

AMCHI KHOBAR

The voice of the Mangalorean Community in Mumbai

Vol. 6, Issue No. 1 • January, February, March 2021

Education

Pre
Covid



Post
Covid



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From The Editor's Desk



Dear fellow KCA members,

Wishing you and the family a joyous Easter !

In our living memory, 24th March 2020 will long be remembered with trepidation, as that black letter day in the Indian Gregorian Calendar which silently contemns a distinct separation of two most unexpected eras in our lives : PRE-COVID and POST-COVID. As we complete a year under lockdown, we acknowledge having learnt from this pandemic, valuable lessons that will be collated as an essential guide for the benefit of those who will be born into this world after the pandemic tides over. These reflections in our co-existence with the changing seasonal moods from fun-filled Valentine's Day, to the solemn Ash Wednesday, the penitentiary Lenten season interspersed with an endearing Women's Day, and the joyous anticipation of Easter, brings to mind a feeling of hope for the future, and a yearning for the knowledge that will sustain mankind....recalling that fundamental right to EDUCATION.

So what is Education?

Parents coax their children as soon as they are put into school to study well to attain a sound education to secure a good job, to become self reliant and to live a safe and comfortable life. From home to school, and from college to post graduation university, and then on to research programs, Education is a lifelong process and journey of discovery and understanding of the potential and power of the human mind and its applications, understanding the laws of nature, the order of the universe, the larger picture of what governs our existence, the smaller picture of the unseen world, the tiny organisms invisible to the human eye and micro-organisms proven to be potentially fatal for humanity. All in all, education helps us to understand other human beings, the animal and plant kingdom, and also the universe of non-living matter. Education helps us in our communications

with others and helps us to articulate and convey our inner thoughts for bringing out the best in others to make our planet a better place with each passing day. Education teaches us to be patient, to be able to listen and to be understanding and tolerant, unifying us into bonds of beautiful relationships, beginning at home, extending to school and then to our peers, friends, colleagues and clients in professional life and the world at large.

As a visiting lecturer at the Sir J. J. College of Architecture for over two decades, I have been noticing the old school transitioning into a new avatar of education, with technology playing a dominant role. Students today stand to lose out on the natural and simple skills of pencil hand sketching, artist's impressions and manual calculations. They find it necessary to enrol for classes to learn advanced software that teaches them how to draw and produce impressive photorealistic 3D virtual models. In other words, they have become more dependent on high end technology with the result that they have neglected to hone their innate abilities which was characteristic in my day.

Here at the KCA, our President Mr. Eric D'Sa, is all set to take forward the Managing Committee decision to include Education in its vision to support children of our members in their pursuit of learning. Our tireless Hon. Secretary Mr. Merwyn D'Souza has shared a deeper insight and historical information on the KCA's Educational Credit Society which was set up in 1919. From our editorial team, Anne-Marie Rego will regale you with privileged insights from her interview with His Lordship emeritus Bishop Percy Fernandes, a beacon of hope and learning for our youth. Deepika Lobo will delight you with the enlightening new concept called Liquid Learning. We



also have education themed articles from other contributors.

So now, what does Education mean to the Kanara Catholic Community?

His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias recently reminded us during his homily that “by our baptism we are all temples of the Lord”. By age 7, human beings are considered to have reached the age of reason and understanding. That is all the time one really has to gift our children with most cherished memories. By the proverb 'cleanliness is next to godliness' Kanara Catholics easily qualify to cross the halfway line to heaven. Our cultural and traditional Education in a family upbringing paves the way for the other half. It makes us self dependent and independent as we grow deeper in knowledge to become spiritually closer to the creator. But we must be aware that while being independent has its merits, being too self reliant creates our own demise towards loneliness and deprives us of true love, friendship and companionship. The KCA offers that forum for community building. A sound Education is like how it is

with God's love... you want to pass it on, to create that oneness where mutual love and respect exist.

I recall a famous cartoon book by James Norbury where Big Panda asked: “Which is more important, the journey or the destination”. “The Company” replied Tiny Dragon. I say a big 'Thank you' to my family and friends who have accompanied me on my journey of learning through the decades.

Remember, the things you do for yourself will be forgotten when you are gone, but the things you do for others remain as your legacy. So let us follow in the footsteps of Jesus, our master teacher.

We continue to pray for all Doctors, Nurses and healthcare workers on the frontline. Our special thanks to the research scientists who have developed the vaccines to boost our immunity. It is still our responsibility to stay safe.

God bless you all!

Rolin Mendonca



The President's Perspective



Eric D'Sa

Dear Members,

This volume of Amchi Khobar is dedicated to Education. The founder members of the Kanara Catholic Association in their wisdom, included the following in item 3b in their Memorandum of Association, under the Aims and Objects of the Association, drawn up in the year 1901: *"To pursue social and charitable service generally and specially with a view to improving the moral, intellectual, economic and physical welfare of the members of the Association and others by providing for their education by means of schools, continuation classes, reading rooms, libraries and lectures."*

In keeping with the above, they started the Mangalorean Catholic Education Co-Operative Credit Society (MCECCS) in 1919, to provide educational loans at affordable credit terms to students of the community to pursue higher college education and obtain professional degrees. Most of the KCA members became shareholders of this society and invested in the same. There is a separate article in this volume about this education society by our Hon. Secretary Mr. Merwyn D'Souza, narrating its history.

