



IN Focus

GENDER AWARENESS & SENSITIVITY

Gender Awareness is the *understanding* that men, women, boys, and girls have different roles, responsibilities, and needs. It also involves *being able to view society from the perspective of gender identity & roles* and how these roles affect society needs.

Gender Awareness is important because *gender norms can shape many aspects of life*: Values, Tastes, Interests, Mental health, Career Choices, Attire and Behavior.

Gender Sensitivity is the *practice of acknowledging* the different rights, roles, and responsibilities of men and women in a community. It is the *act of translating gender awareness into action in the design of development policies, programs, and budgets, as well as considering socio-cultural norms & discriminations*. Speaking about these

2 terms in the realm of school education arises from the prevalence, to certain degrees, of **Gender Bias** - a *prejudice of one gender over another*. It can be conscious or unconscious and can manifest in various ways ranging from subtle glances to obvious reactions. Schools generally affect *gender differentiation via 2 primary sources: teachers & student peers*. Children internalize gender stereotypes and prejudices, which in turn guide their own preferences and behaviors in the long run, even as adults. *Educators* equipped with gender sensitivity *CAN address biases in curricula and teaching methods, fostering critical thinking and empathy among students*. **Instilling gender awareness cultivates a culture of respect & responsibility**, preparing young individuals to challenge discrimination in its various forms, towards an equitable society.



Equality Knows No Gender

WONDER WORDS

Gender Role : the role / behaviour considered to be appropriate to a particular gender as determined by prevailing socio-cultural norms.

Cisgender - A person whose gender identity/ expression and the biological sex assigned at birth are the same.

Gender Identity : a person's internal sense of their gender, which may or may not match the sex they were assigned at birth (*sense of being a man, woman, both, neither, or somewhere in between*).

Gender Expression - External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, attire, body characteristics or voice.

Gender Neutral : a word or expression that cannot be taken to refer to one gender only. Gender-neutral terms are like flight attendant, firefighter, police officer, actor, teacher, entrepreneur, etc.

“Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.”

- Kofi Annan

QED Talk

NEP 2020's focus on GENDER AWARENESS

DHRUV GOENKA (he/him)

Advocacy Officer at **The Humsafar Trust**.

Leads 'Bhavishya Initiative' fostering LGBTQ+ inclusion in educational spaces; is also experienced in wildlife conservation, children's welfare and education, and human rights.



■ **Opener:** (i) *Can you explain what 'gender equitable education' means to you and why it is essential in today's context?*

To me, **gender equitable education means creating an environment where all students have equal opportunities to learn, express themselves, and succeed.** This includes breaking down stereotypes and creating space for students who identify outside the traditional gender binary. It's essential because education is where young people shape their perspectives on the world and themselves. If education doesn't actively challenge gender norms, it reinforces systemic inequality. As someone who has navigated educational spaces as an LGBTQ+ individual, I've seen how empowering emphasising on gender equity in educational spaces can be for students who feel marginalized. I think the point is to be mindful and nurturing of students with diverse SOGIESC and not to treat students equally regardless of gender identity. One must offer age-appropriate platforms to talk about this - pushing it under the carpet / ignoring it is not a solution.

■ (ii) *What are some common misconceptions about gender equity in education that you encounter?*

One misconception is that gender equity is only about supporting students assigned *female* at birth or that it *doesn't involve male students* at all. Another is that inclusion of topics on gender equity in curriculum *conflicts* with academic performance or distracts from "core subjects." **Gender equity enhances the learning experience for all students.** Additionally, many people believe that equity means "the same" for everyone, when in fact, it's about addressing diverse needs and providing the support necessary to ensure fair opportunities.

■ **Importance of Gender Equitable Education:** (i) *In your opinion, how does gender equity in education contribute to broader social and economic development?*



Gender equity in education leads to a more inclusive society, which benefits social and economic development. This **aligns with the widely reputed 'Capabilities Approach' by Amartya Sen**, such that unique barriers faced by children with diverse gender identities must be addressed so opportunities for development can be adequately seized. When all students are given the tools and opportunities to succeed, they contribute to a more diverse, innovative, and skilled workforce. By fostering respect for all genders, we **lay the groundwork for healthier relationships and communities.** At The Humsafar Trust, we've seen how gender equity allows individuals to thrive, which in turn creates stronger, more inclusive social structures.

■ (ii) *What are the long-term effects of gender inequity in educational systems on individuals and communities?*

Gender inequity can perpetuate cycles of exclusion, discrimination, leading to social and economic disparities. Students who are marginalized due to their gender identity are more likely to drop out, experience mental health issues, or feel disconnected from society. In the long run, this leads to lower social as well as workforce participation, reinforcing poverty and inequality. Communities suffer because they lose out on the potential contributions of all their members.

■ (iii) *How does promoting gender equity in education affect boys and male students?*

Promoting gender equity benefits boys and male students by challenging patriarchy and hyper-masculine gender norms, encouraging emotional intelligence, collaboration, and respect for all. It helps break the rigid gender expectations placed on boys and allows them to express themselves more freely. This ultimately fosters a healthier and more supportive learning environment for everyone.

