

Bal vividha 04: an assessment

9th Dec
04

1. COSMOS 80,000, thefts, space for movement limited (design needs to look into storage). Toys ^{also had to go} ~~had to go~~ small space.
2. Audio atmosphere - sounds needs containment
3. Sense of bewilderment: signage & space for Marathi signs
sign-reading stall needed?
Film fest ant. = Rangmanch crowd
Spy watching small numbers
4. Security should be handled by co-host
They know locality & people
5. 37 spaces allotted, 200 at colloquium, 40 outside guests, 15,000 visitors
6. Contractor went down in quality
Available in future
7. Co-host - lack of understanding of event - not even adjusting interval of schedules. We should demand a mtg with teachers & bring parent-teacher asm. into it. Even NGO workers needed to be oriented
8. Manual - checklist
9. Co-hosts investment needed for proper commitment to project
10. Con's where to do 3 more:
a) Pratham - (talk to Faizda, madhav)
b) Cedric Prakash - one every year
c) Pune
d) Hyd?
11. Colloquium needs proper space
give it a day more at the end
Invite them to come day before
12. Food & water. Eureka Forbes
13. Graphics: theme shd. have been stronger and reflected in the graphics. Better briefing
Posters not used. Semiotics too advanced and too stick
Even texture needs
14. Curtain-raiser - set of tasks for p.r. person
Hire a p.r. person for the job.

- 15. Briefing of designers should be more cogent with values, theme etc.
- 16. Mela. Briefing of volunteers needs to be done.
Play for peace / Food + 50/-
type of people
- 17. Team
5 at least
Coordinator
Workshop
Colloquium
Mela
Amphitheatre
Are we expecting too much of people?
- 18. Networking support person needed
- 19. Rangmanchi
- 20. Documentation

FIAR DIASIS

discipline. A reading of the citizenship chapter is a clear pointer to this. The distinction between a good citizen and a bad citizen forms the core of the chapter, where the student is exhorted to follow traffic rules, maintain hygiene and cleanliness as the prime indicators of responsible citizenship. How duties and rights are integrated within the idea of a citizen is neither established nor elaborated.

Civics text-books thrive on constructing a dualistic world for the child- urban vs rural, literate vs illiterate, developed vs backward, men vs women and modern vs superstitious. This stereotyping reflects not just the bias of the urban text-book writer but the inability of most writers to capture the fascinating messiness of human societies. Hiding behind the claim that children are unable to grasp complexity, the attempt to simplify has led to an essentializing of communities, religions, regions and genders. Diversity and plurality have become circumscribed within the domain of food, custom and dress rather than in being reflected in the economic systems, gender roles and cultural value systems that exist around us.

The effort by the civics group was to move civics away from being a tool of catechism by the state to encouraging children to understand social and political structures around them in critical ways. Experience, an important site of feminist analysis, was identified as an important tool of learning. As a result pedagogical strategies like narratives, case studies and travelogues became part of the text. For example, in the sixth standard book the concept of urban and rural was explained through the narratives of four children located in different regions, belonging to different classes, religions and genders. The interplay between these was woven into how the criterion for identifying a rural or urban location articulated itself in the lived reality of these children.

Another element that is important in these text-books is the impact of feminist understanding on certain concepts. The chapter on social institutions drew on feminist understandings regarding the family to move away from dualistic constructions of nuclear and joint families. As it encouraged children to explore and dwell on the issue of how or what criterion can be used to define a family, it also elaborated the diverse nature of families. In this female headed households found mention apart from single parent families and adopted children. The critical role of nurture in the family and its unpaid nature was woven in an exercise to be done by children through reflecting on their own experience.

The separation of the public and private domain, that has come under repeated scrutiny in feminist scholarship influenced the way in which certain institutions, were represented in the text books. The functioning of the panchayats and the legal structure reflect an effort to move towards linking the lives of people to the institution. Case studies in the chapter on the legal system elucidate the process of justice through the different courts. The Fundamental Rights chapter also moved from an endless listing of rights to demonstrating through case studies, folk stories and autobiographical narratives the logic and implications of these rights on communities and individuals.

