



Digantar Shiksha Evam Khelkud Samiti, in short Digantar, is a non-governmental, not for profit organization, working in the field of education. Digantar School (Vidyalaya) is at the Centre of the programmes and activities carried out by Digantar since 1978. At present, Digantar provide education to children through its two schools. The Academic Resource Unit (TARU) is a significant unit of Digantar, distinguished by its commitment to enriching the quality of education for all children by developing a strong knowledge base and imparting training.

## Celebration of Republic Day

Republic Day is a National Holiday in India commemorating the adoption of the Constitution of India, and the country's transition to a Republic, which came into effect on 26 January 1950. Celebrating 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day, on January 26, 2024, the flag was hoisted in both the schools of Digantar, and at Digantar Main Campus. At the main campus, Pragya Srivastava (Coordinator, TARU) hoisted the tri colour, and all staff members attended.



At Digantar Vidyalay, Bhavgarh, after flag hoisting, a programme based on the theme 'democracy' was presented by the children and teachers of both the schools. The details of the programme are as follows. To present the Preamble of the Constitution on the stage and make people aware of the ideas underlying it; Presentation of the play "Sher Bola Meow" by children; Song: "A squirrel, another squirrel..."; Presentation of the play "Raja Ki Rasoi" by teachers and Song: "Ab to mazhab koi aisa bhi chalaya jaaye....". In addition, an Exhibition on the theme 'Our rights given by the Constitution, new laws, and values of the Constitution' were presented, by displaying charts made, drawn and written by children. In addition to the students, parents and teachers and Coordinators from the Vidyalaya, all staff members from mina campus, including the Secretary and Executive Director attended the function.

## Workshop on Sexual Harassment at Workplace

The Government of India (GoI) has enacted the Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal Act), 2013 with the objective to create a safe and secure workplace for women free from sexual harassment. This Act caters to women working both in organised and unorganised sector and establishes a redressal mechanism for the disposal of their complaints. This Act is unique in its broad coverage which includes all women irrespective of their work status, whether working in organised or unorganised, public or private sectors, regardless of hierarchy. The domestic workers are also included within its ambit.

As part of educating and sensitizing Digantar staff about the Act, a one day workshop on 'Gender Sensitivity and Sexual Harassment at Workplace' was organized at Diganatr Vidyalaya on January 5, 2024. Adv. Kavita Srivastava and Prof. Kanchan Mathur facilitated the workshop and spoke about various aspects of the act with specific examples. Key provisions of the Act and Rules of 2013 were shared through PPT. In addition, criteria for the selection of Internal Committee members, their responsibilities and the procedure for the functioning of the committee, as per the rules were explained in detail. All employees of Digantar participated in this workshop.



## Visit from Merlet College, Netherlands



Fifteen students and Five Faculty members from Merlet College, Cuilk, Netherlands visited Digantar Vidyalaya on Saturday, Feb. 10, 2024. This is the 4th visit of Merlet College to Vidyalaya. Earlier in 2018, 2019 & 2020, before Covid, they have visited Vidyalaya. After a brief visit to the Activity Centre, Computer Lab, Science Lab and the Library, the visiting team participated in the School General Assembly. After welcoming the team

with a Rose flower and a greeting card made by the Children, both the visiting students and Vidyalaya students presented few songs and cultural activities. There was an opportunity to ask questions and respond as well. After the Assembly, the visiting students were engaged with three groups, for Games (Rumal Jhaptta), Art work (Painting) and Story-telling (with acting). Thereafter a meeting was held in the Assembly hall. George Cheriyan, Executive Director spoke about Digantar. There after detailed interaction was held. The visiting group made a money contribution to the Vidyalaya and contributed 7 laptops to the school. Executive Director, along with both the Coordinators, facilitated the visit.



## Anemia in Adolescent Girls

Anemia is a common condition in adolescent girls, especially those who have sudden growth spurts or menstrual periods. A diet that's low in iron can also cause anemia. Iron deficiency is the most common cause of anemia. Treatment for anemia usually involves iron-rich foods in the diet, plus iron supplements.

In consultation with Dr. Meeta Singh (Vice President, Digantar) and Smt. Jane Singh (Member, Executive Committee) and Dr. Ajay Wahi, a blood collection was arranged by Ajay Wahi Clinical Lab on Feb. 13, 2024. On behalf of the lab, Mr. Fateh Chand, Technician visited the school and collected the blood samples of 66 adolescent girls. After testing, the Analysis of the report was done Dr. Ajay Wahi. Based on the analysis report follow up actions are in the process of getting initiated.



## Visit of Inspiring Organic Farmer to Digantar



Om Prakash Pareek, is an inspiring organic farmer from Dausa, Rajasthan. He has transformed his family's 12-acre chemical-based farm into a thriving organic haven for fruits, vegetables, and grains. His wife Rubi Pareek is also actively involved in organic farming and innovating. Pareek family owns 45 bighas (12.3 acres) of land. Now they are innovating a three-layer approach to grow vegetables on their farm. They also sell 200

quintals of vermin-compost and Azolla fern per month. They have trained over 15,000 people in organic farming for free.

On invitation by ED, O.P.Pareek visited Digantar on Feb. 21, 2024. Visited Vidyalaya along with ED and interacted with Coordinators and support staff and given tips for organic farming. On return, he also interacted with CCU and TARU team at main campus. He also provided 100 kgs of Vermi Compost (50 kg x 2 bags) and several varieties of Desi vegetable Seeds, free of cost to Digantar.



