

Awards for teachers

The THT Edustar Award is an initiative of TeachersHelpTeachers, a social enterprise in education with an impact. It is a one-of-a-kind unpaid award presented 'For the Teachers, By the Teachers'. THT founder, Rakhee Chhabria, a teacher by

profession, believes that to enhance education, we need to invest in educators.

The 2nd THT Edustar Award ceremony was held at the Bombay Stock Exchange on September 14, 2019.

It was the culmination of a 3-month long odyssey which saw 224 teachers from across India nominating themselves for the THT Edustar Award 2019 in the Academic/Non Academic Teachers category. In all, 24 educationists applied for the Special Category Awards instituted this year such as: Educational Leader of the Year, Excellence in Early Years, Excellence in STEAM, Innovative Educator and Unsung Hero. Teachers across India participated, each filling up an exhaustive online form and sending their Plan and Resources. From these, 85 shortlisted teachers uploaded yet another form with 2 videos showcasing their actual classroom teaching and reason for nominating themselves. The 11 who were selected for the Special Category filled up a second form and furnished further credentials along with a one-minute video.

These awardees are involved in contributing towards supporting the online community by sharing their expertise, teaching videos and content on the THT website. (www.teachershelpteachers.in)

The guest list was a veritable who's who from the education fraternity. Keynote speaker Indu Shahani, spoke about Upskilling. Fatima Agarkar of KA Edu Associates digitally launched the TAP Retreat in association with THT. Theatre Professionals founder Jehan Maneckshaw launched a short term course in using drama in learning. The Unmash School details provided by Divesh Bhatija were fascinating. Bhavin Shah of 'Education World', Ajit Balan of The Hindu, and



QUEST FOR THE BEST Glimpses of THT Edustar Award ceremony held at BSE



Farzana Dohadwala, Debika Chatterjee, Merzeen Doctor, Nabomita Majumdar also graced the occasion. Event partners were Calp Global, Star child, Policy Boss, Microsoft school, Divine touch and Inspirus Education. The dance performances by children from the 'Spark A Change' Foundation were heartwarming.

The jury comprised luminaries such as Coomi Vennia, Amitabh Mohan, Dharendra Mishra, Sujatha Bhan, K. R. Malaathi and Sapna Sukul. They were entrusted with the task of selecting the top 10 out of the 25.

Avinash Jhangiani conducted the Q and A round with inputs from the jury members, based on which the Top 3 were announced. The Top 3 EduStar winners of this year being Shubhra Irani (J.B.C.N), Viral Vasani (C.N.M.) ,Nirupama Kaushik (Somaiya)

Among the special categories THT felicitated the following dedicated professionals whose knowledge and expertise is indeed worth sharing with the entire community - Jaya Parekh- Education Leader of the year, Padmaja Kuttij- Education leader of the year, Shailaja Madhumair- Excellence in E.C.E, Shubra Irani- Excellence in E.C.E, Mahes M.B- Innovative Educator, Vibhik Chauhan - Innovative Educator, Richa Kumar- Excellence in STEAM, Shivaji Mane- Excellence in STEAM, Rakesh Khuswaha - Unsung Hero, Asma Zaidi-unsung Hero, and Lavanya Lokesh -Unsung Hero.

The THT Core team led by Rakhee Chhabria, Anuja Shah Ajmera and Disha Parikh worked hard to make EduStar a success, supported by Chaitali Mehra and Naghma Shaikh.



Sapna Simmi Sukul
Director, Sparsh



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



As we move towards 22nd century we are witnessing changes in all spheres of life. Our core values have changed over the years and so too has our education system. Before we address education, we must examine the influence on humankind of great individuals like Lincoln, Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Mandela. The only single word that comes to mind is inclusiveness.

The concept of Inclusive education to a large extent deals with bringing various strata of society that are segregated into different socio-economic classes, within the same classroom. India is

both culturally and linguistically a very diverse country. I am therefore very happy to mention the contribution of British Council, who through so many of their programmes has brought many educators on the same page.

In Delhi private schools have 25% of their students from economically weaker sections of society. But that is not enough. The concept of Inclusiveness has to now extend to children with special needs. All of us have to empathize with the parents of these children who face a major struggle in their daily life.

The parents, the teachers and the

Sparsh has also taken up the unenviable task of bringing many slum dweller kids to the class room.

trainers together have been working on social and emotional quotient of these children. They too need an upbringing which the parents alone can't provide, and they do not have knowledge about special needs.

Thus the broader idea remains to give each student a bigger platform along with students of formal schooling.

During
World Disability Day 2015

400 differently abled students,

300 EWS children along with

500 formal school Presidium students

showcased their talents in sports and culture in one of the national stadiums in Delhi. It was an eye opener and left the audience spellbound as the electrifying performances during the entire event was worth replicating again and again. It boosted their morale and spirits in every aspect.

As we continue to talk about widening the scope of education, it has been a global objective to improve quality standards in the education sector and to make every citizen more responsible. Challenges to this system are many, especially in developing countries like India. For instance, the child protection

and anti bribery policies have been reinforced again and again and this keeps everyone on their toes and prevents them from 'crossing the line'.

The scope of inclusive education goes way beyond bringing everyone to the classroom and moves into making the curriculum more inclusive. What better can one do to the world other than cleaning up the environment? We have to face the truth that the biggest threat to humankind is environmental degradation. We took on one small project under the aegis of Tetrapak and Teri. Different organisations agreed to collect their used cartons and send them for recycling. Hence we collected used cartons right from Army organisations in Kashmir to embassies in Delhi to hospitals.

