

DIGANTAR

Education for Equality & Justice



Annual Report 2015-16

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Introduction

Digantar, a Jaipur based NGO working since 1978 constantly striving towards quality education in schools. The beginning of the effort was initially in the form of a school, *Digantar Vidyalay* that was envisioned to realize the aims of education based on the democratic values and a vision to cherish the dream of a society based on equality and justice. Gradually, a more wholesome vision of elementary education inherent in the basic principles of the school began to take shape and so the dimension of Digantar's interventions in the elementary education expended through various programmes during the past more than three decades.

The organization has its roots in David Horsburgh's teaching at Neel Bagh where Rohit Dhankar (former Secretary of Digantar) spent 9 months as a trainee. Reena Das (present Secretary and Director of Digantar) who undertook condensed training for five months joined him at Digantar. They started a small experimental school at Jaipur in 1978-79 with the support from *Anokhi*, a socially sensitive business organization dealing in textiles and indigenous crafts. This school, with roughly twenty to twenty-five children of different age groups with varying social background generally became a

vibrant center for experimenting, revising and affirming what the two teachers had imbibed at Neel Bagh. This school operated for about 10 years (from 1978 to 88) on the same scale. During these ten years the two teachers got an opportunity to study and understand the theoretical as well as practical aspects of elementary education. This small venture was quite a success in its own way and began to attract attention of other groups and individuals working in the field of education. A continued process of constant search for the meaning of education and its relationship with society, and interaction with other concerned groups, Digantar's framework became sharper and broader. Gradually a vision of an appropriate design of educational delivery began to take shape.

Needs of rural underprivileged children for quality education surfaced as a priority. More people joined the initial group. In the year 1989, Digantar and the area of its operation shifted from heart of Jaipur to the villages on the south east side of Jaipur.

What began as a tiny experiment in educational innovations at primary level in 1978 has now evolved into a theory of elementary education. It is continuously being refined and tested in Digantar's Schools and at a larger scale in other primary education programmes. Digantar experiment has attracted attention of eminent educationists, education departments/bodies of many state and central Governments, elementary education

|| *Digantar believe that the theoretical basis of any educational programme is extremely important. Often are found the reasons of failure of educational programmes in the lack of clarity on the basic principles of the programme.* ||

Educational Philosophy of Digantar

To our mind education is a distinctive human endeavour which aims at: (a) the development of a rational understanding of the world (with all its socio-historical as well as physical aspects) we inhabit; (b) the development of sensitivity towards the world; and; (c) the development of capacity (ability) to transform an idea into an object or into an action. These three things put together will bring about a commitment to humane, democratic and rational values as well as the capacity to work for their actualization. An educational programme which aims at initiating the children into a process of lifelong learning has to recognize that it is possible only if the —**learning process builds upon the child's life experience**. In our view the child's existing understanding and skills are the only available ground on which further development is possible.

*Building
towards
humane and
a democratic
society*

Major aims of Digantar are:

- ▶ Conduct research in all aspects of elementary education
- ▶ Establish and run schools to provide good quality education to children
- ▶ Help other organizations in similar ventures in academic development

Digantar Vidyalay

Digantar's search for 'alternatives' in elementary education began with a small school in the outskirts of Jaipur city in 1978. For the effective functioning of these schools, Digantar continuously endeavoured to analyze and understand the assumptions and implications of educational theories and policies which helped in designing & developing suitable teaching-learning resources, pedagogy and practices. The overarching aim of Digantar schools is to engage in a constant search, both in terms of theory and practice, for a school system that can provide quality education. Digantar has made special effort to involve the community in regular dialogue to ensure their active participation in the coordination of schools.

At present Digantar runs two schools – one in *Bhavgarh Bandhya* and the other in *Kho Raibariyan*. From a small school with seven children, it has grown into two schools with almost 600 children.



Approach at Digantar Vidyalay:

- Learning with understanding, cooperation with peers and freedom of pace of learning are the characteristics of Digantar Vidyalay. This helps obliterate the boundary of classroom in which children are unnaturally confined, and opens up the possibility of having them in flexible and ever changing groups formed on the basis of their learning level.
- Digantar Vidyalay puts conscious effort to bridge the gap between educational theory and practice which, it believes, helps in understanding elementary education and evolving a better alternative.
- Democratic practices are essential aspect of our system where teacher, student and all other staff members share equal and mutual responsibility of making teaching learning process and school environment just for all its members. This is done through a continuous process of critical dialogue and negotiations.
- Education at Digantar Vidyalay is free; children are not charged any fee.

Developing sensitivity and autonomy in every person in the society is the only way to ensure social justice; and to achieve that education is the only means.

- On the basis of experiences gained from working in upper primary, efforts were made to develop better alternatives for Senior Secondary Education as well with special emphasis on providing higher education to girls. The efforts culminated in a senior secondary education programme which helped girls, in particular, of the local community who would have been otherwise deprived.