”

A gender-equal society would be the one where the word “gender” doesn’t exist; where everyone can be themselves.

- Gloria Steinem

■ (iv) **What role do educators play in fostering gender equitable environments in schools?**

Educators are critical in shaping how students perceive gender. They **can actively challenge stereotypes and foster inclusive classroom discussions and gender-inclusive vocabulary**. By using gender-sensitive language and being aware of the diverse experiences of their students, teachers can make a huge difference. At The Humsafar Trust, we help educators create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students and ensure that everyone feels seen and supported. We provide an extensive teacher training program to help educators become more inclusive and create safer classrooms.

■ (v) **How can school leadership effectively promote and model gender equity?**

School leadership sets the tone for the entire institution. By actively promoting policies that support gender equity, offering training for staff, and ensuring representation of all genders in leadership roles, **Leaders model inclusive practices for both students and teachers**. For instance, creating all-gender restrooms or enforcing anti-bullying policies specifically addressing gender-based harassment are key steps.

■ (vi) **What are some examples of school policies that support gender equitable education?**

Policies like inclusive or **genderless uniforms, gender-neutral facilities, and comprehensive anti-discrimination guidelines are important**. In addition, schools should implement policies that allow students to choose how they identify in terms of gender, ensuring flexibility in documentation and record-keeping. Schools can also include diverse gender perspectives in the curriculum, providing students with a more holistic understanding of gender.

■ **Tools and Strategies : (i) What tools or resources do you recommend for educators to create a gender-sensitive curriculum?**

There are many valuable resources, including training programs on gender sensitivity and inclusive teaching. At The Humsafar Trust, we provide workshops that guide educators in creating safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students. UNESCO’s guides on inclusive education, as well as resources from local LGBTQ+ organizations, are also helpful for educators looking to build a more inclusive curriculum.

■ (ii) **Can you discuss specific pedagogical strategies that can be employed to promote gender equity in the classroom?**

One effective strategy is to use inclusive language, making sure that lessons and discussions don’t reinforce gender stereotypes. Teachers can also diversify their examples and case studies to include gender-nonconforming individuals and LGBTQ+ issues, allowing students to see different possibilities of identity and expression. **Group activities that promote collaboration over competition** can help break down gender-based divisions.

■ (iii) **What role does data collection and analysis play in assessing and improving gender equity in schools?**

Data collection is essential in identifying where inequities exist and tracking progress over time. In 2017, our Trust conducted a study where we found that **65% of trans-identified people are school dropouts and have completed their school barley till 8th grade**. By gathering such data on participation rates, performance, and the experiences of students across gender identities, schools can make informed decisions on how to improve. For example, tracking the performance of LGBTQ+ students can help schools develop targeted interventions to support their success.



■ **Addressing Challenges (i) What challenges do schools typically face in implementing gender equitable education, and how can they overcome these**

One major challenge is **resistance** from parts of the community that may not understand or support gender equity initiatives. Schools can address this by engaging in open dialogues with parents, educators, and students. Another challenge is the **lack of training** for teachers on gender sensitivity, which can be overcome by implementing mandatory workshops and continuous learning.

“In the classroom of equality, gender should never be absent.”
This quote emphasizes the importance of gender equality in education.

■ **(ii) How can community engagement and parental involvement support gender equity initiatives in education?**

Community and parental engagement are key. When parents and the wider community are brought into the conversation, they can help reinforce the messages of gender equity at home. Hosting workshops or discussion forums for parents to understand the importance of these initiatives can make the transition smoother. The Humsafar Trust works closely with communities to raise awareness and foster acceptance, and this model can be applied to schools as well.

■ **Measurement and Impact (i) How can the success of gender equitable education initiatives be measured over time?**

Success can be measured by looking at the **increased participation and performance** of students from marginalized gender identities, reduced rates of bullying and harassment, and the overall inclusiveness of the school environment. **Regular feedback** from students and staff can also provide qualitative insights into how these initiatives are impacting the school culture.

■ **(ii) Can you share any case studies or success stories that highlight effective practices in promoting gender equity in schools?**

At The Humsafar Trust, we've had success with the Bhavishya initiative, where we work with schools to develop safe and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ students. In many of the schools, after **gender sensitivity workshops**, we saw a noticeable reduction in bullying and an increase in students openly expressing their gender identities. These are the kinds of changes that can have long-lasting impacts.

■ **Future Directions (i) What trends do you see emerging in the field of gender equity in education, and how might they shape the future of schooling?**

One trend is the increasing visibility of non-binary and transgender identities in educational systems. **Schools are beginning to rethink traditional gender roles and binary systems.** Another emerging trend is the use of technology to facilitate inclusive education, through online resources and virtual classrooms that cater to diverse learning needs.



■ **(ii) What advice would you give to new educators, especially in Senior Secondary sections, who are looking to incorporate gender equity into their teaching practice?**

Start by educating oneself - on the sex, gender and sexuality spectrum, and the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ students. Be open to learning from your students and ensure that you are **creating a space where they feel safe and seen.** Small steps, like **using inclusive language** and offering diverse perspectives, can have a significant impact.

