

Annexure: 2

Experience during the *Sangati* session

Sangati kit No. 5 'Understanding Change'

School: Pvt. Or. Mahadik Urdu no. 3

Teacher: Abdul Razzaq

Ward: F / North

When the representatives started conducting online sessions in this school, the teacher welcomed her and told her to conduct *Sangati* session once or twice a week. The students were briefly introduced to the new *Sangati* kit, 5, 'Understanding Change' and the sessions started gradually.

'When this session of 'Autobiography of a Cottonseed' was held, the teachers explained the changes that have occurred in the lives of the people due to 'cottonseed' and added that today's daily life has changed significantly. Their financial situation improved due to the change. The setting up of the factory developed the city of Kapasishahar and its environs. New buildings, hospitals, schools, colleges were started. The market developed, which benefited the farmers. New technologies came. Agriculture was modernized.

In a similar manner, while discussing the problems in the neighborhoods where the students live, it was discussed that there was a big problem of garbage and toilets in the neighborhoods where the students live. The stench of garbage near residential houses was causing health problems to the residents. However, despite repeated complaints to the local authorities, they were ignored and nothing was done. Some of the women activists in the *Sangati* took the initiative and visited the corporators, after which change happened. Litter bins were placed in various places and many toilets were constructed. In this way the whole situation of the entire population has changed. The students who participated in the session shared their experiences by relating the changes that took place in their residential colony with the way the city of Kapasi developed. The teachers also made it clear to the students during the session that they should be aware of their rights. *Sangati* allows students to express their thoughts freely.

School: Abhuday Nagar Hindi School

Teacher: Umesh Bhoyar

Ward: F South

Student: Mangalam Dubey

During the discussion in kit 5, session 12 activity what is your stand, after narrating the example of Askshay who is warned by his grand-mother against sharing water-food with people of certain castes, the students were asked if they feel that there is caste discrimination in the society today. Most of the students in the class replied in affirmative. They said that while it is not so evident in cities caste discrimination was still practiced in their villages. For example, on occasions of marriage, religious ceremonies etc. A group of children recalled that they were once 'kicked-out' of a wedding ceremony when they accidentally entered the pandal while playing.

Referring to the incident in the workbook, all the children said that Akshay should not obey his grandmother in her views on caste-taboos and should drink water at his friend's house.

The teacher in this class actively takes initiative to expose the students to progressive ideas to bring about social change. He strongly believes that caste discrimination is an obstacle to our development. He also feels that caste system is like a termite that will disappear only if we change our thinking and act accordingly. He pointed out how we practice discrimination in our villages as well as in our localities in cities. At this point the children said that they don't discriminate on basis of caste, we share our food with each other and we will continue to do this. Thus the discussion was very constructive, self-reflective with active participation of both teachers and students.

School: Maniklal Mehta Hindi

Ward: N.

Teacher: Richa Pal

Due to Corona outbreak this year, children's education has started online. On teacher's leaks, sometimes by sending representative leaks to the online San, a lot of the time the children have to call before the San.

Children shared that they liked the 'Words of wisdom', they adapted themselves according to the current environment. Corona outbreak changed everything - they had to wear masks, wash their hands, stay indoors, stay away from each-other and so on. The biggest change they felt was the shift to online education. They felt that school was no longer fun in this online mode. We can't meet our friends. We can't play alone all the time. We don't like it. Students say that the village has changed during kit 6 – now there is electricity, water, roads and transportation. How things were used in the past has changed. Just as 'Pata-Varvanta' has been replaced by a mixer, 'Jat' has been replaced by a flour mill. We use many appliances in our daily life like fan, mixer, fridge, washing machine etc. When these machines are turned off, we start to miss them, as these machines have become an integral part of our lives.