Our Vidyalay

Digantar Vidyalay can be placed at the core of the programs and activities carried out by Digantar since 1978. At present, two Digantar Vidyalay provide education to children from *Kho Raibariyan*, and *Bhawgargh Bandhya*. At present, there are 300 children (at the primary and upper primary level) from the surrounding 28 hamlets have been studying. There are 25 girls studying at the secondary and higher secondary level



(Initially there were 26 girls but one girl did not continue). No fee is charged from the children in both Digantar vidyalay schools. This financial year remain a challenge in running our schools due to lack of funds. However, Vidyalay had been putting strenuous efforts to maintain the quality educational processes at school within available resources.

Children and Teachers

Unlike conventional classrooms in the main stream schools, at Digantar vidyalay children learn in groups. The group formation is based on their level of learning needs. Currently, there are eleven such groups out of which there are nine groups at the primary level and one group each in secondary and the senior secondary level. During 2015-16, total 298 children have been enrolled (There are higher number of girls as compared to boys). The details are mentioned in the table below.

Vidyalay Level	Group	Teachers	Children			Monthly Attendance (%)
			Girls	Boys	Total	
Primary	9	10	149	124	273	76.72
Secondary	01	5	16	-	16	76.25
Senior Secondary	01	-	9	-	9	79.28
Total	11	15	174	124	298	

Capacity Building

Sharing and collective reflection by the practitioner is in the core of Digantar's processes. Teachers keep on sharing their work, accomplishment, challenges and concerns weekly. Apart from weekly sharing, all the vidyalay members meet bimonthly *Mahasabha* to share and discuss their common success and failures, to discuss on various educational aspects. Having common sharing is based on the assumption to develop a commune of reflective practitioner.



Digantar believes that for an effective teaching-learning, teachers need to reflect on their practices and continuously engage with the academic ideas. Hence, Digantar organizes such academic enrichment for the teachers periodically. During 2015-16 following capacity building workshops for the teachers had been organized.

Summer workshop for teachers

Every year, during summer vacations, a 30-day workshop is organized for the teachers. This year the workshop was scheduled from 1st-30th June.

Major activities done in the workshop were-

- Discussion on the educational issues
- Determining annual learning goals of children
- Analysis of language and mathematics work done by children
- Developing TLMs
- Rehearsing play by teachers
- Creative writing by teachers and the developed materials, stories and poems, to be work with children

Winter workshop for teachers

The workshop was scheduled from 23rd Dec-10th Jan, 2016 during winter break for primary teachers. The work, during the workshop, was decided in three phases.

Phase I A survey was conducted by the teachers and the coordinators in the nearby areas to know about the youngsters who are studying or dropped out after 10th standard.

Phase II Half yearly progress report of 273 children was prepared by the primary teachers.

Phase III During this phase the focus was on developing TLMs. Teachers developed charts/cards/story charts in different subject viz. Hindi, English and Maths.

Activities

Throughout the year, different activities take place which provide children with much needed space for them to express themselves. Celebrating different events and participating in them is a nice opportunity for them to explore, brainstorm, create and innovate.

Bal Panchayat

Bal Panchayat is a practice that has been followed right from the inception of the schools. It is an attempt to reinforce children's participation in formulation and execution of the rules and norms to be adopted in schools. Digantar strives to accomplish the goal of ensuring democracy at every level. Schools are the places where an attempt is made to



translate this value into implementation.

The concept of *Bal Panchayat* derives off from this philosophy.

Adhering to the democratic principles, elections were held in all the Digantar Schools for the selection of the



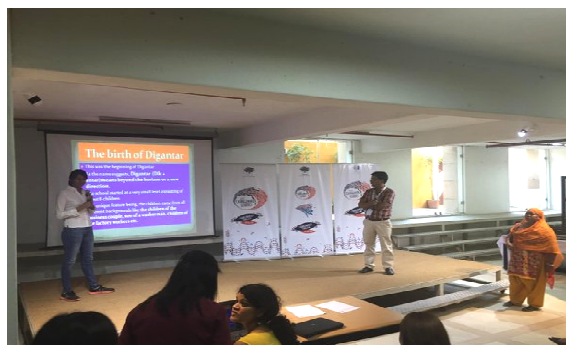
representatives of Child Parliament. The elections aim at proper functioning of the schools and catering to the problems of groups and schools. This year, Bal Panchayat elections were held on 30th-31st July, 2015 and 30th-31st Jan, 2016. Out of the process five children, three girls and two boys were elected for *Bal Panchayat*. The entire process helps children to have a direct experience of democratic processes.

Exhibitions, Fairs and Celebrations at Vidyalay during this academic year

- *Ambedkar jayanti*
- *School foundation day*
- *Independence day*
- *Teachers' Day celebration*
- *Gandhi jayanti*
- *Children's day celebration*
- *Republic day celebration*
- *Screening children films- Stuart Little, Dost Magarmakh, Bum Bum Bhole*
- *Organizing plan by teachers in the community*
- *Participation of children in Jaipur Literature festival*

Interaction with other organizations

Digantar Vidyalay has been selected as one of the first Ashoka "Changemaker Schools" In India. A Global Initiative, The *Change maker Schools Program* has been launched by Ashoka Innovators for the public to identify, connect and support innovative schools around the world that recognise the need for a new way of learning.