■ **(iii) What is your view on discussing non-binary genders in secondary grades, given the current scenario?**

It's crucial to introduce discussions on non-binary genders in secondary grades, perhaps earlier to ensure that binary notions of sex and gender are challenged early. **Adolescence is a time when many young people begin to explore and understand their identity,** and it's important for schools to provide accurate information and support. By normalizing these discussions early on, we foster an environment of acceptance and reduce stigma.

■ **(iv) How can individuals advocate for gender equity in education, regardless of their position within the educational system?**

You don't need to be a teacher or administrator to advocate for gender equity. **Parents, students, and community members can all play a role** by supporting inclusive policies, challenging discriminatory practices, and raising awareness. Advocacy starts with creating conversations and pushing for change in everyday interactions.

■ **Your final words...**

My final advice is to **always listen to your students.** They are the best source of information on how inclusive your space feels. **Gender equity is a continuous process,** and it requires openness, empathy, and commitment to evolving your practices. With dedication, we can create a more equitable future for all students. With **PRIDE** and Regards...***

FOR TEACHERS

Gender Sensitivity in Schools

- by **Dr Dheeraj Mehrotra**

Gender sensitisation among children teaches them to rely less on subconscious assumptions and generalisations and more on individual personality traits. As an educator, it is essential to explore equality among all odds. Among different gender biases and discriminations. It is important to start educating the students early before they acquire some beliefs regarding gender differences.

The book, **Gender Sensitivity in Schools**, reflects on the basics and how to develop Gender Equality as a priority in society. A gender-sensitive school has a culture which is boy-girl friendly, orphan and vulnerable-child friendly, while promoting equity and equality within positive gender-responsive environments.



FOR PARENTS

The Gender Identity Guide for Parents - *Compassionate Advice to Help Your Child Be Their Most Authentic Self*

- by **Tavi Hawn, LCSW**

Talking with your child about gender identity can seem overwhelming—but with the right guidance, you can have healthy conversations and create an affirming environment for them as they grow. Whether your child is cisgender, gender expansive, transgender, or still unsure, this guide provides practical advice and strategies to help you embrace them for who they are and support them as they approach puberty. With this book, parents can create a safe and inclusive space for their child to explore themselves, with expert strategies and relatable stories.

GENDER AWARENESS

- *The Role of Schools*

When children are about 2 years old, they learn about the physical differences between boys and girls and by the age of 4, they have a stable sense of their gender identity. During this time, they also learn about "things girls do" vs "things boys do". Teachers and peers directly influence gender differentiation by providing boys and girls with different learning opportunities and feedback. For example:



"Girls make a line on this side, boys on that." "Boys go get your bags."
 "Boys don't cry!" "He is such a sissy - he should wear a skirt!"
 "She's such a Tomboy!" "Girls shouldn't do such activities / tasks."

Teachers may **present curricular materials** that contain gender stereotypic behavior, and peers may exhibit gender stereotypic attitudes and behavior. **Their own responses** to real-life situations, world events can also condition the minds of young children. In order to create an open classroom environment, it is essential to **avoid stereotyping**.

Teachers can take a variety of measures to create a fair and gender equitable environment for young children with a couple of steps:

Being Aware Of Current Gender Bias: In general, girls are always praised for their neatness and appearance, while boys are praised for their effort and ability. We often *objectify* the lack of women in science, math or engineering field. This can be changed by *making the school a bias-free zone & encouraging girls* to take up technical / science subjects.

Junking Old Rhymes & Stories: The very popular Gujarati rhyme 'Ek Biladi Jadi', when seen through the gender lens can feel wrong at so many levels : from fat-shaming to showing the perils of going/stepping out of the 'safe' confines of one's home. "What are girls made of?" & "What are boys made of?", "Smiling Girls & Brave Young Boys" are examples of such gender bias. *Nursery rhymes also perpetuate the encoding of the male worldview* (with males at the top and in charge) into the fertile minds of babies and young kids.

- ▶ The researchers studied 62 rhymes from English, 47 from Hindi, and 40 from Gujarati to understand the gender connotation
- ▶ The researchers claimed that the rhymes projected gender bias based on career or profession, dressing, appearance, traits, choices and activities during leisure and relation with the other gender
- ▶ As almost all the rhymes and songs are anonymous and passed on from generation to generation, they were separated from authorship or anthology
- ▶ The researchers claimed that the rhymes, taught right at the beginning of the education cycle, play key role in cognitive and socio-emotional development of a child

Using Inclusive Language Is A Must: Gender is a *social construct*, so the classroom should be an area in which all these *social norms are left at the gate* and children can be anything that they wish to be. Gone are the days when the population was divided into girls and boys or men and women. Phrases such as "you guys" should be replaced with "you all".

Thinking About Your Own Conduct:

Grouping children by their gender should be avoided. *Classroom rules must apply to a multitude of genders*. An equal number of books, guest speakers, films on transgenders, females, males should be there to normalize these ideas for children and create wide exposure. By *checking one's own conduct and responses*, teachers can create an inclusive learning environment promoting equality and respect for all.