School: Goregaon Transit Camp

Ward: P / S

Student: Riya Keshari

The student response was very good while discussing the flipchart 'Autobiography of a cottonseed'. During this session Isha Yadav, a student, gave the example of her village. In the past, her family used to farm in the village, but now her father does not farm, so they have to buy all the grains and vegetables. Riya, a student, said that there was a highway between the school and their Basti (the residential area) which they had to cross with some difficulty, but now the Metro work is underway, thus she faces more difficulties in crossing the road and once the Metro project completes the access will be completely blocked. Although the Metro will benefit people, it hurts us. While the students were having this discussion, the mother of a student Riya Keshari also took part in the discussion. Her three daughters are studying in this school. She said that she the inputs and activities about the concept of change was wonderfully structured in the session, this will help them understand the concept very well in all its dimensions. She thanked the **Sangati** representatives for their hard work. In this way parents too participate in sessions along with their children and contribute their ideas, insights, they support the students at home.

School: Sakharam Tare Marg Municipal Corporation English Ward: R / N

Teacher: Mr. Digambar Shelke

During the session 'Life in the City' from *Sangati* kit. 5 'Understanding Change', with reference to the flip-chart 'Sweet-n-sour' different experiences of life in cities were discussed with students with help of examples of various characters.

With references to stories of Nandita (who has come to Bombay from her village for her mother's treatment but is disturbed by the conditions of life like lack of sanitation in irregularised communities), Sonu Singh from a farming family but has to earn additional money in Mumbai to support his family), Sujata Rane (school teacher, despite the challenges of managing home and school, during her train commute finds camaraderie with other women co-passengers independent of other social roles) Changdev (a Dalit who left his village fearing caste-violence and has been staying in the city since years but still inadvertently gets conscious of his social status and subconsciously gives-in to old caste modes). The students realized that these were like their own or their families or neighbours' stories. The students then gave examples of issues like caste discrimination, child marriage and struggle for girls' education prevalent in their villages even today. At this point, the teachers inquired if the students have freedom in their families to independently think and express themselves.

The discussion later focused on Nandita's experience of staying in the irregularised locality having to bring water from far away, her experience of having to use public toilet. Some students living in the area near the creek shared similar experiences. They too have to fetch water from far away, have to buy drinking water in summer. There are toilets in the area but they are very bad. The toilet cleaner charges Rs. 50 per month from each household. Some people who cannot afford to pay defecate in the open in the creek. Some gangsters use toilets without paying. Sometimes drug addicts come and sit there. So it is scary to go at night or alone.

At this point, the teachers then gave inputs about public health and environmental hygiene. They also suggested that the children can approach the nearest Municipal Corporation office to provide more public or mobile toilets. However, some students said that the standard of living in the city, as well as the amenities, could not be equal to the villages – despite the problems there are many positives in cities. This point was well debated in the session. The teachers got to know the thoughts of the students by probing with help of additional questions. "For instance, why there were no roads in the village? Why couldn't girls study there? Why does everyone have to come to the city for employment? etc."

In addition to these, the students gave some real-life examples particularly in context of the CORONA pandemic, relating them to the other characters in the story, and adding their own experiences. Unable to afford private school education, the parents admitted them to corporation school, some had to leave for their village, some of the girls and around eight boys were taken to the village after 8th Standard and were married-off, their uncles and aunts had to search for jobs in Mumbai to pay off their debts etc.

In this way, the session came to an end by sharing and discussing various experiences about cities and villages.

School: Sakharam Tare Marg English

Ward: R / N

Teacher: Parul Desai

A session on **Sangati** kit No. 5 'Understanding Change', (Session 16) 'Different angles, different views' was held. During the session, illustrated explanations of the two folders 'India Shining and India suffering' were given. Through this session, we can evaluate the changes that have taken place in the country from Independence through different perspectives. There was a focused discussion on this aspect. The students reacted very thoughtfully. One student explained it with example of the speed of COVID vaccine research. In the past, vaccines took a long time to develop. People did not even know the name and cure of the disease even if they were affected by it. As a result, many would die without medical help. Today, however, there has been so much progress in the medical field that the warning about Corona reached the people sooner. Throughout the year, various countries, including India, made the vaccine available. A vaccination schedule has also been prepared. We learn about all of this through newspapers, TV, mobiles etc. It is a story of great progress and joy.

At the same time, some students said they understood it as completely opposite. Explaining what people are saying about their difficulty about access to the vaccine, they have heard that it is not easily available and in private places very expensive, it is depriving the poor, etc.