We also have another article from one of our members Mr. Albert Machado, who has worked closely with me during the last 7 years, running a one-of-its-kind Catholic charitable society in the Archdiocese of Mumbai, that provides interest free loans to bright students belonging to economically weaker sections of the community, to pursue higher education, become graduates and obtain the necessary skills to be gainfully employed.

From my own family history, I am more than convinced that good education helps an individual to scale up the intellectual and economic ladder and be prosperous. This enables the individual to be more generous and an asset to his extended family and his community. My own father belonged to a lower middle class Catholic family in Mangalore, one of 7 children who fared well in

school and junior college. After finishing his intermediate in St. Aloysius College, he was keen to pursue Engineering at the Government Engineering College at Bangalore, the only such college then in the State of Mysore. It was a struggle and he could only do so by taking an educational loan from a credit society. He passed each of the 4 years with distinction and later after graduating with a degree in Electrical Engineering, obtained a scholarship to pursue the post graduation 2 year degree course in Birmingham University in the U.K., where he graduated first class first.

He returned to India and joined the Government of Mysore Electrical department, worked on putting up two large electro-hydraulic power projects, became known as one of the best electro-hydraulic engineers in India and finally rose to become the first Chief Electrical Engineer of the newly formed Karnataka State. He could not have achieved all this without a sound education which he could get only with the help of an educational loan from a Community Credit Society. All through his professional career, he kept helping other members of the Kanara Community. While he was Chief Engineer, he helped in the formation of the Kanara Catholic Association in Bangalore and became its first Vice President then later, its President.

My father-in-law too, was the son of a progressive farmer in a small town in South Kanara. He and his siblings were provided with the opportunity and benefit of obtaining a good school education, first in their own town and then in his case at St. Aloysius College in Mangalore. He later obtained his Civil Engineering degree in Madras City, joined the Public Works Department in Madras State, rising up to be the Chief Engineer. He was then selected by Mr. Homi Bhabha to work directly under him as the Chief Civil Engineer in the



Atomic Energy Department of Government of India. In that position he helped a number of Kanarite businessmen to grow and prosper.

I am narrating these two examples to show that good education helps an individual, albeit with a lot of hard work and a bit of luck, to rise to a high stature professionally, to be a wealth creator for the family and even the community. We have in the previous volumes of Amchi Khobar written about many of the previous Presidents of KCA, Bombay. Each of them belonged to middle class families in Kanara, but with a good education became highly successful professionals, bureaucrats or businessmen. They went out of their way to assist community members in Mumbai and in their hometowns. Good education more than anything else had provided them with the required foundation at the start of their life, on which they could build successful careers, become prosperous and then be generous.

This Managing Committee has in the KCA Vision statement included the word Education. We firmly believe that to succeed as a minority community in our country, in this 21st Century, where rapid changes will be taking place in all facets of our lives, the constant upgrading of our knowledge and skill will play a decisive role. As a community we need to ensure our young will have the required tools, skills and knowledge with access to good education to navigate the rapidly changing world.

When I visited my daughter in Manhattan a few years ago, I was surprised to find in this digital age when a vast amount of published material is available on the internet, that we could within a few minutes from where she lived, walk into a well furnished public library and reading room. There was a vast range of books from which we could select any book or magazine to read, if required, take it home for a few days and return it without any cost. I was happy to see that my grandchildren spent more time reading books than watching TV.

One of the projects we are working on in the KCA is to set up an open library at Yuvakalaya where we will have books written by Kanarites around the world for our members to read. This is one of the ways we will meet the Aims and Objects of our Association and at the same time encourage and support the authors of our community. If there is sufficient demand from members we will have a reading room attached.

And finally, with the vaccination drive now in full swing, hopefully the country and our city will overcome the Covid 19 pandemic. It has been a difficult year for the KCA as an institution and we are happy we have done so without any of our staff and hostel boys contracting the disease. We have arranged a Thanksgiving Mass online, which will be offered by Cardinal Oswald Gracias, on Sunday 11th April 2021 at 9 AM and we hope all our members and their families will be able to take part.

KCA Counselling Committee

Unable to provide regular counselling sessions and seminars at Yuvakalaya due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the KCA Counselling Centre conducted a series of webinars for Senior Citizens.

Invites to join the webinars were sent through the KCA Members WhatsApp group and instructions to download the necessary app were given.

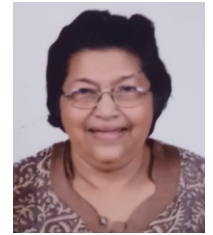
Every Thursday an hourly session was conducted keeping in mind the mental health needs of the older adults especially during Covid.

The following topics were covered:

Session 1 : Knowing Yourself after 60 **Session 2 :** Sharpen the Senses (Games and online activities)
Session 3 : Meaning in Life **Session 4 :** Logotherapy
Session 5 : Psychosocial Development in older adults
Session 6 : HERO (Hope Efficacy Resilience Optimism) Model
Session 7 : Gross Motor and Reaction Time Exercises
Session 8 : Find your Locus of Control
Session 9 : Fasting and Diet Plan **Session 10 :** Your Perceived Stress assessment (Paper Pencil test)

*Those interested in joining upcoming webinars, please contact the Head of the KCA Counselling Centre Ms. Deepika Lobo, deepikaslobo@gmail.com and she will add you to the group. **Eligibility:** over 60 years of age.*

Testing Times



Doris Saldanha

“Who dares to teach must never cease to learn.”