Teaching Acceptance: Acceptance of every person from every background is really important. We should teach children to be *open-minded*. *Teachers are one of the most powerful sources who can help children cope with gender bias*. By being aware of gender bias, they can help children to deal with this conflict and respond to intolerance in the real world.



Create An Environment For Books, Toys, Sports Equipment And Musical Instruments For Everybody: A student's mindset, growth & confidence are really crucial in his/her developing years. Allowing them to pick and choose what they like helps in critical thinking and broadens the learning space for children. Teachers should also *avoid putting girls or boys into boxes with respect to what they can play with*.

Additionally, Teachers can set up a *visually inclusive Classroom Environment*. One can

- ...decorate the classroom with neutral colors and themes that do not reinforce gender stereotypes.
- ...create inclusive bulletin boards that celebrate diversity in gender expressions and identities.
- ...display the accomplishments of the traditionally weaker-considered genders in varied fields of real-life professions, awards, feats and recognition



Revisiting Gender Roles : Exemplifying gender-neutral roles at school, at home and in the workplace is crucial for fostering an equitable society where all individuals can thrive regardless of their gender. **At School**, Teachers must **(a)** *encourage discussions in class that challenge traditional stereotypes*, and **(b)** *promote critical thinking about media representations and societal norms regarding gender*. This can help to create an environment that *encourages both boys and girls to embrace diverse responsibilities and opportunities*. Teachers usually, *without being aware of it*, exhibit gender bias in classroom teaching in the following three ways:

- Reinforcing gender stereotypes (*Dads change car tyres, mums do the cooking*)
- Maintaining gender separation for activities & tasks
- Treating boys & girls differently for assigning roles/duties or while punishing them

In the workplace, promoting gender-neutral roles fosters inclusivity, enhances team dynamics, and drives innovation, as diverse perspectives come together to solve complex problems. Ultimately, advocating for gender neutrality not only leads to improved individual well-being and satisfaction but also contributes to a more balanced, respectful & productive workplace.

Family Engagement : Communicate with families about the importance of a *gender-neutral approach* and how they can support this at home. Provide resources to families to help them encourage inclusivity and acceptance. Parents can be encouraged to play partners in education, by *promoting sharing of chores and caregiving responsibilities*. Such efforts help to dismantle outdated norms and teaches children the value of collaboration and respect for all contributions. These days, some professionally accomplished mums earn more than Dads, so Dads take care of the home responsibilities. The acceptance of the equality & shared responsibility of such roles is paramount.

Addressing Gender Diversity : Incorporation of discussions & debate on diverse gender identities in the *high school curriculum* is essential for fostering an inclusive and equitable educational environment. Our kids are exposed to the real world that is now evolving into a world that accepts & recognises the fact that *gender may not strictly be binary*. By exploring these aspects in high-school (*grades 10 to 12*), we can help students understand and appreciate the complexity of human experiences and identities.

By *integrating aspects of non-binary, transgender, and gender non-conforming individuals*, schools can promote empathy, reduce discrimination, and prepare students to engage with a diverse society. This not only validates the experiences of all students but also encourages vocabulary awareness, critical thinking and respect for others, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious and accepting community. School students today will eventually *work in all kinds of work environment* - some of which are *highly gender inclusive*. It is our duty to ensure that the workforce being groomed for tomorrow *learns the social graces, conduct, communication etiquette to 'fit into' such environment*, to accept varied gender expressions in attire-conduct-behaviour and *not harbour gender biases*.

“ There is a plan and a purpose, a value to every life, no matter what its location, age, gender or disability. ”

- Sharron Angle

In conclusion, let us go back to some child development basics. Studies have shown that the *areas of the brain responsible for language and fine motor skills mature earlier in girls than in boys*. This may be one of the reasons why a lot of boys are known to have behavioral problems, attention disorders, and learning disabilities. *Socialization patterns additionally influence the learning preferences* among girls and boys. Girls tend to like a non-competitive and cooperative learning atmosphere while the boys relish the competition and are driven to perform by the win-lose design. Girls are naturally organized, take better notes, keep journals, set goals for themselves, and ask teachers for help and clarification, while boys do not. By *being aware of these signs of discrimination*, teachers can work towards creating a learning environment that acknowledges these internal and external discriminations but strives to address them and *ensure a classroom of gender equality with sensitivity*. ***

GENDER AWARENESS AT JML SCHOOL

- Voices of the Teacher and Students

As a mentor and a Sociology Teacher, I believe the LGBTQ+ community plays an essential role in shaping a diverse and inclusive society. Embracing inclusivity not only fosters mutual respect but also allows for richer learning experiences. It's vital that all students, regardless of their stream or grade, are taught the importance of understanding and accepting different identities. This approach helps to break down stereotypes, build empathy, and create an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to be their true selves. Inclusivity in education nurtures well-rounded, compassionate individuals who contribute positively to society.