Another project was undertaken in a flash-flood devastated village in Uttarakhand. The preliminary assessment of their needs was



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carried out in one of the affected villages. The children sold their own artwork and raised funds from which we presented a soya milling machine to the villagers.

Inclusiveness, however, is incomplete without an

international dimension. So what could be better than bringing the hearts and minds of India and Pakistan together? His Excellency Mr. Abdul Basit, the high commissioner of Pakistan to India accepted an invitation to the NGO when our special students visited his office. He literally stole four hours from his busy schedule and witnessed their cultural programme and enjoyed the sight where students from formal schooling shared same stage with them. The impact was so deep that one eminent TV journalist covering Indo-Pak relations who near about gate crashed the event for interviewing the Ambassador was moved beyond doubt and had to leave his interview for another time and place.

In conclusion, inclusiveness is a wide canvas. We must add all the colours, shades and hues to paint the most beautiful picture. Mark my words, if the intentions are good, the standards will automatically be high. I am sure that when we return home there will be something new to include for our institutions. ■

A small project has become a mass movement amongst kids to collect tetra pack cartons. This project works on principle of

R5 { **Reduce**
Reuse
Recycle
Rethink
Restore

This brings out the best in every child. It has evoked lot of interest amongst students with the idea of recycling and making it as fun activity where they were the leaders. Along with it they learned the importance of recycling teamwork, communication and collaboration and the umbrella phenomenon of inclusivity by all.



MULTI-TASKING EDUCATORS

'Jack of all trades but master of none'. This is what we were always taught to believe was not the correct example to follow in life. In our pursuit of knowledge we had to scratch the surface and dig deep. What this physically meant was going to libraries, scanning catalogues, reading many books, filling up research cards, rearranging pieces of information and then making sense of it all. We actually had to cut ourselves off physically, mentally and socially from everyone else. But today, information is so easily available that we spend minimal time on gathering data and proportionately more time in analysis.

Now looking at life the way it was lived before the turn of the century, most of us in India could handle very few activities simultaneously. If we spoke on the phone we could do nothing else since our position was more or less fixed to one spot. We used to marvel at people like stock brokers who could handle three phones at one time. I remember that even a simple activity like listening to music meant that we did little else since the old turn tables, spools and cassette players needed all our attention. So much has changed in such a short span of time. We entertain ourselves while we drive with our exact choice of music. We dial telephones, ascertain routes, dabble in shares and so much more while on the move. While at home, we wash clothes, fill our water tanks, purify our water, heat up our food and catch up with all the gossip without messing up anything. So without realising it, we have all become multi-taskers. Waiting in long queues is not as harrowing as it earlier used to be since we get busy on our mobile phones. With our laptops, tablets, cell phones et al, we can so easily pursue two or three courses simultaneously or follow multiple careers. Now mastery over many trades is possible. Technology has made it happen. Whilst earlier the yard stick for efficiency in multitasking was how well a manager could sub-delegate his responsibilities, today his ability to use technology is a key factor in determining managers efficiency.

The work place is a much changed atmosphere now. We have TV screens in offices where we can have sports events or the news being screened. While at work we are updated with scores, current events and stock prices. But still, many of us still have the tendency to concentrate only on one job at a time. Maybe this is a sign of taking your job seriously. Teachers by and large fit in to this mould. We can't blame them since delivering a lesson or correcting an answer sheet saps all of one's senses. However, educational administrators of today can't afford to restrict their vision. They have to see and think three dimensionally in three hundred and sixty degrees. Education is evolving at a rapid pace. Earlier parents were perpetually indebted to educators of their wards. Today they are customers who need to be pampered. The media has become highly intrusive and is always on the lookout for the slightest mistake. They are very quick to compare and rank institutions. So as a result, the administrators can never let their guard down. While they look into the curriculum, they need make sure their children are safe and sound. For this their security systems have to be foolproof and transportation arrangements uncompromisingly perfect. Then they need to upgrade their standards, for which they have to keep themselves networked by attending workshops and seminars. They also need to engage the media not just for publicity but also as a feedback system. So the eyes, ears, tongue and pen are much busier than what we witnessed a couple of decades ago.

As we all know, education has transcended the boundaries of a philanthropic cause and entered the realms of business and money making. This however is not for the worse since there is serious competition. Like any saleable product, educational institutions are going through the exercises of segmentation and differentiation. The management goes heavily into



strategy before investing in an institution. Hence each one ultimately is in search of a USP so as to provide 'Education with a Difference'. Many schools try to portray a different value system from the others while some boast off about infrastructure. The best way to overtly display such uniqueness is architecture which calls for even more investment. So ultimately when the school gets started, Principals and other administrators have to go way beyond the academic purview and keep an eye on break even points, top lines and bottom lines. The job now involves keeping investors happy too. So what we now see is a multi-tasking educator with mastery in many other spheres too. While we discuss the added pressures in the current social and academic milieu, we should also spare a thought for the less fortunate amongst us, in particular children with special needs. Our multi-tasking minds need to wander in this direction and settle there for a while, not only for the children but also for the parents who suffer their fate in loneliness. It is indeed so very difficult for them to multi task. In many cases one of their two parents has to totally give up on or maybe heavily curtail their career aspirations. Students need to be sensitised and this should form an essential part of the curriculum. This should not just be a Corporate Social Responsibility but an Essential Social Responsibility. I would like to sum up with a thought came to mind. Why not replace the traditional M.Ed. course with MBA (Education).

Director
Petals World School
Sparsch special school