Members from Digantar vidyalay team participated in the conclave organized by Ashoka foundation under its Change Maker Schhol initiative from 5th-7th September, 2015. A presentation was presented on the theme *समुदाय की आवाज स्कूल हमारा हम स्कूल के* in the conclave.

Kalbelia Art Academy

Members from vidyalay visited *Kalbelia Art Academy, Pushkar, Ajmer* on 28th Nov, 2015. Academy aims at opening a school for *kalbeliyayi children*. They seek academic support in running the school. The observatory visit was regarding understanding the aspects of teachers' training and school curriculum. Eventually, a six day, 10th-15th March, teachers' training workshop was conducted by Digantar Vidyalay for Kalbeliya Arts Academy, Pushkar. Following themes were the focus of the workshop.



General Theme

- Place of discipline, freedom, fear & punishment in school
- Interrelationship within school-notion and its importance
- Interrelationship between teacher-student
- Seating arrangement in a classroom and how does it affects/influence the process of learning

Language- Hindi

- What is language?
- Process of language development
- Aims of language teaching
- How children learn language?
- What is meaning of 'reading'?
- Methods & strategies of learning reading-writing
- Understanding language learning approach
- Pedagogy of Hindi language learning at the primary level

Attended PoE conference at Azim Premji University, Bangalore

Two persons from Digantar Vidyalay participated in the conference Philosophy of Education held in Bangalore from 9th to 12th January 2016 organized by Azim Premji University.

Educational Tours for Children

Primary level children visited Technology Park, Jaipur on 4th December followed by discussion on various forms of houses and technology with the teachers and peers.

Children Visit

Jaroorat foundation through Jaipur based Engineering College, organized a programme for children. Children from different organizations participated in the programme. Children from Digantar vidyalay too participated in it and presented a mime on religious dogma in the society. The act was appreciated by all.



Visit to Ashoka Foundation

R.N. Poddar School, Mumbai organized one-day workshop on gender inequality on 12th Feb, 16. The discussion was focused on the ways to reduce gender inequality in the society. A Digantar teacher participated in the workshop and shared his experiences of girls' education.



Activity Centre

ASED, a Switzerland based organization and Cargill donated to establish an activity centre in Bhavgargh school. The construction of the building was completed by June 2015 since its start from year 2014. A meeting was held with team members of ASED and Cargill to discuss the issues of progress of construction & its quality and optimal use of library, handicraft room, science lab and computer lab. In Digantar vidyalay, a medical rooms was inaugurated on 5th Dec, 2015 with the support from *Khejri Sarvoday Sansthan* and ASED. Mrs Unninath addressed the community on health awareness.



Community Participation & Contribution

Thrust is put on building good rapport with the community which would corroborate in successful functioning of the school. Activities are done with community with an aim to make the community vigilant about school's functioning, and in the long run be self sustained.

Community intervention is perceived as another axis along with teachers' capacity building and direct intervention with the children to ensure efficacious way to accomplish the outcome. Meetings were conducted with the female guardians in the month of September & October in 15 hamlets to discuss the following issues:

- To discuss children's health related issues
- To acquaint them regarding the current situation of the school
- To acquaint them regarding the academic activities in the schools
- Sending their children to the school regularly
- Community participation is ensured in academic on goings too which gives community people flair of what children learn at schools and how they learn too.

Publication

This year, due to lack of financial assistance, the monthly children's magazine and bi-monthly शिक्षक अनुभव न्यूज लेटर could not be published. However, drawings and stories by children got published in **Chakmak** magazine published by Eklavya.



Academic support to other organizations

Summer Orientation Programme

TARU unit at Digantar offered workshop on various themes during the last summer. One of the courses was on *Digantar Vidyalay: Theory & Practice* organized from 21st-23rd July, 2015. The

group of participants came from various organizations. Vidyalay team was involved during the school observation followed by group discussion on the theoretical dimensions of the school practices.

Teachers training on Mathematics

In the month of August, Digantar along with *Save the Children* organization conducted workshop with the teachers of seven Kasturba Gandhi Balika Awasiy Vidyalay in Ajmer district.

The workshop was conducted in two subject areas, Science and Mathematics. Four team members from TARU unit and Vidyalay facilitated in these workshops in the specific subject areas.

Teachers Training for Durga Devi Trust

Academic team of Digantar Vidyalay organized one day workshop based on the theme *विद्यालय में सीखने सिखाने का रचनात्मक वातावरण* on 26th October, 2015 for the teachers of Durga Devi Trust. Major activities done in the workshop are as follows-

- Role of discipline, freedom, punishment and fear in the school
 - Notion of freedom and its implications in the educational processes
 - Notion of fear and punishment and its implications in child's learning
- Relationship and mutual interaction- why this is important
 - Relationship between-
 - ✓ The teacher and the student
 - ✓ Between students
 - ✓ Between teachers
 - ✓ Between the principle/school administration and the teachers



Participation in the academic workshops

Teachers and the academic coordinators keep on participating in various academic workshops to engage with the contemporary educational discourse and issues. Keeping this aim in view, vidyalay teachers and coordinators participated in workshop on RtE theme organized by Ajit foundation and UNICEF

Girl's Education Support Unit

Since year 2006, girls are studying at the secondary & higher secondary level under *National Institute of Open Schooling*. On May 6th, 2015, due to lack of funds, children had to leave the school. The major hardship faced by the girls who were enrolled in 10th and 12th grade as they were not getting admissions in other schools. After continuous efforts to raise funds for these girls especially, they got back to school from July month. Later, children could appear in their practical exams in the month of September followed by appearing in theory exams in October.

