewing previous versions. For the language package, teachers are evaluating two versions of the *Pothis*, comparing their approaches, and refining TLMs like *Shabd-Chitra* (word-picture cards) to address challenges with word selection. Some sections of the existing *Pothis* will be rewritten. Additionally, primary group teachers are reviewing NCERT textbooks and learning outcomes alongside Digantar's pedagogy package to identify better materials and their optimal use at different stages.



Mathematics Workshop

## Meeting with Women Parents



Meeting with Women Parents

To strengthen the connection between the community and the school, inform parents about the current situation, and encourage women's participation in school-related discussions, women's parent meetings were held at various community locations from October 15-22, 2024. The meetings covered updates on the school's status and upcoming activities, precautions to prevent seasonal illnesses like dengue fever, and the issue of children not bringing lunch to school, including discussions to understand the reasons behind this concern.

## Film Screening

On October 25, 2024, a film screening event was organised for students from pre-primary to secondary levels, divided into three groups based on their grade levels. Pre-primary and primary students watched **Antiks - Icy Ants**, primary to upper primary students enjoyed **Inside Out - Part 2**, and upper primary to secondary students viewed **Lapata Ladies**. After the screenings, teachers held discussions with each group to delve into the issues and content presented in the films.



Film Screening

## Exposure Visits

On November 26, 2024, upper primary and secondary students went on an educational tour to the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, and Fatehpur Sikri. The need for this visit emerged during discussions on relevant issues in history classes, providing students with an opportunity to connect theoretical knowledge with observation. They explored the historical monuments, deepening their understanding of history of cultural heritage, and Akbar's reign, including his administrative and cultural contributions. The tour also emphasized the importance of preserving and caring for historical sites. After the visit, students shared their experiences and reflections.

On December 18th, primary group students visited the Science Park, where they made various observations and engaged with interactive exhibits, enhancing their understanding of scientific concepts.



Children's Exposure Visit to Agra & Science Park in Jaipur

## Reading Circle

We have initiated a reading-sharing practice among all Vidyalaya teachers. Selected readings are read by everyone, followed by discussions on assigned dates. So far, three sessions have been organised. The first two focused on articles by Krishna Kumar and Karen Haydock. Currently, we are reading *Teacher (Book)* by Sylvia Plath. The introduction, preface, and first chapter have been read and discussed.



## DPT-TD Vaccination of Children



DPT-TD Vaccination

On November 23, 2024, all children aged 10 to 16 years at Digantar Vidyalaya were vaccinated as part of a state government vaccination campaign. Organised under the guidance of the Director (RCH) Office and Chief Medical and Health Officer, Jaipur II, the campaign focused on preventing diphtheria. With parental consent, a team from the Health Department administered the Pentavalent, DPT, or TD vaccines, based on the children's age group.

## Central Coordination Unit

### Publication and Store

Shiksha Vimarsh was paused due to financial issues, but it was decided to relaunch it in the upcoming financial year. To facilitate this, an action plan was shared followed by an online meeting was held, and an editorial team was formed, comprising Mr. Kuldeep Garg, Mr. Rajesh Kumar, Mr. Manish Jain, Mr. Ravikant, Mr. Pramod, Mr. Ramsingh, Mr. Khyaliram Swami, and Ms. Pragya Shrivastava.

This month, teaching-learning materials worth Rs. 47,942 were sold to individuals and institutions.

### Recruitment

Significant time was devoted to the recruitment process for the positions of Principal, Outreach Coordinator, and English Coordinator, aligning with our Vidyalaya Vision 2030. This involved disseminating job descriptions and planning interview schedules.

Through this process, Ms. Shivangi Lohumi was recruited as the English Coordinator and joined the Vidyalaya on 9th December. For the Principal position, Mr. Jagdish Sankhla was appointed; however, due to a mutual understanding of misaligned work expectations, he resigned after serving for 18 days in December. The position of Outreach Coordinator remains vacant despite multiple interviews. Considering his involvement in design-related work, Mr. Khyaliram Swami is now being considered for this role officially. Additionally, two new members have joined the team: Mr. Moolchand Gurjar for mess and gardening duties, and Mr. Balram Meena for office support and driving.

### Fund Raising and Proposal

As part of this effort, the team has been reaching out to various individuals and groups. A crowdfunding page has been created on the Give.do platform. In addition, multiple versions of donation appeals have been prepared and shared across various channels. Proposals for infrastructure needs have been segmented based on specific requirements and shared with several funding CSR organisations, including Abercrombie and Kent (A&K), Action and Solidarity for Education and Development (ACED), and Ernst & Young. The team has also visited local CSR entities in Jaipur, such as Round Table, Coloured Rock Pvt. Ltd., Dhabriya Polywood Ltd., MSME, and Rajasthan Knowledge Corporation Ltd., to seek support for this initiative.

