

*And the
Parijataak
Smiled*

Original Marathi Author : **Shivraj Pimpude**
Translation: **Pranita Walavalkar**

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Education meant classrooms, education meant textbooks,
education meant private tuitions.

All these boundaries were shattered by the COVID-19 pandemic.
Within a year, the tools of education changed. The methods changed.

This period of the pandemic became, in every sense,
a time of transformation for the field of education.

Jnana Prabodhini Nigdi Centre's Pre-Secondary section was no exception.

Through this book, readers will find many examples of how a student's
family, home, and surrounding environment were used creatively as
spaces for learning, leading to rich educational experiences.

It is hoped that teachers working in both formal and
informal education, young volunteers, and parents will be
able to implement the ideas from this book into practice and in doing so,
will naturally be inspired to develop new ideas of their own.

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And the Parijatak Smiled

(Innovative Educational Experiments Conducted
During the COVID-19 Pandemic)

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During the COVID-19 Pandemic)

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About the Author

- ◆ Alma Mater: Jnana Prabhodini Navnagar Vidyalay Nigdi
- ◆ Education : M.A., M.Ed., DSM
- ◆ While pursuing M.Ed at Savitribai Phule Pune University, was selected for a 7-day study visit to Finland to study its education system.
- ◆ Associated with Jnana Prabodhini, Nigdi since 2000.
- ◆ 10 years of work experience in the Gurukul project at the Nigdi center.
- ◆ In charge of the Pre-Secondary Department from 2016 and Head of Formal Education Department from 2024.
- ◆ Authored and published the book 'An Parijatak Hasla' based on various activities carried out during the Corona period. Mr. P. K. Ghanekar presented the 'Harit Pustak' award on behalf of the Olive Institute. The 2nd edition of the book was published in 2023.
- ◆ Another work, 'Dhamal Bhatkantichi...' received the Yashwantrao Chavan Center's 'Lakshavedhi' award.
- ◆ Contributed writings on various experiments in experiential education to magazines like Jadanghadan and an e-magazine. Additionally educational writings were published in various Diwali magazines and the Saptarang supplement of Sakal newspaper.
- ◆ Conducted interactions with students and teachers across many schools in Maharashtra on various topics.
- ◆ During the Corona period, contributed to teaching history to 4th grade students via the 'Tilimili' program broadcasted on *Doordarshan*.
- ◆ Offered guidance sessions through workshops held with Sakal Media Group, NIE, multiple ITIs, and various educational institutions.



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The one who asked me to write blogs **Mrs. Madhura Dev**

The one who taught me blogging from scratch **Mr. Vinit Date and Mrs. Vrushali Dengavekar**

The one who took immense efforts to make all the activities in the article successful **All colleague teachers**

All those **Students** who participated in the activities

When we started the activity of exploring nature, they wrote a research paper spontaneously **Mrs. Sujata Honap, Mrs. Sandhya Khasnis, Mrs. Prasanna Alone**
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A teacher's nostalgia

I am a teacher. For the last forty-two years, I have been fortunate enough to teach students from the primary section to the post-doctoral level. Skinny as I am, anyone can fathom that I am a teacher to my core! To top this attribute, I was asked to write a preface which is enough evidence to prove that I have grown old. Hence, I agreed to write when Mr. Shivraj Pimpude approached me. Without a second thought I realised, I made the right decision when I read about the various fun activities carried out by teachers and students of Jnana Prabodhini, Nigdi during the Corona period.

I studied in a typical, traditional, education system. But some teachers took special efforts to make the subject more interesting. I still remember how we were mesmerised after every such lecture. The teacher who could utilise this sensitivity tactfully was considered the best teacher. I had heard words like, an international model, model lesson, lesson planning, etc. but have realised that while we are being taught or we are teaching the repetitiveness in the subject decreases the fun, irrespective of the type of the said model. If the process of education is based on a pre-planned syllabus or design, then it is clear that something is seriously wrong. Learning a new subject is like exploring new paths into the woods, trekking on a new mountain peak, finding new treasures or resolving suspense. The experience should make one feel adventurous.