MOU with Ethasa Organization

During this academic session since August a negotiation with *Ethasha*, a Delhi based organization, had been commenced. The organization collaborates with other voluntary organizations to select youths aged 18 and above in order to give them jobs in the nearby industries and other places after giving them vocational training. In this context several rounds of negotiation meeting had been held with Digantar which eventually turns into signing MOU between Digantar and Ethasha. Under this partnership, Digantar shall provide space for the training programme and shall also help in collecting the database of youths aged 18 and plus.



Achievements

- In the new academic session 75 children were enrolled at the primary level with the effort of teachers
- Teachers, in the new academic session, formed and named their learning groups of children democratically. The groups also formulated their rules for the better teaching-learning in the groups.

Challenges

- Fund crunch was the predominant challenge, throughout the year. Throughout the year, lot of energy was invested in encountering with financial crunch; however, no concrete solution at this front has been sought till.
- Due to lack of funds many teachers were bound to leave the schools.

Vidyalay Visited by Other Organizations/Individuals

Many organizations and individuals across the country visit Digantar Vidyalay every year to observe and understand its alternative educational practices. This year about 319 observers from 52 different organizations visited vidyalay (see the list in the annexure table: 1)

The Academic Resource Unit (TARU)

The Academic Resource Unit (TARU) is a nucleus unit of Digantar which propounds academic and research activities. The idea of TARU stems from the need of continuous academic support required by the various projects of Digantar. However, it gradually emerged as a core group that has been actively contributing to shape the scenario of education, especially elementary education, in India. The members of TARU contributed to kindle out a debate on education based on constitutional values by participating in the development of National Curriculum Framework-2005 at national level on the one hand; they have also been facilitating government and non government organizations and agencies actively to live out the liberal ideas on education on the other hand. The engagements of TARU encompass a wide range of activities on teacher enrichment, training programmes for professionals, research and evaluation studies, teaching learning material development, and pedagogical renewals.

The unit came into existence as a response to the need of providing support to research activity and academic pursuits that are undertaken by Digantar. In later period it spread its ambit in order to address other organizations who are also working in the area of elementary education in different capacity

The unit successfully attempted to accomplish the entire task planned under the annual plan for the year. Unit members developed their independent annual plan as per the proposed unit annual plan and later after discussion with the team the plan was finalized. TARU engagements can be bifurcated in to two segments- its engagements with Azim Premji Foundation and TARU's own independent engagements.

TARU Engagements

Summer Orientation workshops

Basically the programme was conceptualized and designed for the educational workers. The programme was an attempt to create a space wherein participants could interact together with their varied experiences and analyze their experiences from theoretical perspective of respective disciplines and develop their critical understanding emanating from such cogitations.

Summer orientation workshop was organized in the month of June- July, 2015 in six different areas viz. *Nature and Pedagogy of Mathematics, Nature and Pedagogy of Science, Children Literature, Teaching Portfolio, Digantar Vidyalay: Theory and Practice and Action Research.*

Each of the courses was scheduled for three day workshop. The response to the workshop was encouraging. More than 100 participants participated in different workshops from various organization, institutions and schools across the country.



Certificate Programme in Foundations of Education

Digantar has been organizing the *Certificate Programme in Foundations of Education* Since the year 2005. So far eleven batches have been successfully completed this programme. More than 250 participants from more than 43 various top-notch organizations across the country have been participated since the inception of this programme. This year a diverse group of 34 participants participated in the programme across the different states and originations of the country.

The aim and thrust of these workshops is to arrive at an overarching understanding of the broad conceptual framework of what ‘education’ is, and gradually come to a comprehension of the processes that may be involved in being able to actualize the aims of education in schools – in other words, an understanding of what would constitute the foundations of education. This understanding is aimed to be reached through a process that involves reading, exchange of ideas, discussion and examination of issues in a holistic manner, reflecting on them individually and in the course of group-work: an exercise that leads to clarity - of concepts and potential practices. The structure of programme is as under:



Sr no.	Workshops	Course Modules
1.	Workshop I (10 days)	Philosophical Perspectives on Education
		Sociological Perspectives on Education
		Perspectives on Learning
2.	Workshop II (10 days)	Human Understanding and Curriculum
		Nature and Pedagogy of Language
		Nature and Pedagogy of Sciences
3.	Workshop III (10 days)	Nature and Pedagogy of Mathematics
		Nature & Pedagogy of Social Science
		Nature and Pedagogy of History
4.	Workshop IV (12 days)	Assessment in Schools
		Issues in Research in Education
		Teacher Education: Policy & Practice
		Digantar Vidyalay: Theory and Practice

The programme gets support from WATIS, Bangalore by getting 15 fellowships.