Ms. Sejal Sharma
-Sociology Teacher

Conducting the **Pride** activity was a fulfilling experience. Meeting and interacting with LGBTQ+ individuals gave me a deeper understanding of their stories and experiences.

A role-play organized by the students allowed everyone to step into different perspectives, fostering empathy and connection. The fashion show was a vibrant celebration of self-expression and diversity. It was inspiring to see such confidence and creativity. I'm grateful for the opportunity to contribute to such a meaningful event and to learn from a community that values love and inclusivity.

Paavni Sharma
-Student, XII

While the West embraces LGBTQIA+ community, India still struggles with widespread acceptance despite legal recognition. My journey of acceptance solidified with my school's Pride Day celebration, where I myself participated in a presentation and conducted street interviews to gauge public opinions with my classmates. This experience revealed both support and resistance within society, highlighting the need for greater awareness. The event featured impactful short films, speeches, and an impressive fashion ramp walk. All of this made me respect the community and a proud supporter of the community.

Yathart Thakkar
-Student, XII

The Pot of Gold at The End of a Rainbow- My golden experience after Pride : Although LGBT was always a hushed and frowned upon topic, I was always supportive of the community. I was astounded to hear about a Pride Event annually being hosted in our school. As a Humanities Student, I participated in 2 pride events of my school, one last year with my seniors and one this year with the juniors. While preparing for the events, I learnt about their struggles and how they always fought for their rights against uptight society. It was amazing meeting different people from the community who shared their personal struggles, achievements, how they now inspire and uplift others from the same community to self-love and confidence. Now after the events, I hold a deeper understanding and appreciation of the community and vow to support them always.

Vandita Srikanth Reddy
-Student, XII

Unity. Empowerment. Inclusion. These are a few words that come to mind when I reflect upon the Pride Day Celebrations at Jasudben M.L. School. At family gatherings, I would always wonder- every time the LGBTQ Community would come up in conversations, the room would fall into a thick, uncomfortable stupor. The real question was- why? Was it because of the generational gap, or just plain and simple lack of knowledge? The films, the presentation, the fashion show, the speeches- they impacted me profoundly. But, more than that, every young person in our school, curious or afraid of their true identity, found something to truly resonate with. I know for sure, now, that because of this wonderful step taken by our generation, this topic will no longer be one of discomfort. It will lead to smiles, togetherness and a sense of pure, unbridled belonging, for ALL.

Ria Chawla
-Student, XI

Celebrating Pride Day at JML School profoundly impacted my perspective. I gained a deeper understanding of LGBTQ+ experiences and challenges. This experience transformed me into a compassionate ally. I gained insight into LGBTQ+ experiences and struggles. The event highlighted the importance of acceptance and love. I witnessed the resilience and strength of the LGBTQ+ community. This experience encouraged me to challenge my assumptions. Now, I'm a stronger advocate for inclusivity & strive to create a more inclusive environment.

Angel Loomba
-Student, XII

GENERAL AWARENESS & TRIVIA - a must for students & teachers

The Indian educational space is undergoing a revolution of sorts - with schools rising up to meet the reformations proposed by the NEP 2020 and the subsequent NCFs 2022 & 2023. The focus is shifting towards a more *integrated and holistic approach, for an overall balanced, futuristic skills-based development*. The holistic aspects ensure that kids grow *intellectually, socially, physically, spiritually and emotionally*, as they build their *knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviour*.

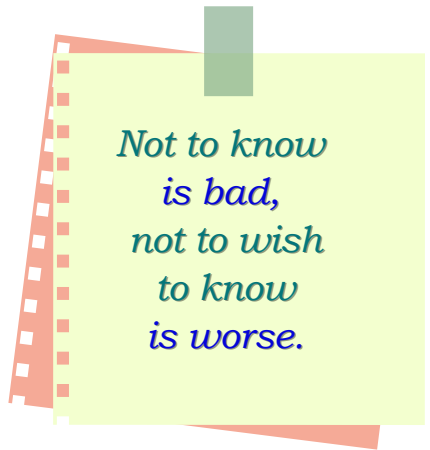
Many schools and educators now truly believe that to prepare students for the future and truly practice holism, students need exposure to more than just the multi-subject school curriculum. Kids require real-life application, soft & humane skills, competency based education and above all, **a fairly good general knowledge & trivia base to become a part of the X shaped workforce** they will eventually enter.

General knowledge helps broaden an individual's knowledge level, and this knowledge can be useful for children in both personal and academic forefronts. It will make them smarter in every phase of life and add to their holistic growth. Cognitive psychologists say that **one cannot be a critical, creative, independent thinker if one doesn't know a lot of facts**. Learning facts and building general awareness require a lot of reading, and once a person is adept with facts, it becomes easier to incorporate higher-order thinking skills. GK can also help children build a more confident, social personality.