## Bal Panchayat



On February 2, Bal Panchayat was formed in both the schools of Digantar. In the process of formation, first of all the selection process were shared with all the children. Accordingly, the contesting election, first submitted their nominations and there after the election symbols were distributed, their campaigning started. The outgoing Bal Panchayat members,

who were in the role of Election Commission, played an important role and successfully conducted the elections. After the counting of votes, the elected members took charge on March 3 and took oath to do their work with honesty.

## Study Tour

On February 21, primary level students of Digantar Vidyalay were taken on a visit to Zoological Park, Nahargarh. The children observed the animals in the park and discussed about the animals with the teacher and understood about them.



On February 21, primary level students of Digantar Vidyalay were taken on a visit to Zoological Park, Nahargarh. The children observed the animals in the park and discussed about the animals with the teacher and understood about them.

## Study Visit



A group of Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed) girl students from Mata Sundri College for Women, New Delhi came to visit Digantar Vidyalay from January 15-18, 2024. They first observed the groups and talked with teachers, they understood Digantar's philosophy and teaching method. One day, they interacted with the parents of the children and former students in the community and also

understood the history and philosophy of Digantar by interacting with the Executive Director and the Coordinators

## Winter Capacity Building Workshop for Teachers

Due to winter vacation of children extended till January 15, Teachers' Capacity Building Workshop was organized from January 1-13, 2024. In this workshop work was mainly done on the following points. The report of the daily meetings held with the children in the school were reviewed and its meaning and objectives were discussed in detail and understanding was created. Tasks of Children were discussed in preparation for the Republic Day and an



outline of the programme was prepared. Since the children had a long holiday due to extreme winter, the teachers also prepared a play "Raja Ki Rasoi". and read Articles: Preamble of the Constitution, understanding of poetry - (Devayani Bhardwaj) skill of telling stories - (Krishna Kumar) Conversations with children - (Rohit Dhankar) and meaning of patriotism and patriotism (Devayani Bhardwaj) and discussed about the content, after reading the articles. All the teachers prepared one story each and presented it and on the basis of this, understanding was developed on the method of storytelling and story selection.

## The Academic Resource Unit (TARU)

### An Introduction to Philosophy of Education – Online Course

The course "An Introduction to Philosophy of Education" commenced on February 23 with opening of the course portal and the uploading of required reading materials for Unit 1, focusing on Philosophy, Language, and Logic. A total of 40 participants are enrolled, with 25 from organizations affiliated with Wipro Foundation and 15 individuals who have paid the full course fee. Before the course commencement, thorough dissemination of course information was conducted. An orientation session for registered participants was held online on the Feb. 19 to familiarize them with the course structure and address any queries they may have had. Subsequently, all participants were enrolled on the course page and began engaging with the material by reading Chapter 1 and submitting their response notes. In parallel, work is in progress on developing unit-wise chapters for upcoming units, as well as crafting scripts for 15-minute videos corresponding to each unit by Rohit Dhankar.

### Reading Circle

The Sociology of Education workshop participants, led by Prof. Amman Madan, decided to establish a regular reading circle to enhance their understanding and stay connected. Veda, one of the participants, took the initiative to coordinate the first session, which took place on January 25. The second session held on February 10. In both the sessions, the group discussed the initial pages (1 to 10) of the first chapter of Steven Brint's "Textbook of Sociology," focusing on schools as social institutions and various schooling theories. They agreed to continue with Chapter 1 for subsequent sessions and plan to read and discuss the remaining part of it.

## 'Vision of Education' Workshop



The Vision of Education workshop for partner organisations of TATA Trust was held from January 29 to February 3, 2024, spanning six days. A total of 28 participants from four different organisations, namely Centre for Micro Finance (CFMF), TATA Trust, Himmotthan, and Aga Khan Foundation, attended the workshop. The primary objective of the workshop was to develop a

comprehensive vision of education, achieved through critical analysis of the New National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023.

## Step Back Workshop of SwaTaleem Organisation

From January 4-9, 2024, SwaTaleem held its annual stepback workshop at Digantar campus with 27 team members. The focus was on reviewing the past year, reinforcing their mission, and planning. SwaTaleem, dedicated to empowering rural adolescent girls, often collaborates with state governments, particularly in KGBV Schools in Haryana.



During the workshop, the team got engaged with Digantar's team, including a two-hour discussion with Rohit Dhankar. In the session, the team of SwaTaleem learned about Digantar's journey and discussed ground-level challenges such as the amount of freedom to give children and how to motivate teachers to work better. The team visited Digantar School to understand its functioning. TARU members and the admin team coordinated this visit.

## Digantar Vidyalaya Vision 2030 - Feasibility Study (FS)

During the month of January, a list of general and specific hypotheses was compiled, serving as the foundation for developing an online survey questionnaire in both English and Hindi. After multiple discussions among team members and incorporating inputs from Mr. Rajesh Kumar, an Advisory Group member, the questionnaire was finalised and uploaded onto Google Forms. The sampling framework for the online survey was planned using a multi-stage sampling methodology.

Decisions also were made regarding the three modes (online, face-to-face, and focus group discussion) of gathering responses for questionnaires addressed to parents, along with the formulation of frameworks for compiling information on outstation school visits.

Throughout the month of February, data collection for both the online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were the primary focus. Recognizing the importance of



understanding successful school models, visits were made to four outstation schools: Poorna Learning Centre in Bangalore, Vidya Vanam in Coimbatore, Aksharn and School in Pune, and Riverside School in Ahmadabad mainly during February. These visits provided invaluable insights into various aspects of school operations, including curriculum, pedagogy, infrastructure, staffing, and sustainability practices/models.