

Special Hour Celebration

International Women's Day was celebrated on 8th March. It was an occasion to pause for a moment and reflect on advancements in gender equality, and challenges that still seem so deep-rooted in India and around the world. On this occasion the students took to the stage with songs, dances and drama to deride and bemoan the vicious social customs of dowry and killing of the girl-child. Rajwant Sir, Asst. Professor, was responsible for the overall co-ordination of this celebration.

World water Day was observed on 22nd March, with students demonstrating the value and meaning of water to them through song and dance, as well as with an excellent film that they made and edited themselves on the importance of conserving water. The events were organized under the guidance of Shashi Shekhar Sir, who also spoke of the science and spirituality associated with water.

Ambedkar Jayanti was celebrated on 14th April. A short video on the life of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was followed by a spirited discussion on the relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's views in today's times.



Orientation | D.El.Ed. 2020-22

Amaltas College of Education welcomed their third batch of D.El.Ed. students on 1st April with their orientation. The students were formally addressed by the faculty, management and trustees of the college. Saurav Sir, Asst. Professor, compered the session. Saloni Sinha Ma'am, founding trustee, talked of excellence in language skills, commitment to lifelong learning and mastery over subject matter. Shashi Shekhar Sir, Asst. Professor, presented an overview of the D.El.Ed. curriculum, reflecting on the importance of, and the path of 'joyful learning'.

The student self-introductions that followed provided an important glimpse into their backgrounds and motivations. Thereafter, the students received a guided campus tour, and during the lunch hour, had their first opportunity to interact informally with students from other batches. Their in-classroom learning began right after lunch.

Social Emotional Learning | A Workshop



Amaltas College of Education collaborated with Sonebhadra Lions Club, Tilothu and Lions Quest International, to host a 2-day weekend workshop on Social-Emotional Learning. On the 6th & 7th March, 35 teachers from 5 schools in the area, and two of our own Asst. Professors participated in activity-filled, intense and invigorating sessions, designed to educate on how to make social-emotional learning in adolescent children a part of a school's regular curriculum.

The workshop was conducted by Ratna Choudhry Ma'am, an international Trainer's Trainer for Lions Quest. The participants received a set of 7 reference books with detailed instructions to implement the program in their schools. All participants were awarded certificates in a formal closing ceremony.



Admissions | 2021-23 Session

The Bihar Common Entrance Test (CET) for admission to the B.Ed. Program is COVID-delayed. The CET is now scheduled for 11th July 2021. Results will be declared on 20th July, counselling will begin in the last week of July, and we hope to start the new session no later than 1-Sep-2021.

Bihar School Examination Board, Patna is yet to announce the CET and counselling for the D.El.Ed. admissions in 2021-21 academic session. As per media reports the schedule may be released by BSEB in July 2021.

University Inspection



On 4th March, a two-member team of Dr. Deepankar Sreegyan and Dr. Sujit Kumar Dwivedi from Aryabhata Knowledge University, Patna, conducted their day-long annual inspection of the College infrastructure, record keeping and overall performance. During the day, they also interacted independently with the students and faculty. At the end of the day, they expressed their appreciation of our efforts and progress.

Shortly thereafter, we received the formal extension of affiliation from the University for the 2021-22 academic year.

Faculty Speak | Competition - An Approach

Competition exists only when there is comparison, and comparison does not bring about excellence. Thus, is it possible to help students not to think competitively in the academic field, and yet to have excellence in their studies, their actions and their daily life? These are the profound words of the famed philosopher, Jiddu Krishnamurti.

Competition has been discussed in psychology for a long time. Sigmund Freud argued that humans are born competing for their parents' attention, and Charles Darwin's work on natural selection is used to suggest that competition is in our genes. Within the classroom, there are different kinds of competition amongst pupils. One of these is in assessed achievement levels, which these days, is commonly informed using letter grades. In the teaching-learning process, grading is a method of evaluating, communicating, motivating, and receiving feedback. Grading is extremely important in fostering competitiveness. Grading scales also serve as a tool for students to assess or measure their own performance, as well as compare themselves to other students.

Advocates for competition will say that the primary goal of competition is to improve student motivation. However, an aggressive use of this approach comes at the cost of promoting 'surface-learning' over 'deep-learning'. Studies have shown that even though competition appeared to cause more harm than good, it has also shown that removing all competition reduced some students' motivation to learn.

What then? Is a pure cooperative model, as advocated by J Krishnamurti the answer?

Co-operation as explained by Krishnamurti is the enjoyment of being with, and doing things with others, without necessarily working towards something specific. True co-operation comes not from, for example, just agreeing to work on a project together, but from the happiness, a sense of togetherness, that the process of working together generates.

But too often, when two or more people come together, it is to achieve a common goal. They have an objective in mind, perhaps to establish, let's say the perfect school, and believe that cooperation is required to achieve it. If they are not in it for the joy of working together, it is not cooperation - it is a form of greed, a kind of fear, a sort of compulsion.

In this context, let's examine certain recent trends in evaluation.

Teachers in our education system use grading (competition) as a method to assess the comprehension level of their students. There are certain known consequences of grading. For example, receiving bad grades may

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demotivate students and lead to absenteeism, while receiving good grades is shown to have a positive effect on student performance.

The grading system typically uses one of these two methods - the pass-fail method or the ranking method. While some academics say that with a pass-fail system, performance decreases and only limited feedback is possible, this approach benefits students by lowering stress and promoting group cohesion.

Ranking methods used in our education system are typically either criterion-referenced or norm-referenced. Criterion-referenced assessments compare a student's knowledge or skills against a predetermined standard, learning goal or other criterion, without considering the performance of other students. Norm-referenced assessment is a relative method that compares a student's performance against the performance of other students.

In this competitive world, students have different approaches to the teaching-learning process. Some students are motivated to learn to achieve a specific objective, while some are driven by the need to avoid shame. Performance-based approaches boost aspiration and self-esteem, but performance-based avoidance causes anxiety, depression, and embarrassment.

The answer, in my opinion, is that in today's world, we need to practice co-operation along with competition, which seems more natural, as Charles Darwin's work on natural selection suggests. Competition can be a useful tool for motivating pupils in a positive way. However, any competitive activity needs the consideration of several key factors.

1. It should not invite negative stress on the pupils. The results of such activity should not be its most important aspect for pupils, teachers, the community.
2. It should incorporate collaboration. As an example, a smart approach to this is to divide students into groups and have them work together in those groups. The groups compete with one another as a fun rather than serious event, focused throughout on the process rather than the result.

In this and other ways, promoting competition along with a co-operation model will bring about equilibrium in our society. This will be helpful to all kinds of learners.

- Shashi Kumar Shekhar (Asst. Professor)