Most schools have GK classes, Olympiads, Quizzes, etc on an intra and inter school level. But these usually address the select few who are sort of *born to quizzing* and, by virtue of their own reading and curiosity driven habits, have become masters at GK. Let us pause here for a bit.... The term **"general"** means - *"affecting or concerning all or most people or things; widespread"*. Here our contention is that while the depth & spread of knowledge may be 'general', the focus of the GK curriculum in schools is NOT! In most schools, even today, it is NOT *"affecting or concerning all or most of the people."*

Here's how one could **ensure that classroom interactions build upon GK and trivia for ALL the students?** While this may not be an exhaustive list of strategies, it could provide a great starting point for those struggling with this lacuna.

- **STEP 1 : The Foundation :** For a strong base in GK & trivia (Students & Teachers) ...
 - **identify your areas of interest and set specific goals.** When the topic(s) like - science / arts / history / sports / literature / politics / culture / geography / current affairs, etc are of one's interest then the challenge to start with it is not a stressor. For a start, choose a maximum of 2 topics and then gradually expand the base, remembering to move gradually away from the interesting ones to the not so interesting ones.
 - **read extensively.** Start with books, articles, the newsprint / magazines and reputable websites that cover these topics. Consider general knowledge books or encyclopedias for foundational information. In addition to the standard GK textbooks your school may have adopted, the school or public library could be a great place to look for more.
 - **stay updated:** Follow the news through reliable sources to stay informed about current events and developments in the topics that you have chosen. Use the classroom display boards to pin up facts, figures, dates for the brain AND visual memory to view and synthesize it DAILY, for cementing the knowledge into long-term memory.
 - **engage in discussions:** Join forums, discussion groups, study circles or GK evening classes or social media communities, where you can exchange knowledge and ideas with others.
 - **plunge into quizzes and games:** Participate in trivia quizzes or apps designed to test and expand your general knowledge.
 - **reflect and review:** Regularly review what you've learned and reflect on how different pieces of knowledge connect to each other. Update the display boards and GK corners with such connections (*hexagonal thinking works here!*)
- **STEP 2 : GK at Home :** Involved Parenting demands that parents spend adequate quality time with their children engaging in conversation or playing games that add to their knowledge with a full dose of fun and laughter. GK and trivia talk/activities at home helps children become aware, confident and excited to learn and share. It also helps to keep their competitiveness in the world and assist them to remain mindful of their surroundings.
 - **develop and model the habit of reading:** Reading periodicals, newspapers, GK books, and other inventive materials is another excellent way to improve general knowledge in children. Unfortunately, young children nowadays hardly read newspapers, but homes where parents are 'good' readers, usually have children who also have healthy reading habits.



Not to know
is bad,
not to wish
to know
is worse.





Spending quality time reading newspapers with kids on a daily basis, or reading other instructive periodicals together can help to enhance GK. What is genuinely important is helping the child develop a positive attitude toward *learning for a lifetime*. Reading promotes overall enthusiasm in children and creates a desire in them to remain curious to learn more.

- **watch & engage in quiz / informative shows:** The KBC craze had infected most homes and one can see that watching the show (or its international versions) has indeed become a fun family activity, with a competitive spirit among family members guessign the correct option.

- Also, families should develop the habit of **watching knowledge-based TV channels** (like Discovery Channel, National Geographic or informative Docu-series), as well as specific educational broadcasts, which are superior sources of information and aid in broadening a child's GK and trivia.

- **encourage your child/children to interact with others & participate:** Every youngster should be encouraged to engage with other children - kids require friends not just to play with, but also to help them learn about many topics such as sports, technology, and other events which they discuss at their level. Socialisation helps children to broaden their knowledge base. Parents should also downplay the unnatural focus on academics and ensure that kids participate in competitive GK based events, programs that are both educational and entertaining.



- **play games and puzzles at home:** The physical and online markets are filled with educational games that can foster general awareness, like - Pictionary, Trivial Pursuits, Create a Story, Kids GK App (categorised), What Things Are Made Of, SkillMatics Card Game, etc. Even games like chess & scrabble open the world of chessmasters, scoring, strategies, etymology of words, spellings and more. Such activities offer quality family time with enjoyment and knowledge enhancement.

- **engage children in a healthy discussion:** When a family spends time together, it is critical to consider and respect their children's perspectives so that they feel confident in dealing with varied challenges in life and are capable of standing more confidently. Children must be offered the opportunity to opine / express their views on many types of discussions that take place regarding home, school, happenings in the city, country, and around the world. This helps them to expand their general knowledgedevelop and build their personalities as well.



- **STEP 3 : GK during class interactions :** School classroom are vibrant spaces for GK to happen at any time! Here are few strategies that you may wish to try to encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and a lifelong love for learning among students:

- **starter quiz Qs:** Begin each lesson with a brief GK question or fact relevant but unfamiliar to the subject matter to spark curiosity and set the context.
- **incorporating offline & online quizzes:** Incorporate fun quizzes or games focused on GK, making them a regular part of the classroom routine (*use Kahoot, Quizlet or your own quizzes*)! You can also create a "*GK of the Week*" challenge where students can earn points/prizes for participating/sharing interesting facts.

- **guest speakers & field trips:** Invite professionals from different fields or local community leaders to share their knowledge and experiences, or arrange field trips to museums, science centers, or historical sites.