I took up this dare - (seems like aeons ago), fresh and optimistic, ready to take up the gauntlet and change the world.

Now I look back with satisfaction at what I was able to achieve by interacting with students of all ages and learning so much along the way, more than books can ever teach. Each young mind is so special and amazing, one realises one has to be fully alert and on top of one's game when dealing with them. There have been moments of joy and fulfillment as well as moments of disappointment and frustration at the system but never a dull moment.

The years flew past and we teachers tried to keep pace with new ideas and new methods of teaching when suddenly we were jolted out of our security by the terrible pandemic. It has changed the rules of life in every sphere, everywhere. The great equaliser. Nothing was sacrosanct anymore.

Education bore the greatest brunt of this challenge. We were not prepared and had to hurriedly find solutions and transform or perish. There was a new normal and adults and youth had to adjust and change to survive. Inherent qualities and values stood us in good stead. They have been the game changer and made the

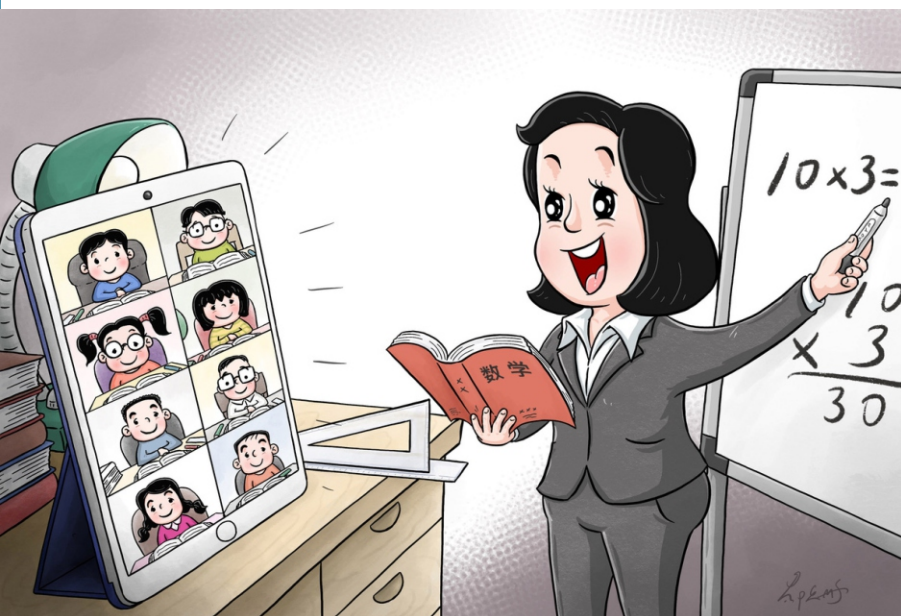
difference between failure and success, hope and despair.

Who are the survivors? Those who know *how to think*? No, those who have learnt *what to think* and are adept at thinking *out of the box*. Youngsters are quick at thinking on their feet, never at a loss to find solutions to problems. They have creative minds which look beyond the ordinary.

Accepted norms have not withstood this horror. Our Indian minds, probably the best in the universe have found ways and means to deal with it but this is only the beginning.

Educators have to find means to transform the system before it overwhelms us. Learning has to become more meaningful and exciting, action oriented, without losing traditional values and ideals. It has to be all encompassing, for the rich and poor, smart and not so smart; all inclusive... only this will awaken the natural curiosity of our students and encourage them to seize every opportunity to dream and fulfil 'the impossible dream'. Dedicated, committed, creative, skilled teachers and educators are the need of the hour.

From the earliest periods, India has been in the forefront of education and innovation. Indian minds and brains are second to none. The 'new normal' has seen Indians taking up the challenges and leading the field in medicine, health, technology and other fields. In education too, challenges are being taken up fearlessly and relentlessly. The state is trying to do its bit but as in all fields, it is the private philanthropists and entrepreneurs who have upped the ante and taken that extra step to try to make sure no one is left behind. May Education in India prove it is second to none and produce generations of citizens who will take India to its rightful place in today's world.



Prominent Personality

Bishop Percival Fernandes

In this issue, the KCA is proud to acknowledge one of the most renowned and beloved Mangaloreans of Mumbai, Bishop Percival Fernandes. He has been of stellar service to the community and it is due to his efforts that several Catholic students have been able to obtain their medical degrees in one of the best institutions in India. He is also an ideal role model to students as he personifies how intelligence, perseverance and total trust in our loving God can overcome any hurdles on the road to success.

He was born on December 20, 1935 to Paul Custodio and Lily Fernandes in Bendoor, Mangalore. He has a brother and five sisters, one of whom was an AC nun. His primary education was in St. Sebastian School in Bendoor, after which he shifted to Padua High School in Nanthoor to complete his schooling which was entirely in Kannada. As he was very keen on becoming a priest, his parish priest suggested he study at the Bombay Seminary. He was interviewed by the Rector of the Jeppoo Seminary and at the young age of 17, left for Bombay.

His early years at the Parel seminary were not easy as the classes were taught in English, which he was not familiar with, and included Latin. However, his rector, Fr. Casasayas, must have observed his innate intelligence and took a tremendous interest in him, encouraging and assisting him to learn the languages, and making him Beadle of the students. Once he mastered the languages, Br. Percy excelled in his studies and finished his studies with distinction.