To experience this it should include uncertainty, surprise factors, curiosity, innovation, boldness etc. Such things like ‘Let’s try something new’ or ‘I do not agree, let’s challenge this’ makes it more interesting. It should not include fixed criteria of success or failure. These factors do not fit in any routine. These cannot be pre-planned. Without spontaneity and uncertainty, there would be no fun in either learning or teaching. The ideal model in teaching is having no pre-decided model.

Education is science and teaching is an art but in any given circumstances it is not a technology. You can use technology in teaching but technology should not become a way of teaching. In science one cannot predict the next innovation. A poet can never say what his next line would be because it is either science or an art. On the other hand, the machine will always give the same output as programmed. This is called technology. If one can predict what the next lesson is about, what is to be taught in the next class, then that becomes technology not education! If one continues to teach the same lesson for years then unknowingly it becomes monotonous. In such a situation there comes one change that shakes the whole system and the pattern of teaching. Do you think there would be any other ideal situation than Covid? When the whole system of education in schools and colleges had collapsed due to lockdown and coming up with different methods of teaching was the success story of not just one person



but of the whole education system of Jnana Prabodhini. While reading this book I could recollect six decades of my life which I spent in this education system both as a student and as a teacher. We were naughty students in school. Some of our teachers had tried such experiments with us. When we were in the sixth standard our English teacher had given us a mantra ‘Speak in English’. Internet didn’t exist even in dreams. The teacher had asked us to write the difficult words which he would explain later. The naughtiness in us took full advantage of this opportunity. We chose words that we thought would never exist in English. Words like ‘*Anda jhala*’, ‘*Dabada aispais*’, ‘*Rumalpani*’ (words typically used by Marathi children while playing). Our teacher was about to faint when we insisted English word for ‘*kamichi majority*’ etc. Later, our teacher didn’t impose the rule of speaking in English at least in our class. Our pure and honest motto was just to annoy our teacher. But for that, we had to take a lot of effort in ideating. This naughtiness in students is the main factor in education. The questions we asked were so rebellious that we really took extra efforts in thinking of a novel idea each time. Any amount of technical reading would not have helped us to improve, as this act did.

Few things that appear simple or funny have several scientific facts hidden behind them. For example, in this book you will find resolutions where you have to walk around with both eyes closed or use only one hand for the



whole day. In Biology, this method is used to find the role of a particular gene, a molecule, or hormone in a body. Remove that gene or that particular protein and see the result which will clarify its role when it existed. Day by day, hour by hour, we keep learning things without even realizing that we are learning. Many things have various end results and we realise them later in our life.

The most important thing is listening to these many stories, experiencing, and remembering them. All these factors are reflected upon beautifully in 'And the Parijatak smiled'.

That reminds me of your question in the book about the Parijat tree which was so appropriate. We see the Parijat flowers carpeted on the ground early in the morning. But does anyone know when these flowers exactly bloom when do they or fall/shed from the trees? I have heard from the Adivasis of Satpuda that every tree has its own time of dropping/shedding the flowers. The Mahua tree drops its flowers according to different schedules. Few flowers fall at night from twelve to two while few fall from four to six in the morning. Rarely some flowers fall at twelve in the afternoon. Animals like bears eat these flowers. They remember these timings. As Adivasis are aware about this they collect flowers before the animal arrives. They can differentiate between fresh and stale flowers. But the question is why is it so? Why does each tree have a different timing? It seems Botanical scientists are yet to work on this part and



find the reasons behind it. But the fact is, even illiterate tribals have observed it and hence have that knowledge.

Nature has many things that science is yet to study. If we start from zero then we will find them everywhere. It is not necessary to discover something in order to contribute to the field of science it will be enough if you ask questions as even that is considered as contribution to knowledge and anyone can do so. Curiosity does not need money or intellect. However, our education system is stuck in expected questions and hence we do not understand the importance of unexpected questions. The only fault I see in this book is that out of many questions only those that had solutions have been mentioned in this book. But there are still many questions which do not have answers. These questions may appear stupid but may lead to many revolutionary discoveries. There should have been a separate collection of such questions and been published in the same book or may be in some other form. If students ask a few questions which teachers are not aware about, then few teachers find it embarrassing. What is so embarrassing about it? When a teacher replies that he/she had never thought about such a question then that would be the biggest achievement for the teacher and also the education system.

Dr. Milind Watve
Independent researcher



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