Material Development and Publications

One of the key functions by a TARU team is to develop materials for various workshops, training modules, translations and trans-creation of materials for different academic purpose. Articles written and published by team members are as below during the year-

- "What (and how) are Teachers Made" in Teacher Plus magazine
- "What did you asked a teacher to be" in Teacher Plus magazine
- "Teaching Maps: A Reflective Engagement with Geography" at *Adharshila Learning Centre*
- In journal published by MHRD "Voices of Teachers and Teacher Educators"
- “साझी समझ-साझे प्रयास” व “बच्चे, अभिभावक व शिक्षक”, खोजें और जानें पत्रिका

Support to TEP, Phagi

Teacher Empowerment Program, Phagi" is a research program in primary education initiated by 'Digantar' from April 2013. This program is conceptualized as a participatory action research (PAR) which calls for voluntary participation of primary teachers of the government schools of Phagi block. Basically the programme began exploring the question that what could be the approaches that help teachers become reflective practitioners and agents of transformation in their own context.

This program is conceptualized to explore the potential of **teaching portfolio** and **peer dialogue** to promote reflective practices and thereby empower the teachers. The program intends to study how teacher portfolio writing and critical peer dialogue among teachers help in sustaining and improving an endogenous process of reflective practice.

The project proposes that a commune of 30 selected primary teachers of government schools, representatives of government education system at the block level (BEEO & BRPs) and DIET faculty along with the team members of TEP will be constituted in Phagi block. TARU team members are engaged with the programme in providing academic support to the project team in terms of facilitating in project team meetings, peer group interaction and writing the programme report.

Developing Website

Digantar web page (www.digantar.org) re-designing task was successfully completed by TARU team members this year. Various sub-tasks under this engagement were accomplished by the members right from identifying and signing the contract with the web developing agency, coordination with the web developer in designing the layout of the web page, developing the content and finalizing the task.

Engagements with APF

Engagement of TARU members with Azim Premji Foundation, in their different academic activities was in the centre of TARU's annual work plan. Below is the brief detail of the various tasks done in the collaboration of TARU & APF.

Co-development

TARU and members of APF and Azim Premji University from the various state and district resources centres collaborated in developing teachers' training modules and other academic materials. Members from TARU participated in developing science modules in APF's science co-development group.

Perspective of Education

TARU members supported Azim Premji Foundation in developing an introductory course in *Perspective in Education* for their working in field institutes. Members from TARU team supported in designing the course, developing course material and facilitating in the workshops conducted in every alternate month.

Status of Elementary Education in Rajasthan Study

Along with various other engagements with APF, a study on status of elementary education in Rajasthan was conceptualized in collaboration with the APF research team and TARU. Core aim of the study was to understand and analyze various aspects of the elementary education in the state viz. schools, resources, facilities, enrollment, teacher education and development of teacher education institutions and analysis of various initiatives taken from time to time in the state to ameliorate the quality of elementary education. Under this study, TARU team developed three chapters on whole status of elementary education in Rajasthan, Right to Education Act and teacher education in Rajasthan.

Shiksha Vimarsh

In continuation with our philosophy of generating dialogue on education, we publish 'Shiksha Vimarsh' a bimonthly magazine on education in Hindi. Shiksha Vimarsh is a registered publication of Digantar and has been operating from 1998. It was conceived as a Hindi magazine attempting connection between theory and practice through writings both of theoretical nature as well as about the practices and experiences of the ground level in education.



Focus and Reach of the Magazine

'Shiksha Vimarsh' (henceforth Vimarsh) is a bimonthly magazine in Hindi and seeks to inform and engage its reader in discourse on a wide spectrum of issues related to contemporary educational thought and practice, policies, problems, case studies, researches and book reviews.

Shiksha Vimarsh owes its genesis to the lack of serious literature on education in Hindi. This bimonthly magazine in Hindi vies to provide a forum for academia and practitioners in education to share their experiences in Hindi speaking belts of the country and highlight issues related to educational theories and policies as well. With these objectives, the first issue of the magazine was published in the year 1998 and from March 2001 *Shiksha Vimarsh* became a bimonthly magazine.

Shiksha Vimarsh, over the last 15 years brought out a range of issues covering: Maths pedagogy, History pedagogy, State of Children's Literature and 13 special issues on Public-Private Partnership in Education, Right to Education, Assessment in Schools, Teachers and Sociology of Education. Specific issues of Shiksha Vimarsh have been used by educational institutions as supplementary reading material for various courses/programmes. Several educational institutions, universities and individuals are among the regular subscribers of this magazine.

The magazine is being published with support of various funding organizations. Since 2012 the magazine is supported by *Azim Premji Foundation* which shall last in March, 2016. To sustain the publication of *Vimarsh* continuous efforts have been put forth by the team. During this phase proposal to seek grant have been send to various funding organizations. Since 2015, *Vimarsh* began publishing advertisements to raise funds of its own.



Circulation & Membership

Number of memberships keeps on fluctuating. Currently, there are two kinds of memberships; one is the memberships registered by *Vimarsh* on its own which keeps on renewed and the other is on the basis of orders given by APF for its state and field institutions as per the content published in the particular issue. The amount of order is not fixed; this is decided based on the issue specific content.

