

अक्षर

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ANNUAL REPORT



WORKSHOP ON LANGUAGE

Akshar very well understands the importance of language and linguistic etiquette, and the need to impart the same onto young, impressionable children, to not only keep them up-to-date with other children of their age having access to better schools and more expensive education, but also to inculcate in them an attitude of general English speaking, starting with the most basic phrases. Keeping this as an aim in our minds, the team of Akshar conducted a one-day workshop on Language, on Tuesday, 17th September 2019. The workshop ran through the usual class timings of Akshar, that is, from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm. Room Number 6 on the first floor of the college worked as the base of our workshop.



A dedicated team was formed in advance under the guidance of our faculty coordinator, Dr. Charu Arya, who took extra efforts to devote their time and focus on the content of the workshop and its quality. This team was picked from the larger pool of volunteers whose primary job was to teach the children and look after the overall organization and management of the daily classes. The conduction of the workshop was an added responsibility for the workshop team, and to say that they worked hard to ensure that the event was a success, will be an understatement.

The workshop was attended by a total of 56 students. For normal classes, the students were divided into at least three separate rooms. However, the structure of Room No. 6 allowed us to accommodate all the students comfortably. The workshop team prepared a 1 simple but compact PowerPoint presentation, keeping in mind the importance of having the complete attention of students while also teaching them something important. Prior arrangements like getting permission for the use of the room, setting up the projector, and having a run-through without the students was done well in advance.

Apart from the focus on language and the ability to form basic sentences, the goal was to inculcate general etiquette and good manners into the students. The students were taught common words and phrases on how to greet their friends, parents, teachers and other people. They were explained the importance of being kind and helping in nature, and the use of proper language to reflect that in their behaviour. The beauty of teamwork and unity was described to them in the simplest of manners. Phrases and words of day-to-day utility were given a lot of focus. Words like please, sorry, thank you were greatly emphasized upon.

Educating and training them on the use of proper sentences and appropriate words while speaking the most basic of sentences, formed a big part of the workshop. An animated video was played, which not only escalated the interest of the students, but also taught them basic but important English phrases and questions and answers according to common situations. The volunteers emphasized on the speaking part, and hence they made sure they translated the content of the video wherever required, and repeated every sentence a number of times, with varying examples, to drive the point home.



At the end of the workshop, the students learnt to introduce themselves properly in both the languages, Hindi and English. To make sure that they learnt and understood their lessons well, they were asked to enact the same. Students gave their introduction one by one and told everyone about themselves, their family, their hobbies and interests. They were praised with huge applause each time, to motivate them to keep doing a good job.

The effect of the good things that the students learnt on the day of the workshop, was seen very soon during the classes. They started greeting their teachers, tried to ask their questions more coherently, and attempted to speak in English. Even though they made small errors and mistakes - which was politely corrected by the volunteers - the effort to learn and improve was visible. The volunteers felt proud and happy each time they saw these little but determined efforts from their students. Suffice it to say that the workshop was a great success.

PARENTS TEACHERS MEETING

Akshar works actively throughout the year in order to provide quality education and lessons to its students. To ensure that the students grasp their lessons well, volunteers occasionally take tests, quizzes and other assessments. A record of the same is also kept to keep a check on students' progress. Following the monthly tests in the month of September 2019, a parent-teacher meeting was held to present the progress report of the Akshar students to their parents. This meeting took place on 28th September 2019 in Room No. 6 on the first floor of the college. The meeting started at 3:30 p.m. and went on till 5:00 p.m.

The parents came in large numbers. Once everyone was inside and seated, they were addressed by the Faculty Coordinator of Akshar, Dr. Charu Arya, who always believes in Akshar's motto "Involve. Educate. Inspire". It was her thoughtfulness and concern for the students which led to this Parent-Teacher Meeting. She, along with the student volunteers, made the parents well aware of their children's academic progress. They very patiently answered all the doubts, queries and concerns that parents had regarding their children's progress.



Ma'am very patiently listened to the issues and complaints that the parents had. Not only were the concerns and doubts exchanged, but there was an interactive discussion on what else could be done to make students learn even better. She took all the suggestions and feedback in the most humbled manner and made sure the 1 Parent-Teacher Meeting proved to be effective. She even made sure that she talked in person to the parents to ensure a good environment for the children at their homes so that they could study and carry forward their learnings in the class, to their homes.

Many parents who were eager to learn about their children participated in the meeting and made it worth organizing. This Parent-Teacher Meeting not only gave parents an idea of what and how their children learn in Akshar but also guided them on how they could play a role at home in ensuring quality and effective education for their kids. The parent-teacher meeting proved to be successful as parents went back after the meeting smiling with contentment, knowing that their children have immense potential if taken good care of, and are in good hands at Akshar.

WORKSHOP ON SELF HYGIENE

Keeping in mind the importance of having a healthy lifestyle and knowing how hygiene plays a big role in this, a workshop on self-hygiene was organised for the students of Akshar on 1st October 2019. It was held in Room No. 6 on the first floor of the college. The workshop commenced at the usual class timing of the Akshar, which is 3:30 p.m, and went on till 5:00 p.m. After taking the attendance, all the students were taken in a queue to their classroom for the day which was big enough to accommodate all 59 students who were present that day.