He was then ordained by Cardinal Valerian Gracias in 1960, in the first batch of ordinations at the newly constructed

Goregaon Seminary. He was posted in succession as Asst. Parish Priest to St. Stephen's (Cumballa Hill), St. Ignatius (Jacob Circle), St. Michael's (Mahim) and Holy Name Cathedral, Colaba. He was an energetic and dynamic priest, and formed lasting bonds with the many Mangalorean parishioners in these parishes.

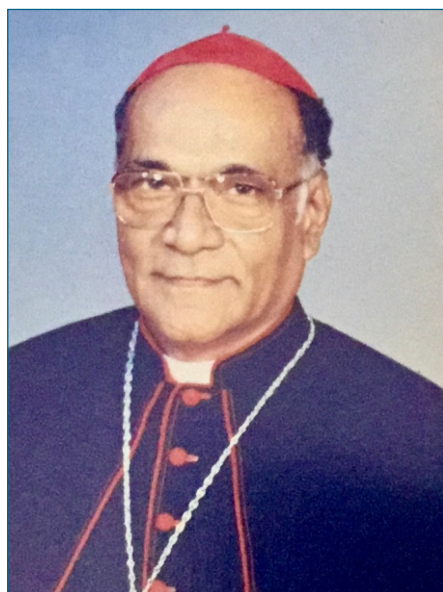
In 1974, he was made Parish Priest of St. Ignatius and rebuilt the Rectory and the High School building. At the same time, Cardinal Valerian appointed him Head of

Caritas India, the Catholic charity, in which he had to manage the Bangladeshi and Ugandan refugee crises as well as the severe drought problems in Maharashtra. Though it was arduous and challenging work, Fr. Percy made a considerable difference in the lives of the stricken people by arranging shelter, transport, food and rehabilitation for them.

In 1978, Cardinal Valerian once again asked him to take on another onerous responsibility, that of Administrator of St. John's Medical College in Bangalore. In 1980, he did his MBA at

the Eastern University in Washington DC, and followed this with a Ph.D in Health Management. He was permitted to do his doctoral research in India and he visited 75 hospitals over the length and breadth of India to collect data for his thesis. He returned to the USA to defend his thesis on *Behavioral Factors in Health Management* in which he stressed that good human relationships depend on each person recognising the dignity of others, all of whom are masterpieces of God's creation.

In 1985, he was appointed Director of St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences. In all, he was to spend 22 years at St. John's, during which he increased the capacity of the hospital from 200 to 1200 inpatients,



set up a Nursing School and College, started post graduate courses in most subjects, specialty courses in Cardiology and Paediatric Surgery, a Research Centre, a health management course, and a Medical Technology course, training students to excel in all fields of medicine. This phenomenal work proved to be a boon to all the Catholic students who wished to do medicine and thousands flocked to St. John's. He was a caring and benevolent Director and was beloved by both students and staff. He still keeps in touch with several of his students who are now successful doctors in India and abroad.



During his years of service, he came into contact with several well-known people, in the academic, political and religious circles, but he says the one person who impacted him the most was Mother Teresa whose simple mantra of loving and serving echoed his own.

After retiring in 2000, Fr. Percy returned to Bombay and taught Pastoral Management courses to the students at St. Pius X Seminary in Goregaon, where he lives today. He was ordained Bishop on April 21, 2001. He was also elected Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference and served in that position for four years.

In 2006, Cardinal Ivan Dias asked Bishop Percy to set up a Corpus Fund to assist poor Catholic families with their health care expenses. Bishop Percy undertook this task with his customary vigour and approached those who could afford it to contribute to this fund. By sheer dint of hard work, he collected Rs. 13 crores as a corpus and the interest from this is used to pay for the medical expenses of poor Catholics in Mumbai. To this day, Bishop Percy personally types out at least 20 letters daily which he sends to potential donors. The fund has

so far paid for the medical expenses of over 2074 families in our Archdiocese and many more will still be able to avail of it.

Bishop Percy is a man of many talents: he has written several books, despite English not being his original language; he is an avid gardener, with a passion for growing plants which serve as herbal remedies, and he is also a very skilled painter. His rooms at the Seminary contain several of the very striking oil and acrylic paintings he has done on diverse subjects.

We at the KCA know how willingly he has come several times to celebrate the Monthi Fest Mass in Konkani for us, and has supported and blessed us with his prayers.

He emphasises the fact that every challenge is a learning process and should not go untested. If a young untrained boy from Mangalore could come to Bombay and go on to scale the heights as he did, then any young person can also do so. In his own words: "I request everyone who feels that he/she is not talented, to change their mindset and realise that they are masterpieces of God's creation and are blessed with more gifts and talents than they realise."

Thank you, dear Bishop Percy, for your 61 years of dedicated service to all, we are so proud of you and grateful to you, and wish you many more years of good health and happiness.





Paintings By Bishop Percival Fernandes



How To Manage A School With No Experience



Jonathan Mendonca

I recall working on a \$2 million construction project in Mumbai and thinking, "Isn't it ridiculous that we're building buildings for people, through people, without ever having studied about people?" As a graduate engineer, I had been the recipient of a technically focused education that left out the softer disciplines of psychology, sociology and economics.