The status of circulation and membership during this financial year is as below-

Shiksha Vimarsh Memberships during this fiscal year

Published issues (Month-wise)	New membership	Sent to subscribers ¹	Number of copies sent to APF	Total issues sent	Number of renewed memberships
March-April, 2015	08	987	989	1976	17
May-June, 2015	44	908	1207	2115	30
July-August, 2015	20	867	1099	1966	22
Sep.-October, 2015	29	839	1455	2294	23
Nov.-Dec., 2015	17	734	1512	2246	28
Jan.-Feb., 2015	8	753	1531	2284	31

1. Reduction in the number of copies sent to the subscribers is due to non-renewal of the subscription

Total six issues of *Shiksha Vimarsh* have been published during the year out of which an issue on educational assessment has been published as special edition. The special edition received well and edition was re-printed to meet the demand. During this financial year, *Vimarsh* has generated the amount of 1, 51,000/- by selling the magazine to different organizations (Room to Read, Aide-et-Action, Save the children and UNICEF). Mr Pramod Pathak has recently joined as editor *Vimarsh*, however for a brief duration, Feb- April, 2016.

Challenges

- Financial support from APF shall come to an end by the end of this financial year. Exploration and negotiations regarding seeking the funds with other funding organization are in the process, however no concrete solution has been sought out till.
- Literal translations of the original papers are challenging and trans-creation of the same takes longer time
- *Vimarsh* is being published for last eleven years, however getting quality articles remain a big challenge. There is great dearth of the writers who are writing articles based on or by incorporating practical experiences while discussing the theoretical dimensions. Hence the magazine largely depends upon translating articles written in English.
- Due to small team size engaging in multiple tasks, devising any thorough plan for the circulation of magazine gets hampered and therefore number of subscriptions is not increasing.

Teacher Empowerment Program (TEP), Phagi



Teacher Empowerment Program is a research program in primary education initiated by 'Digantar' from April 2013 in the Phagi block. This program is conceptualized as a participatory action research (PAR) which calls for voluntary participation of primary teachers of the government schools of Phagi block. Basically the programme began exploring the question that what could be the approaches that help teachers become reflective practitioners and agents of transformation in their own context.

This program was conceptualized to explore the potential of **teaching portfolio** and **peer dialogue** to promote reflective practices and thereby empower the teachers. The program intends to study how teacher portfolio writing and critical peer dialogue among teachers help in sustaining and improving an endogenous process of reflective practice.

28 primary teachers of government schools at Phagi block participated in the programme. Group of 28 teachers were divided into three groups notionally on the basis of disciplines taught by them in primary classes, to write their teaching portfolios. For the purpose of this project, portfolio writing was focused on three school disciplines of primary classes – Language, Mathematics and EVS.

Teaching portfolio writing and peer dialogues was visualized as means to promote reflective practice among teachers in the proposed project. And reflective teaching practice is an outcome of integrated repertoire of relevant theoretical understanding, dispositions, values and abilities. This repertoire is essential for any reflective practice



which at one end helps a teacher to deliberately and carefully examine her experiences, information, formulated insight, ideas, existing understanding and principals to understand its implications for her practices; and serves to spot the problems, challenges, fill in the gaps in her understanding and achieving the goals and objectives on the other. Reflective teaching practice demands for acquiring the pre-requisites which would allow a practitioner to examine and analyse the dimensions of class-room practices/experiences with different lens and thus help them to bring necessary changes in their practices while sharing it with peers.

Portfolio

Teachers' portfolio is one of the key tools of this action research based study. Behind writing portfolios by the teachers lies in the assumption that it helps in reflecting over one's own practices and the deliberating upon various aspects of teaching-learning in an organized way. The research team had not only extensively studies teacher portfolio entries but also did thorough analysis of the entries in the light of the theoretical frame of the research proposal. The elements of the analysis were shared and discussed with the teachers during the school visits and peer group meetings. After discussions and feedback received in the group, a new framework of portfolio was developed. The new portfolio framework includes the indicator such as defining the problem within the theoretical frame of the discipline, finding solution in keeping view the nature of the discipline, implication of the strategies in the classroom and its impact on learning and accordingly adapting the educational processes in the classroom.



According to the new portfolio frameworks the group of teachers developed their portfolios followed by its analysis and discussion in the large group. Number of teachers and their portfolio entries can be seen as follows-

S.No.	Subject	No of Teacher	Year 2013-14		Year 2015-16		Core elements
			Entries	Portfolio	Entries	Portfolio	
1.	Language (English)	05	14	06	20	05	Phase I (2013-14)- Lesson plan and teaching points Phase II (2015-16)- Problem based, specific to the nature & Pedagogy of the discipline
2.	Mathematics	07	42	13	29	07	
3.	Environmental Science	06	13	06	24	06	
	Total	18	69	25	73	18	

- Portfolio Entries -

Peer Group Meetings

Four peer group meetings (PGM) were successfully organized during the year as per the following details.