- **daily GK / trivia sharing:** Build the excitement of having a daily GK/Trivia sharing during assembly or circle-time (perhaps roll number wise / housewise for team efforts), which could be related to an important event of that date from the psat, or some news that made the headlines, or about soemone's birth / death anniversary, or about awards, etc.

- **STEP 4 : GK at the Community level :** Engaging the community in fostering general awareness and trivia among school students can be highly effective. These can be arranged through office bearers of residential societies / flat complexes, or through Kids' clubs or study groups. Here are a few ideas:



- **weekend workshops:** Kids would willingly plunge into weekend workshops that add to their GK and trivia. Passionate resource people (even Dads and Mums), can arrange such events. An annual calendar of planned GK enhancement can be designed for progressive age and level matched build-up.

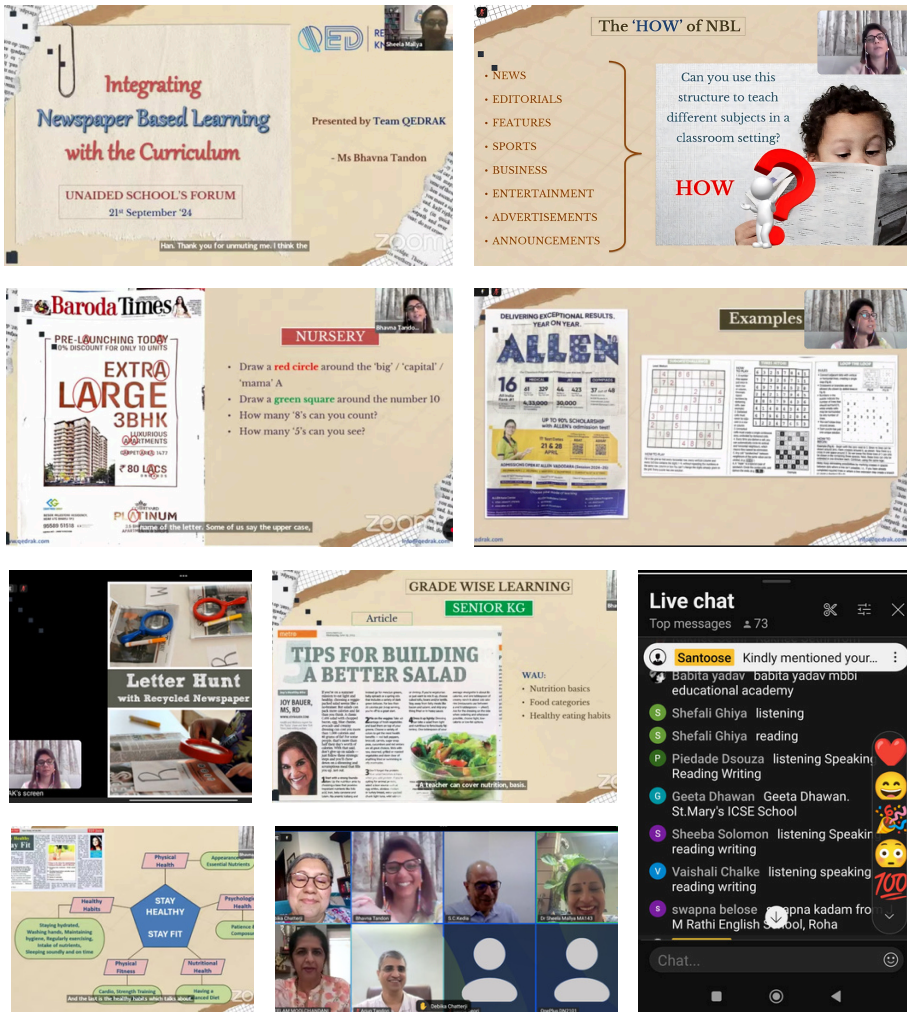
- **nature / heritage walks:** The city of residence (or near-about) allows for GK enhancement through its rich heritage of flora, fauna, historical buildings & sites. Organised tours with reflective writing adn deepr research would help children to widen their knowledge. Even art/dance/music shows add value.

- **child-friendly posts on social media / blogs / radio snippets:** With the appropriate Digital Citizenship awareness, children can also engage with social media to increase their GK. Browsing educational sites, blogs, podcasts and radio stations can help. They can, with adult supervision, also post their researched learnings, views and remarks.

By working together, we can foster a rich environment that encourages curiosity, critical thinking, GK & Trivia, as well as a *lifelong love for learning*. **Do also check out our QEDRAK trivia site: <https://www.qedrak.com/gk-trivia/>** ***

Unaided Schools Forum (USF)

Maharashtra



TEACHER TRAINING

Team QEDRAK has continued with ONLINE training mode since its inception, in 2021 (when COVID ruled the mode of communication). Even after schools resumed *in-person training*, many educational boards, groups and fraternity of schools continue to reap the **benefits** of online training for **large number of members, located anywhere**, through Zoom & Google Meet sessions.