The masons cut through granite with their steady hands, but their poor judgement in geometry led to a significant amount of material wastage. A quick lesson in trigonometry remedied that. Was it prudent then to assume an inherent 15 % material wastage- as we had been taught- rather than to account for an individual's upbringing? Through a process of unlearning, I realised my predilection for teaching. Well timed with my acceptance into the Young India Fellowship for liberal arts-where I studied- I undertook an expedition on education. I was conscious that I loved teaching, loved learning, and that there was a massive educational crisis in the country. At the time, I was hardly resolute in my eventual ambition but knew that I had a year to figure that out.

Over the past four years, my venture, Barefoot Edu Foundation, has grown into a grassroots organisation that is transforming schools through administration, school culture and collaboration. We have intervened in 12 schools and converted 1482 government nutrition centres into holistic educational centres. One revelation made clear to me along the way is that in the field of learning, one need not be deterministic along their path of discovery.

No one has enough experience: Education stems from critical thought processes that are shaped and developed by experiences. Schrodinger's General Systems theory beautifully illustrates how every system can be explained or seen through the lens of any other system. I had no formal experience in pedagogy but I did have a partner whose vision

and enthusiasm were aligned with mine. We did not abandon our professions - engineering and business studies - but recognized the ways of thinking that we had inherited through them. Our prior vocations continue to be deeply imbibed in our approach to problem solving and education. We co-started a not-for-profit Barefoot Edu Foundation and began leveraging our ability to simplify science and mathematics while connecting them to a child's physical environment. For example, staggering the height of playground swings changed their time periods which allowed the natural cadence of childhood curiosity to double up as a lesson in pendulum kinetics. The very nature of a challenge, or an initiative that excites you, lies in your lack of experience. No one ever has enough experience when it comes to re-organizing ancient institutions, but everyone has their own experience to leverage. The art lies in identifying and acknowledging the shortcomings in one's own experience.

Collaboration: To glimpse the scale of the education crisis in most developing countries, one can begin by categorizing the challenges into those faced: inside the classroom (different learning levels, irregular attendance); inside the school as a whole (weak school leadership, lack of effective assessment); and beyond the school (parent perception, accessibility). This plethora of challenges then divides into demand and supply facing facets. Clearly, piecemeal solutions are independently overwhelmed by the horde of trans-scalar crises in underperforming schools and potentially waste resources that could be deployed more effectively elsewhere. Our first intervention in a school in rural India was not 'educational' per se, but rather, 'education enabling'. We collaborated in order to provide a mid-day meal for the children as wise words fall on deaf ears dulled by empty stomachs. Subsequently, we joined hands with organisations that provide specialised but isolated interventions in the form of capacity building, student workshops and assessments. We at Barefoot Edu Foundation believe that 'Education' is too vast to be covered by a single



perspective and therefore, collaboration with key stakeholders, progressive organisations and exceptional individuals is non-negotiable.

System Goals and SDGs: We must not forget that these external partners need to work seamlessly with the internal team-the school leader, teachers, students, parents and us. Schools are complex systems with many primary stakeholders. The only way to effectively avoid a cataclysm is to unite all these autonomous members with a robust, measurable goal(one of the most important leverage points in a system). Goals tend to be event oriented and therefore people within systems often do not recognise the larger purpose or vision that they serve.

A school that we are currently transforming was established by tribal youth in one of the most under-resourced regions of India. As an agrarian community located in the heart of India's drylands, the tribals in Madhya Pradesh have minimal exposure to the rest of the world. Our goal here was to transform a child's exposure from age old ideas to one that engages with relevant themes currently being debated the globe over. Though idealistic, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are the highest level of currently debated global consensus. They are universal, diverse, and set a framework to align the rest of the curriculum within. The result being- global thought in a local setting.

This agrarian community had nearly emptied the groundwater from the aquifers that they were perched on and had also depleted the soil fertility with excessive use of fertilisers, pesticides and water intensive crops. We converted scientifically developed, but practically tested solutions, implemented by local NGOs, into a curriculum of sustainable agriculture and watershed management for our school. Nine of the SDG's are actively addressed at our school through this curriculum, over a period of four years, taught by the local NGOs that specialise in these fields.

Just a year subsequent to our intervention, school enrollment and attendance has increased, and 62% of the graduating batch was able to secure a fully funded higher education- as opposed to returning to serve as labour in the fields post schooling. Schools and learning centres need diverse and enthusiastic professionals shaping education through their lenses. The development sector, although intimidating, has



umpteen organisations and people eager to assist and share resources. The advent of the internet has made it easier for change makers to find each other and collectively achieve visions that seemed impossible a decade ago. Changing mindsets is the most powerful vehicle for change- start with having no excuse for inaction, set a goal, and collaborate to translate that into implementation.

Author: Jonathan Mendonca

Jonathan co-founded Barefoot Edu Foundation with a vision that every child must have a strong foundation to think, feel, and dream. Jonathan is passionate about creating spaces where people at the grassroots have the autonomy and support to interweave their understanding of beauty into educational design. He is a Young India Fellow and is now pursuing a masters in International Education Policy at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Jonathan specialises in design of learning experiences for students, college and career guidance so that they may reach their full potential. Contact +9833428606/ jonathan@barefootedu.com



Don't Take My Advice... Only To A Degree



Neha D'Souza

"Don't judge the value of higher education in terms of careermanship. Judge it for what it is - a priceless opportunity to furnish your mind and enrich the quality of your life." -David Ogilvy

When we talk about education, the immediate thought that comes to mind is a degree. Not the unit to measure temperature. Not even the unit to measure angles in geometry. But the unit to measure general marketability at the workplace.