Peer group meetings	Date	Number of teachers	Activity
PGM I	April 18, 2015	11	Group reading and discussion, working on the concept of teaching portfolio
PGM II & PGM III	July 29-30 th , 2015	19	Developing new framework for portfolio after analysis of the previous entries
PGM IV	January 19, 2016	18	Overall reflection on the entire programme, sharing of programme experiences, achievements and challenges with peer group, government officials and programme team

During the fourth and the last PGM, along with overall reflection by the teachers on the programme display of portfolios, charts and teaching material was also exhibited. Education officials at the block level were present throughout the meeting and shared their positive views about efforts taken by Digantar in general and the programme specifically.

Team Capacity building workshops

- Programme team members participated in the discipline specific workshops (Mathematics, Science and language) in summer orientation workshops and foundation course organized by TARU. Some of the teacher from Phagi block also participated in these workshops
- Members participated in two-day workshop on RtE organized by Ajeet foundation and UNICEF in the month of October.



Publication

Provision of publishing six-monthly newsletter, “सहभागी”, was one of the important part of the programme, however, due to engagement of teachers and the research team, publication of the second issue of “सहभागी” could be done. Nonetheless materials collected to include in the second issues was circulated among the peer group.

New Recruitment and Orientation

Two members from the TEP team left the programme and as a result new members had been recruited from Digantar Vidyalay. After their recruitment a workshop of 12 days was

conceptualized for the new members for their orientation to the programme. With the support from TARU team the fellows engaged in rigorous reading and discussion on the various aspects of the programme.

Coordination with Officials

TEP members were continuously in integration with the block officials, BEEO and BRP in terms of seeking their approval for PGMs, updating the programme status and for the coordination with the teachers and administration.

Data Collection, Analysis and Report Writing

Diverse nature of programme data have been developed and organized this year viz. Portfolio entries, school visit, teachers' meetings Memos based on workshops and programme progress report. Team invested a great amount of time in portfolio analysis after devising the parameters of analysis followed by programme report writing.

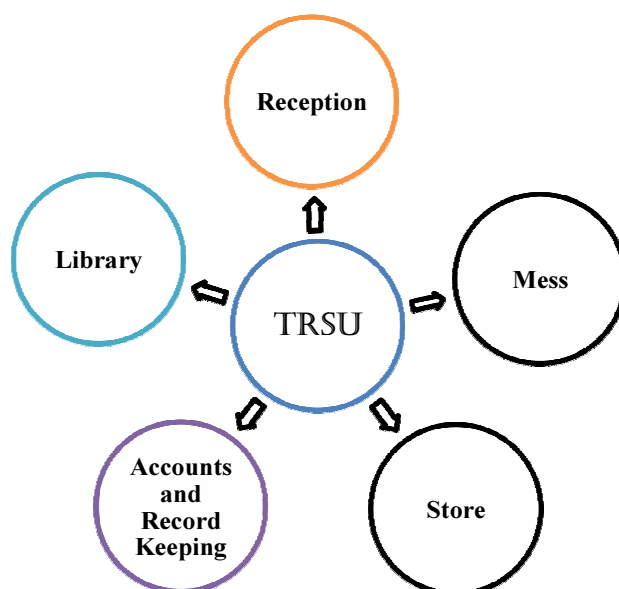
Challenges

- Attrition of teachers from programme which eventually reduced to 18 from 30
- Irregular submission of portfolio entries and hence irregular analysis of the entries
- DIET could be involved in the monthly meetings
- Lack of involvement of the teachers as per the expected due to their engagements in non-academic tasks such as local elections, BLO etc
- New appointment of team members in mid of the programme and lapse of time in their orientation.

The Resource Support Unit

TRSU is the central support and administrative unit of Digantar. It is responsible for overall administration of all projects, total logistic support, accounting and finances, purchase and supply and appointment process of all workers. TRSU plays a major role in smooth functioning of the programmes and projects of Digantar by taking care of all the nitty-gritty which often goes unnoticed. The Unit also helps in maintaining coordination among the various programmes and projects of the organization with the Digantar main office. The support provided by the unit helps the workforce of the organization to focus their vigour in achieving the aims and objectives of their respective programmes and projects.

TRSU constitute of the following units-



The major work done by the various sub-units of TRSU could be summed up as follows:

Reception

- Attending and maintaining all the records of the activities at reception.
- Entering the details of personal and official calls in register as well as computer.
- Work related to photocopy, scan, fax and telephone.

Store

- Buying and issuing materials related to fixed assets and stationary.
- Physical verification of the infrastructure available in the organization.
- Purchase and maintenance of new appliances for the organization.
- purchase of various articles as per the requirement



Accounts

- Preparing and maintaining the accounts book; Ledger, Bank Book, Cash Book, Journal Book and Trial balance and maintaining personnel record files.
- Preparing various financial and audit reports.
- Dispensing salaries and documenting the details related to it.
- Maintaining and dispensing the expenses of various programmes viz. Foundation course, shiksha vimarsh, TEP and vidyalay



Mess and Campus

- Includes mess, campus care takers, watchman, gardeners and other supporting staff.
- Providing regular meals (Breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner) to the guests and trainees.
- Receiving the guests and helping to make their stay at the organization comfortable.
- Cleaning and maintaining the rooms and toilets of the campus.
- Other outside works such as; train reservations, photocopy and other work related to outside market.