A team of volunteers was prepared a week before the workshop to make sure that each lesson is imparted perfectly to the students. Being a common but crucial subject for discussion, volunteers first asked the students what thoughts and ideas they had about hygiene. The workshop began with defining and explaining hygiene. Later on, the types of hygiene were explained to the students. They got to know about the importance of both environmental hygiene and personal hygiene. Furthermore, community and domestic hygiene were explained to students as subtypes of environmental hygiene. Students learnt how they could help keep their homes, classrooms and their locality clean. They learnt about the significance of cleanliness, the need for fresh air, ventilation, disposal of waste and avoidance of household pests, rats, and insects. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was also introduced to the students.



Personal hygiene was greatly emphasised by the team. The aim was to promote standards of personal cleanliness. Children were taught about the right habits of bathing, clothing, washing hands and toileting. The significance of cutting nails, wearing slippers, keeping a handkerchief, and keeping clothes clean was explained in a detailed manner. Students were taught the right way to sneeze or cough in public and in general as well.



To ensure children have learnt all the concepts very well, the session was kept interactive. A step-by-step demo on how to wash their hands was enacted by the volunteers and shown to the students. Towards the end, a quick oral quiz was done to get an idea of how much students have learnt from the session.



It could be seen in later days that students were practising what they were taught. They now took special care while sneezing or coughing and some of them also happily showed that they now keep a handkerchief with them always. Seeing the positive results, it can be concluded that the workshop on self-hygiene was indeed a great success.



GANDHI JAYANTI CELEBRATION

Akshar believes in the all-round development of its students. To ensure this, volunteers do not just teach the students through books and boards but also make sure that the children also learn and know what is outside the books, and in the world. For this, various national festivals and important occasions are celebrated by the team and the students. Following the trend, a one-day event was organised by team Akshar for the students, to celebrate Gandhi Jayanti on 2nd October 2019. The program commenced at 1:30 p.m. and went on for almost four hours.

A total of 73 students were present on the day. We called them at 1:30 p.m. which was two hours earlier than their usual class timings. They were first taken to their respective classrooms after attendance where they participated in various activities. Children first learnt about Father of the Nation, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on his birth anniversary. Many of the students, especially the younger ones, were excited to know about the person they had seen on the notes and sometimes in books. They learnt about Gandhi Ji's contribution to the freedom of India and also the reason behind calling him Mahatma.

A lot of competitions were organised for the students which included drawing, speech and poem recitation. Colours, sheets and other necessary stationery were provided to them. Students very enthusiastically participated in the competitions as per their will. The drawing competition was the one which drew the maximum number, as almost everyone had something to draw or paint based on their imaginations, creativity and skills. The volunteers were glad as the children showed their colourful and beautiful paintings to the class. All the students applauded and cheered for each other as they fluently recited their poems and confidently spoke in front of the whole class.





For a change from the classroom environment, students also spent some time on the college ground, permission for which had already been taken from the faculty Coordinator Dr. Charu Arya. Children were given some time to enjoy themselves. They also had a race competition in the ground itself, for which they were divided into groups. They played and had fun for the day. During all the games and fun activities, the volunteers helped children enjoy and learn something or the other in a fun way and also ensured that no one gets hurt while playing.

Winners of the competitions held on the day were also rewarded at the end of the event. The prizes were given to motivate and appreciate the children, and consisted of useful items like stationery, colours and other things that we had received in last year's donation. The happiness on the faces of the children made the celebrations successful. They were motivated and determined enough to ask for more such events and competitions in future.



This celebration brought a change for the Akshar students from the daily classroom studies. They enjoyed the day and learnt some lessons about teamwork, team appreciation and also self-appreciation. This boosted up their confidence and instilled in them a sense of healthy competition. To end the celebration on a happy note, refreshments were also distributed among the children. These celebrations help students bring their fun and creative sides out and the Gandhi Jayanti celebration proved out to be one such successful event.



DONATION CAMP AND ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION

Akshar is a self-funded project of the National Service Scheme (NSS), Maharaja Agrasen College. It takes absolutely no funds from the college. However, to assist in the education and development of the children whom the volunteers passionately pledge to teach, we do require a few basic things. In order to fulfill these needs and ensure the smooth running of the project, a three-day Donation Camp and Arts and Crafts Exhibition was organised by the Akshar team, under the effective guidance of our Faculty Coordinator Dr. Charu Arya, on 23rd, 24th and 25th of October 2019, which was set up in the college premises.

In Akshar's short history, the donation camp has almost become the signature event of the project. Every year, everyone involved with the project waits months and months for the festival of Diwali to arrive, as it is around this time that the Donation Camp is essentially held. The amount of preparation and planning that goes into the successful organization of this event, supersedes that of any other event. The participation of almost the entire college, students and teachers alike, makes it one of the grandest events of not just Akshar or NSS but the entire college.

The preparation for the Donation Camp and Arts and Crafts Exhibition started almost a week before the first day of the event. The volunteers collected things like waste coloured papers, ribbons, pieces of clothes, old unused water drinking glasses, buttons, plastic bottles, and other things that could be used to decorate earthen lamps, or diyas, and other artefacts.