This degree that I talk about brings with it a host of titles. Bachelor being one, Master being another. Those who have the desire to sacrifice their social life for a few years by disappearing behind research papers, go an extra mile and acquire an added title - Ph.D. These titles that come with degrees generally determine which rung of the corporate ladder you'll end up on. It's your springboard to success. An organised way to boost you up the figurative ladder.



If our lives were a proverbial prom night, Degree and Title would come hand in hand as a pair and win the title of Prom King and Queen uncontested! And we'd watch from the sidelines, throwing confetti while they dance centerstage. What we wouldn't notice during all of this, is the other pairs : Creativity and Leadership, Resilience and Team-work, Empathy and Independence, Experiences and Dedication. I may have taken liberties assuming who'd come with whom, but you get the general drift. All the pairs come together to make an unforgettable educational experience.

While we focus on the outcome, i.e. the degree, we undermine the path that leads us to it. Education is ultimately a sum of all experiences. It is that first Maggi dinner that you made in the confines of your dormitory with the help of an electric kettle. It is the first time you ironed your formal blazer before a campus interview, it is the late night brainstorming sessions between peers, where ideas were exchanged, opinions were made and friendships were solidified. It is in the act of sharing an umbrella with your two roommates because they simply forgot to carry theirs. It is about standing up to bullies and standing up for your principles. It is not limited to the copy-pasted drivel students often pick up from PPTs. It is not limited to

words, sentences, paragraphs that make up an average textbook.

When you don robes and throw your black hats in the air on your graduation and collect a thinly laminated certificate that affirms that you are now a master of this or a bachelor of that, you must remember that

you are not just the labels suffixed or prefixed to your name. You are a sum of all your experiences. Don't limit your education to the confines of classroom walls. Don't limit yourself to pre-designed syllabi that have probably outrun their value. Don't limit yourself. Be insatiable when it comes to knowledge because you are, and will always be so much more than just your degree.

If you would like to get in touch with me regarding this article, please contact me by email: Neha.j.dsouza@gmail.com



Teachers of the 21st Century.



Jeanette Pinto

The New Education Policy (NEP) introduced in India in 2019 has four levels in the school system. In general, it aims at universalization of education from pre-school to secondary level. Digital technology has advanced phenomenally. Under these circumstances, today's teachers need to be a guide, mentor and friend to their students, not an all-knowing sage providing them with tomes of information. With a wide range of varied resources, children today know more than teachers on different topics, and are a step ahead of the technology in use, so teachers need to be effective as facilitators and motivators for learning, to empower their students in turn.

In fact, teachers must be open to handling new ways of teaching and learning alongside their students. The talk, chalk and blackboard need not necessarily become obsolete tools, but may be used differently. The important question educators must ask is: What will students need twenty or thirty years from now? How can we provide them those skills? What can we do to bring about a transformation in the classroom, and later the community at large?

The answer seems simple. The 21st century skills clearly are the ability to think **critically** and enhance **creativity**, to **collaborate** with others, to **communicate** clearly and to **empower** people to lead happier healthier lives. The point is, how can teachers be catalysts in creating these new learning opportunities for the students?

With constant advances in digital technology, the characteristics required of 21st century teachers are that **firstly**, they must become information, media and technology literate. This will facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity so that students can excel in the global society they live in.

Secondly, teachers will have to change their methodology. They could design learning experiences in which students might need to apply both knowledge and skills; encourage students to debate a topical issue

preferably in pairs, before holding a larger scale class debate; organise mock trials or role play exercises on a civic issue, etc. Problem solving in Mathematics could be done by applying various applications in interesting innovative ways. How about finding historical evidence from a primary source, and then getting students to do the same with oral tradition? What about a comparative study to widen their scope of learning?

The Covid19 scourge has taught humanity the importance of human values namely: Love, Peace, Truth, Right Conduct and Non-Violence. These are inherent in every human being. The world needs transformation. Teachers **thirdly**, can play a significant role by nurturing societal values in young minds. Human values teach how to respect, be kind, grateful, and relate to various people in our lives, families, friendships, communities and others. Teachers must creatively introduce these life-skills and values within the classroom situation for growing children to carry it further.

Human values suggest that all people belong to the fraternity of mankind and should live in brotherly love, have empathy, caring and sharing with others. Personal human value- education helps students to become more responsible and have concern for others. What about special students? They cannot be left downstream. This is how values will help one understand the perspectives of life better, making people happy and responsible citizens.

In conclusion, teachers of the 21st century must focus - to motivate students with learning, exploring, investigating, discovering and inquiring to make a difference in this world of ours. We live in a global village, and so teachers must teach young people to appreciate and embrace diversity. Be creative, by using out of the box approaches, awaken the conscience, and prepare children to use their potential worthily.



Liquid Learning- The Way Forward!



Deepika Lobo

Life's greatest lessons are usually learned from the worst times and the worst mistakes. Hopefully we are on the safer side of the mountain now, almost a year after the covid19 pandemic began. From sunrise to sunset, everything we do seems to be connected to the virtual world. The world and its beneficiaries are all in the flow, alternating between real and virtual platforms. Politics, Administration, Business, Technology, Healthcare, Education, etc., have all metamorphosed their working models to suit the need of the hour.

On the other hand, lives have been stressed and human bodies have been challenged, both physically and mentally. The transition for systems to move from offline to online hasn't been as daunting as the toll on humans, especially children.