Team QEDRAK, in association with the **Unaided Schools Forum of Maharashtra**, is conducting 6 special **online programmes for educators & leaders**, from July '24 till February '25.

The topics include :

1. *Leading With A Difference*
2. *Newspaper-based Education*
3. *From Effectiveness to Greatness*
4. *Collaborative Learning*
5. *Visual Thinking Strategies*
6. *Classroom Dynamics*



Weekend Courses for **WOMEN**

Communication Skills - I:

Tears - The Last Resort, not the First

Communication Skills - II:

Getting What you Want Without Nagging

Driving a Car Safely: A Skill You CAN Acquire

Silence, the Final Frontier:

Where No Woman Has Gone Before

Bathroom Etiquette:

Men Need Space in the Bathroom Cabinet Too

Appreciating Footwear: *Wearing Shoes You Already Have*

The Undiscovered Side of Banking:

Making Deposits as important as Making Withdrawals

Weekend Courses for **MEN**

How to fill ice-cube trays: *Step by step with slide presentation*

Differences between the laundry basket and the floor: *Pictures and explanatory graphics*

Learning to live: *Basic differences between mother and wife. Online class and role playing*

How to fight cerebral atrophy:

Remembering birthdays, anniversaries, important dates, calling when one's going to be late

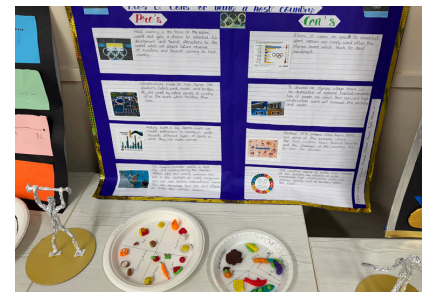
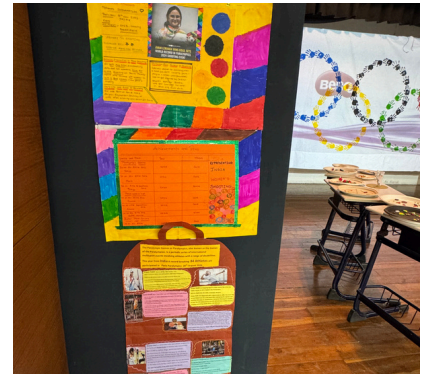
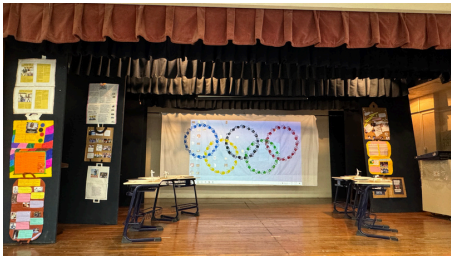
How to be the ideal shopping companion: *Relaxation exercises, meditation and breathing techniques*

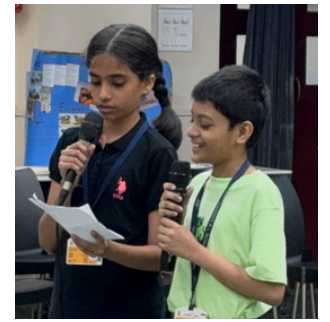
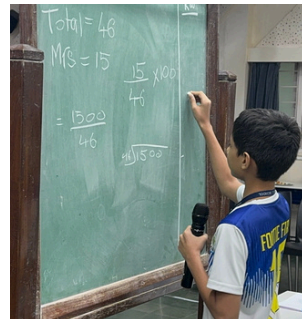
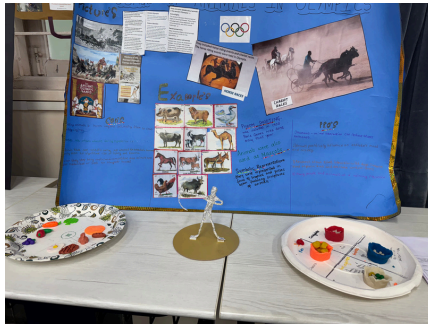
RIB TICKLERS

JASUDBEN ML SCHOOL, Mumbai

TERM 1 : Culmination of INTEGRATED CURRICULUM in GRADE 5 on 'OLYMPICS'

Under Team QEDRAK's guidance, the *JML School - Grade 5 team* implemented a truly exciting, engaging and meaningful discovery of the Thematic Integrated Unit - **OLYMPICS**, just as the Paralympics were going on! NEP 202's vision of making learnign relevant to real life happenings just came alive! Through the unit children explored decimals & percentages, countries & mapwork and history, languages (including French), the science in olympics - materials used & diet plans, dance form (can-can), artworks - charts -related to the olympics (medals, trophies), debates and discussions on issues related to the Olympics, paralympic wheelchair football, as well language supported creative writing. The final showcasing in Octobe was an explosive bonanza for Parents, students, other classes and more. Learning of this nature remains imprinted in memory for a lifetime!





The **November 2024** issue will focus on "**Embracing The Invisible**". Please send your contributions of an effective classroom strategy / class humour / vocab word / a featured article / book titles, to - team@qedrak.com



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