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Vilas Ramanth Satarkar
Dr. K. B. Hedgewar High School
Cujira Bambolim, Goa
Email id: svilas@rediffmail.com

Abstract

This school caters to a mixed student population belonging to locals of the city, goan and migrant labour, various cadres of government employees, professionals and a section of English/ Portuguese speaking catholic populace. The school first recruited qualified teachers who were willing, involved and passionate. It developed annual plan which focused both on academics and extracurricular activities. Teachers build rapport with parents of all students, developed a sense of belonging among the parents. Remedial classes became part of school routine. It initiated multipronged strategy for all round development of students – specially designed plans for developing students in various fields–sports, state and national level examinations, science project competitions, academics etc.

Socio-Cultural Context of the School

Today, we are an Institution of High Repute; looked at, by _____, with High Esteem and Recognized as a Guiding Force in the _____ of Goa.



However, as is the case with all _____, ours too *hasn't been a Bed of Roses*. Our Journey, from a Pre-Primary School with **20 Students way back in 1990**, to an **Institution with 1700 students in 2019**, has been TOUGH to put it

It has been nothing but Ardorous Uphill Walk.

In 1990, keeping in mind the **Necessity and Importance** of Primary Education in one's Mother Tongue, Dr. K.B. Hedgewar Shikshan Prasarak Mandal, the parent organisation, took a decision to start a Marathi Medium Pre-Primary school in the Heart of the City of Panaji, the Capital of Goa.

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The World Scoffed at us! To add to the JEER was the *Dilapidated State* of the building, in which we were to start the school.

However, with the Blessings of the Mandal members and Well-wishes of Like-Minded residents of Panaji, our journey started with 20 students.

Was it difficult to enroll just about 20 students? You bet it was!

Goa as such, is a Low Population State, (17-18 lakhs in the whole of Goa State as of today!!). The Sparse populace of Panaji, which had a sort of Cosmopolitan mix:

- LOCALS of the City and its Peripherals.
- Various Cadres of Government Employees from all over Goa,
- The small and medium business class of the City,
- The Goan and Migrant Labour,
- The Migrant Blue and White Collar workers from all over India and
- A section of English/Portuguese Speaking Catholic populace.

Moreover, the City already had its share of established schools, some established after liberation of Goa and some even having completed 100 years!!

Further, Marathi and Konkani medium Government schools, even in the Villages were on verge of closing down because of Paucity of students.

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In a Scenario, where all factors, *Socio-Economic, Language, Culture, Density of Population, Infrastructure* etc. were extremely **challenging** and **Unfavorable**, We Took up The Challenge!!!

Our challenges were many, but it was of *Utmost Importance* to identify the most **Fundamental** and **Profound** issues, so as to start the process of *Ideation* to find the *Right Solutions*. All our Deliberations and Discussions Highlighted Two Cardinal Issues

- 1) New Enrolments every academic year and
- 2) Retaining the existing students

Efforts initiated or the Process of Transformation

Both the above issues were in a way Inter-related. We had to get new students, so as to retain them in the future; and we needed to retain the existing to get the new.

Our analysis of the above issues focused on:

- a) as to why 'in the first place' had the child been admitted in our school.
- b) why would the parents retain the child, in spite of other options.
- c) why did the parent shift the child from our school.
- d) why did the parent not shift the child from our school.

Our Findings were:

- If the child was admitted with the Free Will of the Parents, then the Child was retained, inspite of other options and hardships, if we could give our best.
- If the child was with us because, in that particular year, all other options had closed, then retaining would require a Dramatically Different approach.
- The most Encouraging FIND was that, though Infrastructure mattered, it wasn't the PRIME FACTOR, provided the Basic facilities like Clean Toilets, Clean Surroundings, Safety of the Kids was assured and the Staff was Passionate and Compassionate, the Aesthetics could take a BACK SEAT.
- Also it was very encouraging to note that our Philosophy to Inculcate ***Bhartiya Sanskar in the Students through*** all our Activities was a Major Factor Contributing to Our Success!!

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Armed with these major findings, we worked out our strategy to *go from Strength to Strength*.

Our strategy revolved around making the school more of a family than an Institute. Hence, we did the following:

- While recruiting the teachers, along with the Requisite Educational Qualification, we insisted on persons who were Passionate about Teaching; who were ready to go

That EXTRA MILE to be a Friend, a Guide and a Philosopher to the Student.

- We did not hesitate to enroll even the weakest of a weak student.
- Designed a Plan for the year, which was loaded with co-curricular activities along with very Focused academics.



With all the above, we started the implementation.

- It was a part of the teachers' schedule, that they should visit the students' homes, interact with the members of the family and develop a sort of rapport with the parents.

This not only helped us to earn the confidence of the family but also gave us the insight into the background, environment at home and problems if any. We were one of the pioneers to take up such activity, highly appreciated by One and Sundry.

This activity created a **Feeling of Belonging** amongst the Parents and went a long way in helping us **RETAIN** the students and also generated Goodwill which in turn helped in **NEW ENROLMENTS**.

- As we had decided to take up the academically weak students, we had to spend EXTRA TIME and put in EXTRA EFFORTS to get them through the Exams.
- Remedial Classes became a part of our Routine.

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This again helped tremendously to build our Goodwill and a Reputation that, WE CARED and NURTURED the Students and not JUST TAUGHT THEM.