The teaching and learning process has advanced rapidly through the use of Virtual World(VWs). Back in 2014, research studies forecast that a major emerging trend would be the "Integration of Online, Hybrid, and Collaborative Learning". Synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities, interactive and gamified materials, students as creators, not consumers, and the opportunity to find a pathway through education that suited you, regardless of where and when you wanted to study.

Business and corporates have already made the shift and equipped themselves to survive the shocks (lessons learnt) from the pandemic. However, it is ultimately human resource that lays the foundation for quick and efficient adaptations in the environment in any given context.

All these years, we grew up with the understanding that the home is our first school and parents are our first teachers. The time has come to live this belief. The enhancement of teaching and learning processes has been implemented in most universities and schools through liquid curriculum. The

teaching-learning process will stretch beyond open courseware and closed virtual learning environments. Learning environments will be immune to uncertainties, like negotiated assessments and open flexible learning intentions. The virtual world of teaching and learning has made all 'learners'.

Teachers are learners in the educational context, entering new environments, of which some students might have different or more knowledge compared to their teachers. Additionally, teachers need to learn about their students' perspectives and knowledge frameworks. At home, parents too have a larger role to play as supporting the mental and physical health needs of their child is essential. Attending classes alone in the confines of a room, or in the midst of a fully operational home, yet keeping up to the deadlines of continuously assigned academic or partially online based co-curricular activities can lead to frustration, anxiety, burnout or even depression.

One cannot ignore the strain on the eyes or the lack of physical activity as a result of being confined to a chair for long hours. So, those at the front line of engaging students have enhanced responsibilities in this COVID time. Teachers as well as parents need to be both vigilant and observant while at the same time, gracefully support the student.

A pilot conducted by Microsoft Research found that blended learning intervention led to a small but significant improvement in learning. Blended learning combines the best of classroom and online education. It relies on a healthy mix of different learning modes to optimize learning as a process. Blended learning is on the rise and is being used more than pure online modes in countries around the world. Blended learning retains the human connect between the instructor and the student whilst automating and personalizing the delivery of content. While online learning is emerging strongly across the world, a blended learning approach, arguably, may be best suited to achieve optimum learning outcomes for the offline-driven Indian student.



Youth @ KCA



Simone Alvares

It has been a long drawn-out year ... all have had to make big changes in their lives, whether it be working adults, home-makers or school/college students. We had to all quickly adapt to the new norms and to a “locked down” way of living. Of course, we all faced our difficulties, overcame hurdles but schools and colleges faced their biggest challenge yet.

The Covid 19 pandemic constrained educational institutions around the globe to close down their campuses indefinitely and move their activities to online platforms. The universities were not instantly ready for adopting change and their web based teaching / learning process developed progressively over months. Teaching faculty had little or no time to get their act together, to switch their teaching methods in order to continue the education process and help students gain the knowledge they were seeking.

Being a final year student (2020) and having to finish my papers during a Pandemic, was a difficult task. It took over seven months for the university to decide how examinations would be conducted. We had to make do with whatever resources were available in order to prepare ourselves for this ‘Online Exam’. But more than us, final year students, the children, young adults and teachers faced even more difficulty.

I had the opportunity to interview two students and a teacher and heard about the difficulties they faced. In particular, they stressed that what they missed the most was “not having physical classes”!

Here’s what the teacher had to say:

“The most difficult thing about teaching online is not knowing what the students are actually up to once they join in, as most keep their videos off. Online classes are also very unpredictable as there are factors like connectivity or device issues which one has no control

over. We also have no actual segregation of work timings and off time. Although we have the ability to teach the students from the comfort of our own home, what I miss the most is the ability to reach out to students by gauging their reactions to a concept / topic during physical class. They also are less responsive in an online class, as compared to physical class”.

And the students:

“The past year was very different for me, because everything had become ‘virtual’. Exams were conducted via ‘Google Forms’, and it felt very weird compared to the actual supervised written examination papers. We now have less class time for lectures, as compared to normal school sessions, so everything that could not be completed during the week has to be done in a quick run through during the course of the following week. I miss the various school and extra-curricular activities such as music, dance, elocution, art, as well as the various sports conducted during school hours. What I genuinely miss the most is the meeting and interaction with my school friends everyday!” **(Rebecca Alvares - Std 8).**

“This year came as a shocking surprise! The break from education had its pros and cons ... getting used to online classes while being at home took a bit of time to adjust to but finally, worked out at the end. Allocating time for online education as well as taking the time out to finish assignments has been the most challenging for me, as well as being able to thoroughly understand and follow the teaching faculty, who have done their best in delivering material. They certainly put in every effort, appreciated by students all over. I definitely miss chilling with friends, making new ones, and of course, spending those moments at the college canteen during my break!”

(Reonna - final year student).



The Mangalore Catholic Education Co-Operative Credit Society (MCECCS) - Why we need to revive it.

Merwyn D'Souza

The founders of the Kanara Catholic Association (KCA) hailed from Kanara where literacy and basic school education was widespread. St. Aloysius, in Mangalore, was available for higher studies for men, but no professional institutions. Many who wanted to study Engineering and Medicine moved to Madras, Bangalore or Bombay to do so. Some left Mangalore to go to other cities for employment.

In Bombay, some were able to study further while still working and a few became engineers and doctors. Those who joined government service rose quickly while the more adventurous opted to set up their own small enterprises.