## The Academic Resource Unit (TARU)

### Perspectives on Learning Course



Perspectives on Learning Course

A six-day residential course on "Perspectives on Learning" was organized from September 9 to 14, 2024, facilitated by Prof. Rajashree from Azim Premji University with assistance from TARU members. A total of 16 people participated in the course, including 8 from Wipro partner organizations and 8 from 6 different organizations across India. The course aimed to engage participants with child development theories that inform teaching and learning processes. It began by emphasizing the importance of understanding child development within the broader educational context. Sessions explored various perspectives on childhood, focusing on biological, cognitive, socio-emotional, and moral development across different age groups and socio-cultural settings. Key theories discussed included behaviorism, Piagetian constructivism, and Vygotskian approaches. The course also highlighted the role of emotions in learning and reviewing policy documents like NCFSE-2023 related to child development. Participants also visited Digantar Vidyalaya to connect theory with practice and observe child learning.

### NCFSE' 23: Critical Understanding for Implementation



National Curriculum Framework 2023 for School Education Workshop

A seven-day residential workshop, "**NCFSE' 23: Critical Understanding for Implementation**," was held from October 14–20, 2024, facilitated by Prof. Rohit Dhankar, Pragma Shrivastava, and Mahesh Sharma from Digantar. The course brought together 20 participants, including 14 from Wipro partner organizations and six from various other organizations across India. The workshop focussed on Part A of NCFSE'23, covering key chapters on **Aims and Curricular Areas of School Education, School Stages – Logic and Design, Approach to Learning Standards, Content, Pedagogy, and Assessment**.

Before delving into the chapters, the workshop established a foundation for critically analyzing NCFSE'23 by exploring key questions such as: **What are the underlying principles of the Aims of Education in NCFSE'23? Why were these specific Aims chosen? What kind of society do we aspire to create? What role does education play in this vision?** A comparative study of the preambles of five countries was conducted to examine the basis of



the Aims of Education within the NCFSE framework, aligning them with the envisioned societal ideals and underlying principles. The workshop also included a detailed discussion on human nature and its implications for education. Additionally, participants attempted to link learning outcomes to the Aims of Education, using examples from Hindi and Mathematics in classes 1 and 2 to illustrate these connections.

The analysis focused on the child development section, justifying the 5+3+3+4 structure, and revealed that children's abilities, particularly in language learning, are often underestimated. Participants also visited Digantar Vidyalaya to observe its practices in relation to the workshop content. The residential format allowed for in-depth reflection, and the workshop concluded with a certificate ceremony.

### Participants' Experiences from the workshop

*"Attending an NCFSE' 23 workshop is an amazing experience to understand new perspectives on education. It helps me learn how an inclusive curriculum can be designed to foster the holistic development of children. In this workshop, I gain insights into new ideas, techniques, and approaches in the field of education, which enables me to see myself as a better teacher or trainer."*

*"For me, the most amazing part was connecting the Aims of Education with learning outcomes with the help of examples in Language and Mathematics. Studying the objectives of education in such depth has been very helpful in enhancing my thinking and understanding. This workshop proved to be extremely useful in exploring how various activities in schools are linked to the objectives of education. I have studied in-depth terms like capacity, competence, values, objectives, tasks, and assessment, and have been able to relate them to the subject matter. I have also seen firsthand the importance of children's freedom of expression and child-centered education. What we think can be achieved - an excellent example of this is Digantar School."*

### Drishti Group at Digantar

The three-day annual meeting of the Drishti Foundation was held at Digantar Vidyalaya, serving as a reflective gathering with 19 participants from various organizations. The Drishti team selected Digantar as the venue for its conducive environment for learning and dialogue. During the meeting, two Digantar members provided an overview of Digantar's history, objectives, and the nature of the courses it offers. The meeting featured both formal and informal interactions with Prof. Rohit Dhankar, focusing on discussions about the NEP 2020 and NCFSE-2023.

### 21st Wipro Partners' Forum

The 21st Partners' Forum at Azim Premji University, held from 4th to 6th December 2024, focused on the theme 'Capacity Building for and by Civil Society Organizations.' The forum was based on the understanding that capacity building (CB) is integral to ensuring quality education for every child in the country. It emphasized that enhancing capacities - both within organizations and among stakeholders - is central to this process. Key questions were addressed through interactive small-group sessions, masterclasses, panel discussions, a teaching-learning-materials (TLM) mela, and other engaging activities.



Digantar Stall

Four Digantar members - Rohit Dhankar, Hemant Sharma, Khyaliram Swami, and Pragma Shrivastava, participated. The team showcased Digantar's structure and work through flyers, posters, and subject-specific notes on Mathematics, EVS, Language Pedagogy, and Shiksha Vimarsh at the TLM mela.

### Visit to Private Schools in Jaipur

Visits were made to seven private schools in Jaipur to share information about TARU's work and capacity-building courses. Principals and teachers were briefed about Digantar and provided brochures of TARU's programmes. It emerged that conducting these courses during summer and winter vacations could encourage teacher participation.