- The Importance of our Festivals is not lost on anyone and we decided to use this to enhance the Involvement, the Bonhomie and the Sense of Attachment amongst the Students, Teachers, Parents and all Involved. **We Pioneered the concept of celebrating Holi, Gopal Kala, Saraswati Puja, Raksha Bhandhan etc. wherein, Teachers, Parents and Students participated with Enthusiasm and Joy.**
- Yet another 'Out of the Box' approach was towards our Annual day Celebration. Our Annual day programs were theme based showcasing Historical events, India's Cultural Diversity, wherein every student was a participant and majority of the parents willingly shared the responsibility.

Inculcating Bhartiya Sanskars through recitation of various Stotras, patriotic songs etc. Chanting evening prayers at home and taking blessing of elders at home by touching feet is a part of school culture.



Along with all such Strategies to Build a Well Knit HUGE JOINT FAMILY, we also were Implementing Plans for Developing the Students for Excellence in Sports, State and National Level Competitive Exams, Science Project Competitions etc. For training students for these examinations a group of like-minded teachers from surrounding schools is formed which is a step forward for growing together.

All the above steps and more, in a very short span of time, helped us to CONVERGE from a SCHOOL LOOKED DOWN UPON to An INSTITUTION LOOKED UP TO!!! AN INSTITUTION OF HIGH REPUTE!

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Visible Results of Transformation

The fruits of our efforts are reflected through our achievements; few of them are listed below:

- Within a short span of 25 years, we have grown from a 20 students Pre-primary School to a 1700+ students full-fledged Institution comprising of Pre-Primary, Primary, High School and all the Branches of Higher Secondary. Moreover, we now even have our Branches at Ponda, Goa since '14 and Sankhali, Goa since '16 comprising of Pre-primary to High School.
- Our 1st Batch of SSC passed out in March'03 and since March '06 till March '18 the School has been achieving 100% results in the Goa Board Exams. This is a Unique Achievement.
- Moreover, our March'16 batch SSC results were Qualitatively the Best amongst all the schools of the State.

Further, our below mentioned students were the Toppers at the Goa Board in their respective batches.

- (a) Miss Shreya Bambulkar March'13
- (b) Miss Vedita Kamat March'15
- (c) Miss Shreeja Thali March'16

In co-curricular activities too, our students have shone brightly.

- Our students have won State and National level awards at *Science Projects, *Elocution Competitions, *Quiz Contests, *Drama and *Dance.
- In Sports too our students have won medals and accolades at Zonal, State, National and International levels.
- From a large clutch of our accomplishments, a special mention needs to be made of our Atal Tinkering Lab.
- We were ***amongst the first 257 All India Schools*** (*from applications of 13000+ schools*), to be selected for the ***prestigious GOI project of ATL***
- The **“Jewel in the Crown”** type of achievement was when our students of the Project *‘Smart Headlight’* were called upon to participate in a Live Video conferencing session with the Honorable Prime Minister of India on 6th of June, 2018. *A special mention needs to be made here that, our school was one amongst the 3All India ATL schools* which were selected for this program.

As of now, one our Projects has been declared the All India No.1 Project in the Category of Smart Mobility.

We proudly state that all the achievements were accomplished, in spite of severe restrictions of the Size and Quality of our rented premises till academic year '14-'15. However, since June 2015, we have shifted to our *Own, extremely spacious and Well-designed Premises* at *Cujira Integrated Education Complex, Bamboli.*

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The said premises have well ventilated classrooms, well-equipped science labs, computer lab with 40 computers, a spacious well-ventilated library and Reading room with a exhaustive collection of more than 10,000 books, a State-of the-Art AV hall, an Indoor Sports hall, playground and most of the infrastructure required for a full-fledged Educational Institute to Impart Quality Knowledge and Education.

We would like to mention here that, **as a policy, we do not burden our parents with demands for Donations at the time of Admissions or thereafter;** *Our projects have been implemented on sponsorships and contributions from Individuals, Industry and Esteemed Organisations' CSR funds.*

Further Strategies to Improve School

Having reached where we have reached today, having achieved what we have achieved so far, though a commendable achievement in a short span of 28 years, we couldn't have just been Complacent and Resting on our Laurels. Now that a Strong Foundation was laid, we had to go for Bigger, Better and Different Achievements.

In line with our vision to give the Best to our students, so as to prepare them for the future, we started a detailed study of what is GOING TO BE THE FUTURE!

We realized that along with the Importance of making a child Accomplished in terms of Education and other Correlated segments, it was also important to build their INTUITIVE and CREATIVE SKILLS for their all-inclusive Development.

Our plans are now evolving around the premise of Adopting Cutting edge technology in academic education to make students better problem solvers and decision makers. We would now focus to Identify the child's INNATE TALENT and COGNITIVE SKILLS. Our aim would be to UNLEASH the Child's INNER POTENTIAL and NURTURING INTERPERSONAL SKILL.

- 1) Groom the students in the REAL SKILLS of the FUTURE.
- 2) Having excelled at the Highest Level in the State, now target Excellence at National and International levels.
- 3) Strengthening community partnership.
- 4) Career guidance cell for educating parents to take up the future career opportunities

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School Leader and Transformation

The process of the transformation of the school certainly led to a transformation in within me. It is said that ‘the principal has to transform to transform for the school to transform’; however, I think it is mutual. I now see myself more focused and equipped to meet the multifarious challenges of 1700+ strength school in the present context.

My approach to all issues and persons is now more Philosophical and analytical than the earlier Head-on approach. I now play a role more of a Friend, Philosopher and Guide than an Authority.

Moreover, with the Growth of the institution and the Plethora of Achievements I have now thrown up as the facilitator not only restricted to my school but to the Education system of the State.