This was the scenario in 1901 when the KCA was formed. The Aims and Objectives of the Association clearly indicate what the founders felt was important for the community and these have stood the test of time. They realised it was necessary for the well-settled members of the community to reach out and assist newcomers to Bombay to establish themselves.

As the years passed and the KCA grew, it was strongly felt that two separate co-operative credit societies should be formed, one for credit loans to businesses and the other for education, to help those who needed financial assistance. In 1916, the Mangalorean Catholic Co-Operative Credit Society (MCCCS) was formed, followed in 1919 by the Mangalorean Catholic Education Co-Operative Credit Society (MCECCS). Most of the shareholders and office bearers were KCA members. Both these societies loaned many Mangalorean men the funds to study or start businesses which they would otherwise not have been able to do.

The KCA, MCCCS and MCECCS grew, as did the number of Kanara Catholics who settled in Bombay. Each Society was run by its Hon. Secretary from his home. In 1945, the KCA rented a 450 sq.ft. premise in a new building in Fort called Noble Chambers and shifted its Registered and Administrative office there. In 1950, the KCA President decided to have common staff and shared expenses between all three societies and he invited the other two societies to shift to Noble Chambers. Table space was also given to a few Mangaloreans who needed to operate their businesses.

In 1969, the KCA shifted its office to Yuvakalaya in Bandra. Meanwhile, the demand for loans from the two credit societies reduced. To keep the two societies functioning, even with limited business, the KCA continued to pay the rent of the Noble Chambers premise and provided table space to Mangalorean businessmen. By the 1990s, the credit societies were hardly functioning.

In 1992, a KCA member, Mr. John D'Silva, vastly experienced in running Co-operative Banks, proposed converting the MCCCS into a Co-operative Bank. The KCA fully supported this and encouraged its members to subscribe to the increased capital requirement and also made the Noble Chambers premise available for this cause. In 1998, the MCCCS got converted into Model Co-Operative Bank with its administrative and head office at Noble Chambers, with the KCA still paying the rent. During the next ten years, the bank expanded rapidly to more than 10 branches and acquired a capital in excess of Rs. 1 crore. At that stage, the KCA requested Model Bank, as per the earlier verbal agreement reached, to vacate the premises. Unfortunately, this resulted in a serious dispute, which is still ongoing.

Meanwhile, the MCECCS, which was also taken over by Mr. John D'Silva around 1994, remained stagnant. Both he and the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Alban Fernandes, have been in charge of this Society for more than 26 years and have done absolutely nothing. Not a single student has been given an educational loan during this long period and no efforts have been made to increase its membership or its capital to provide loans to students from the community.

Recently the KCA, as the parent organisation, requested Mr. John D'Silva and Mr. Alban Fernandes, both in their eighties, to hand over the MCECCS to a younger generation of KCA members who could bring about fresh changes in keeping with the Aims and Objectives of the KCA and the Education Society. The Centenary year of the MCECCS passed in 2019, without even the AGM being conducted. A time for a change of the management is long overdue, especially considering how stagnant it has been. What has happened to the Aims and Objectives of this society and the reason it was formed in the first place? A matter for serious thought.



Catholic Higher Education Society & Mentoring Society



-a unique experiment in the Archdiocese of Mumbai.

Albert Machado

"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today". Malcolm X.

Though most of us understand the importance of education, not all of us can afford to pay for it. A lot of our youth are forced to discontinue higher education due to their financial situation and instead have to take up jobs that undermine their talents and capability. A helping hand during these years could not only enable the child to get the desired educational qualification, but also help his family to come out of poverty.

With this in mind, a group of parishioners from St. Anthony's Church, Mankhurd, led by the Parish Priest Fr. Patrick D'Mello and Mr. Eric D'Sa, founded the Catholic Higher Education & Mentoring Society (CHEMS), to help students pursue higher studies so that they could become successful professionals in their chosen fields.

Over the years, CHEMS has provided financial support, guidance and mentoring to over 43 bright, intelligent students belonging to the economically weaker section (EWS students). CHEMS is registered with the Maharashtra State Government, as well as the Charity Commissioner and the Income Tax Dept. and all donations to it are exempt from Income Tax under 80G.

The Society was formed in 2011 with an initial corpus of Rs.5,55,500/- with 55 Life Members. Today, we have 127 Life Members with a corpus of Rs.12,82,000 and have made donations totalling Rs.25,50,022. To date, we have extended interest free loans to 43 EWS Students amounting to Rs.29,59,235. Nearly half of them have successfully graduated and obtained jobs and started repaying the loans in monthly instalments. A few have fully repaid their loans. They have become wealth creators for their families.

We have heard the saying – *"Give a man a fish, you will feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you have fed him for a lifetime"*. Providing financial support for higher education is certainly the way to make someone independent. There are a lot of young boys and girls with the sincere desire to study and aspirations to achieve, but no means to get there. A lot of us are blessed with the ability to pay for our children's higher education - however, it is also our responsibility to share this with the less fortunate.

Dennis Waitley has said:

"There are two primary choices in life: to accept conditions as they exist or accept the responsibility of changing them".

AMCHI KHOBAR

Published by
Kanara Catholic Association
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Printed at
Richards Printing & Publishing
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Unit no. 15,
Navketan Industrial Estate,
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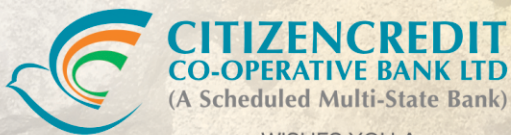
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