A dedicated team was created whose primary job in the week leading up to the Donation Camp was to help the students to prepare the artefacts that were to be put on exhibition. A few students of Akshar were also a part of that team. All the other students and volunteers continued with the Akshar classes, which ran in parallel with these preparations. Other preparations involved preparing the posters for inviting everyone to the Donation Camp, and distribution of volunteering duties on each of the three days of the event.



A day before the first day of the camp, that is on Tuesday, 22 October 2019, the classes were called off, and the students were instead involved in decorating diyas. From the very young to the comparatively senior students - all of them went about their jobs diligently, enjoying their work. From paintbrushes to all kinds of decorative items, we had a large variety of colourful diyas at our disposal.



On the first day of the camp, that is Wednesday 23 October 2019, we began our work at the earliest . The donation desk was set just inside Gate No. 2 of the college, so as to get it into the notice of more people entering or exiting the college. Besides the donation desk, another couple of desks was set up for the Arts and Crafts Exhibition, which contained all the artefacts made by the children of Akshar, with the help and support of the team. The drawings and paintings made by the children during the Drawing Competition held on 2 October 2019, were also on display. Decorated diyas, paintings, and many other small artefacts were part of the exhibition.



The camp started at around 11 a.m. and went up till 3 p.m. on all the three days. The primary purpose of the donation camp was to collect funds and donations from anyone who was willing to give. All the students and the teachers were invited to donate money, stationery items, books, school bags and any other item they deemed fit for the children. The artefacts were sold for a nominal cost, so as to add to the other donations. Some students of Akshar also came despite having to come again in the afternoon for their usual classes and participated to help the volunteers set up things and increase donations.

A large number of students and teachers of the college participated in the camp. People enthusiastically donated and bought the artefacts on display. Posters and paintings made by the children in a competition on Gandhi Jayanti were given as a Thank You present to those who bought any of these artefacts. The Donation Camp was a big success for the complete family of Akshar: all the volunteers, the Faculty Coordinator Dr. Charu Arya, and all the students of Akshar. Children were praised by everyone for the work they did so beautifully. This event not just helped us raise money and collect needed items for the children but also ignited a sense of confidence, self-appreciation, dedication and hard work into them. For the volunteers, it is perhaps the sweetest memory of their whole Akshar journey to look back upon and cherish



REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION 2020

Akshar has always believed in celebrating special days and occasions with all its students, as they form the most integral part of the Akshar family. In continuation of the same practice, Akshar celebrated the 71st Republic Day on the college ground. The event started at 11:00 a.m. on 26th January 2020 and continued for almost four hours. Since the Republic Day fell on a Sunday that year, special permission for entry into college and to use the college grounds had to be sought and was duly granted by the College Principal, Dr. Sanjeev Tiwari. Dr. Charu Arya, the faculty coordinator of Akshar, provided continuous support throughout and encouraged us to go on with our plans despite the public holiday and hence the logistic difficulties. The students were given 11:00 a.m. as the start time, and were asked to reach the college gate - where we take their attendance - fifteen minutes prior. However, their excitement was there to see as they started arriving as early as 10:00 a.m. A few volunteers also reached early enough to keep a watch on the students' safety and ensure they do not run here and there. As the numbers started racking up, the colourful attires added to the beauty and brightness of the occasion. The number of students on the day was 104, which was the highest for the whole academic year. The students were taken inside onto the ground in queues. They were made to sit in neat rows on the ground, after which the volunteers explained to them the importance of the day. They learnt about their country, the constitution, the freedom fighters, and India's journey to being a republic. The students were encouraged to come forward and tell everyone whatever they knew about the special day, and although they were shy to come up at first, a few of them eventually came ahead and impressed one and all with their knowledge of the same. By looking at them, the other students also gained confidence and were henceforth more participative.



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Once we ensured the students knew about the occasion and significance of the day, we moved ahead to the fun part. A dance competition was planned for the day, and we started with the same. The volunteers brought in BlueTooth speakers to play the songs. The children were very excited even a couple of days before the day, right from when we announced that there would be a dance competition. Some children put in great efforts in rehearsing their performances and perfecting their moves, which was visible in their beautiful performances. And then some other children just enjoyed the opportunity to let themselves free and enjoy the moment. Either way, it was very fulfilling and satisfying for both the students and the volunteers.



The day ended with some group photos, and the children being provided with fulfilling refreshments. The happiness on their faces was very satisfying to see as the volunteers formed their queues and bid them goodbye. The children went home with their parents who had come to receive them, with their hands full of refreshments and their hearts filled with joy.

A small Prize Distribution Ceremony was held the next day, on Monday, 27th January 2020, to award all those students who actively participated in various activities and did a great job. The excitement of the previous day had still not faded, with a touch of tiredness as a result of all the hard work put in to make the occasion as eventful as possible, and ensuring that the children enjoyed themselves. Hence we decided not to take the classes for that day. The children went back home a second consecutive day with something they earned and happiness. The volunteers went back home, with the satisfaction of another successful event.