At such times the teacher supported the students in their discussion. If corruption, ignorance, illiteracy and lack of awareness increases, the country lags behind. The main purpose of the flip-chart got across well to the students. What makes the country progress? Why is the country backward today? Such were broader issues discussed during the session.

***Sangati* kit no 6 'Preparing for the future'**

School: Anandnagar English MPS

Ward: R / N

Student: Anupam Chaurasia

This session no, 2, about the topic of 'Who am I?' from kit 6 'Preparing for the Future', is based on 'self image' and relation with others. The concept of self-image is explained through the story of Shamu and with help of the detailed explanation of 'Joe Hary window'. The different parts of the concept of Joe-Hary window explain how our self-image is created by *aspects about yourself known both you and others, aspects about yourself not known to others, aspects you are not aware about yourself but others know,, about yourself, how there are things about us that and those that neither you nor others are aware of about you* etc. These influence one's self-image, our choices, and the way others look at us and expect things of us. At this point, Anupam shared his own experience. Like Shamu's parents' and her best friend's thoughts about Shamu's plans for her future are different from Shamu's own thoughts about herself and her future, something similar was happening with Anupam. His parents want him to become an engineer but he wants to become a well educated farmer. He thinks that there is a lot to do in the village too. His friend thinks that he likes writing, but he thinks that he likes reading more. He further shared that looking at his face, the teacher thinks that he was a very quiet student but actually it was not like that. "I also like to have fun. In our village, children are married at the age of twenty one but I have not decided to get married immediately after I turn twenty one. I don't

know. I want to study agriculture. I don't know if I will stay here in Maharashtra or go to UP but I am sure that I want to study agriculture." At this point, Anupam said that he would talk to his parents about this as he grows up a bit more. "I will explain things to them. I will try my best to explain how my dreams are right. I think my elder brother will definitely help me in this. I think if we talk, the issue can be resolved."

Through this session, it was evident how the students analyse themselves and also how they clarify their thoughts in a mature way, that they too are able to carefully think about their future plans and communicate these to their parents.

School: Sakharam Tare Marg English

Ward: R / N

Student: Talim Sheikh

***Sangati* kit No.: 06 'Preparing for the future' Session number: 4 'The inner voice'**

In *Sangati* kit, 6 'Preparing for the Future', the session 4 "The Inner Voice" focuses on values, and awareness of 'right and wrong' in various contexts.

During the online session, students were told about incident no. 6. It draws attention to how we treat animals. We may think that we like or love them and are affectionate to them, but actually we often commit injustice towards them for example by caging birds, by curtailing their freedom. The cage is a punishment for them, its cruelty, harmful to their health. We keep pets for our happiness but we need to make sure if we are violating the values of compassion and mercy to all living beings. Not just humans, we must treat all other beings based on these values. How would you feel if someone keeps you locked up in a room day and night? Will it be legally correct? These were points discussed in the class.

The students understood this issue right away both from point of view of personal values and legal probity. They suggested that the parrot should be allowed to fly-away, its real home is the nature, it will meet other parrots, will be happy.

During the session, Talim said that he kept two wild parrots in his house. A few months ago, they flew from the creek to the Basti. He caught them and kept them caged. After this, in session number 10 'Should I? Shouldn't I?', the well-known fable of father-son and the donkey 'You choose . . .' was narrated. In the story, the confusion in the minds of both the father and son about carrying the donkey to the town has been narrated with the help of questions like 'whose advice should they follow? What would be right way?' The representative then asked the students if they had ever faced such confusion and tension in their minds. At this point, Talim recalled the occasion of the parrot in Session no. 6. He said he had to deal with the dilemma about the two caged. He said that after the session he had thought a lot about it and decided that it was a right thing to release these parrots, but he was worried about what his family would say. He went through a lot of tension. Then he said that he quietly opened the lid of the rack the parrots were kept in so that the parrots would fly away and that is what happened. "I was very happy." He also admitted that he had made a mistake in catching and caging the parrots. "If I get bored of sitting at home all day, the parrots must be bored confined to that little rack forever," he said. All the students praised him for his decision.

It was evident that children not only understood what was meant by 'values' and they also acted accordingly. Values distinguishes between fairness and unfairness about our relationships in the world... It was heartening to see how the students find ways to deal with stress.