Visits and Workshops

TRSU plays key role in making arrangements for various workshops, seminars and trainings organized in the campus. Arrangements includes regarding making travel schedules and booking, lodging and food etc for the participants/guests. Workshops organized this financial year are as follows-

- ▶ Summer Orientation workshops- 05 workshops (June- July)
- ▶ 11th Certificate Programme in Foundations of Education-04 workshops (September'15-February'16)
- ▶ One day first Aid training workshop was organized by Khejri Sarvodaya General Health and Eye care center in Digantr's main campus. Teachers from different private and government schools participated in the workshop.

Other organizations which came to visit Digantr vidyalay or any during the financial year 20015- 2016 are; *Jesus and Marry College- New Delhi, Shiksha Sandhan, Bhuvneshwar, Aga Khan Foundation, IFLS, Kargil & ASD, Aditi college, New Delhi, Mata Sundri college, New Delhi, Ambedkar university, New Delhi, Mirinda house college and Chirag NGO*. Apart from organizations, universities and colleges, individuals visited Digantr for their research/study purpose in vidyalay throughout the year.

Annexure: Table 1

Sr No	Organization	Number of visitors
1.	Young India Fellowship, Ashoka University, P-2, Rajiv Gandhi Educational City, Kundli Sonapat -131028	2
2.	Project Abroad, 63, Patel, Nagar, 22 Godam, Jaipur	2
3.	Govt. Sen. Sr. School, Sehlang Mohindergharh, Haryana,	1
4.	Sikshan Sandhan, Bhubaneswar, Odisha,	6
5.	Spacebar, Malad, Mumbai,	1
6.	Cargill International, SA	1
7.	ASED	1
8.	CINI, Khunti, Jharkhand	4
9.	D.S.E. Jhajjar, Haryana	2
10.	Disha Trust (Umang) Ganaur, Haryana	1
11.	TISS	1
12.	TATA Trusts	2
13.	Takshila Public School, Bhopal	1
14.	TATA Institute of Social Science, Mumbai	2
15.	Umang, Ganaur, Sonapat	1
16.	Free Lancer, Dwarka, N.D.	1
17.	IL&FS Education & Technology. Noida U.P.	3
18.	Banasthali Vidyapeeth	23
19.	Etasha Society	2
20.	Sikshan Sandhan, Bhubaneswar	4
21.	Aga khan School, Sidhpur	2
22.	The Choice Fashions	1
23.	Aditi B.El.ed Mahavidyalay, Delhi	52
24.	Ambedkar University, Delhi	5
25.	Youth Venture, Ashoka India_Yashveer Singh	1
26.	FLOW_Euza & Arundhati Mitter	2
27.	Sit School For International Training, Jaipur	3
28.	CKFI School, Cheani	1
29.	SKIT Collage, Jaipur	15
30.	Mata Sundari B.El.Ed. Collage, Delhi	50
31.	Durga Devi Trust_Sajjan Agrwal	1
32.	Ashoka India	2
33.	Goel Steel Company, Chennai	2

34.	Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi	28
35.	Patang, Sambalpur, Odisha	2
36.	Meenakshi College of Engineering, Chennai	2
37.	Azim Premji University, Bangalore	2
38.	Miranda House University, Delhi	48
39.	Arpit Ch. School, Jaipur	1
40.	St. Christopher School, U.K.	16
41.	Disha India Foundation, Gujarat	2
42.	Etasha Society, New Delhi	1
43.	KEC International Ltd, Jaipur	2
44.	One Drop Foundation	1
45.	Azim Premji University, Bangalore	3
46.	Mission Sunrise Children Academy, Pushkar	2
47.	Kalbelia Arts Academy	2
48.	Jyoti Social Foundation	1
49.	B.A. Gargi College, New Delhi	1
50.	United Indian Insurance Co. Ltd, Jaipur	2
51.	Foundation of Equal Citizenship, Delhi	1
52.	Yuva Ekta Foundation	4
53.	Merlet college the Netherlands	20
54.	Chirag Organization, Uttarakhand	8
55.	Azim Premji Foundation	10
56.	Shikher Yuva Manch, Vilaspur	7
	Total	364

ABBREVIATIONS

AEP	Alternative Education Programme
APF	Azim Premji Foundation
ASED	Action for the support of deprived children
BEEO	Block Elementary Education Officer
BRC	Block Resource Centre
BRCF	Block Resource Centre Facilitator
CRC	Cluster Resource Centre
CRCF	Cluster Resource Centre Facilitator
DEO	District Education Officer
DERF	District Education Research Forum
DFID	Department for International Development
DIET	District Institute for Education and Training
DPC	District Project Coordinator
EVS	Environmental Sciences
FoE	Foundations in Education
JDA	Jaipur Development Authority
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
NGO	Non Government Organization
PS	Primary School
TARU	The Academic Resource Unit
TRSU	The Resource Support Unit
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
UPS	Upper Primary School
WATIS	Wipro Applying Thought in Schools

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