The question of 'agency' is significant in the above-mentioned pedagogical strategies of using narratives, case studies, travel logues and autobiographical accounts. How were we to move away from unidimensional representations of individuals? There was considerable concern within the group regarding whether 'state textbooks' could move away from constructing 'ideal' images of institutions and individuals. This was partly resolved through acknowledging that if these strategies were to be meaningful to the child then there was a need to represent 'real' situations. Thus, in the chapter on Panchayati Raj, the main protagonist is a woman called Lachi, a ward panch. A first generation beneficiary of reservations for women in the panchayat, Lachi, is nervous and anxious in her first Gram Sabha. Reservations has not transformed her overnight

into a powerful punch but has given her the space and opportunity to participate in the decision making processes in her village.

In the same vein Kesar, a young girl from a farming family from Haryana wonders why she is not allowed to plough the land even though she is perfectly accepting of the fact that her brothers are the inheritors of their land. Kesar's example indicates that socialization is a complex often contradictory but always 'incomplete' process. Even 'victims' raise questions on certain aspects of their lives.

Women in the frame of the content were included in their identities as social and political critics. They appear as writers, travelers, scientists, migrants, activists, political leaders, labourers and professionals. For example Aung Sang Su Chi figures in the chapter on Democracy, while the long historical struggle of suffragists highlights how citizenship rights were fought for by women in the west. Baby Kamble, a Maharashtrian Dalit writer is included in the Fundamental Rights chapter. Her autobiographic descriptions of the caste system in early 19th Century demonstrates the logic of the fundamental right to equality.

Finally, at the level of language it was critical that we kept in mind the girl child as the reader of our text-books. The He/She strategy of addressing the reader is a cop out. It invariably ends up using Man as synonymous with human. Paragraphs beginning with He/she slide into talking about man's development or of interdependence between men. The decision was to go with the writing of certain chapters where a female reader is assumed.

However, the decision to write the Citizenship chapter with the feminine as the norm emerged from a different understanding. Women's identity has been primarily governed by their family, caste, religion or community based affiliation. They carry the responsibility of maintaining the purity and distinctness of these identities. They are rarely, if ever, identified as independent citizens in their own right, with entitlements and direct access to the institutions of power and decision - making. If a proactive link was to be made then women need to be visibly identified as citizens. What can be more discomfiting than to visualize the citizen as a woman. It confuses and breaks the boundaries between the family and the State, the public and the private and the home and the world.

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Responsibilities of Volunteers

Thank you for offering to help organize events for us. SRISTI and NIF will be organizing two events at Bal Vividha.

1. Khoj Anuthe Gyan Ki – Scouting Traditional Knowledge Practices

Organized by : Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Institutions and Technologies (SRISTI) and National Innovation Foundation (NIF), Ahmedabad

Who can participate : Children (all ages)

How to participate : Talk to your grandparents, relatives, elderly neighbours and get them to tell you some traditional knowledge practices. The practices could be related to traditional recipes, gardening, farming, plant, animal and human health, controlling pests, storing food items etc. Submit the practice in the form of a poster at the SRISTI and NIF stall at Bal Vividha. The entry should have the name of the participant with the name of the school, his/her age, the grandparent or the person who shared that knowledge and the address.

What happens next: The entries received will be displayed during Bal Vividha. They will also be screened subsequently and the outstanding entries would be shortlisted. Participants who have sent those entries (along with their grandparents or the person who shared that knowledge) will receive some special prizes!

What you as a volunteer have to do :

Please keep a place where you can collect the entries that children bring. Please keep paper, crayons, sketchpens etc., ready. Children can take the material and prepare something on the spot. Please collect the entries. Arrange for some sort of a display board where you can put up the entries. Please do this for all the days of Bal Vividha. In the end, collect all the entries and send them over to us here at Ahmedabad.

In case, you are asked about prizes- you can say that a further round of screening will take place later and the outstanding entries will be rewarded. The child who gives the entry and the person who has shared the information, both will be rewarded.

2. Samadhan – Designing Solutions to Problems

Organized by : Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Institutions and Technologies (SRISTI) and National Innovation Foundation (NIF), Ahmedabad

Here is a chance for you to think of some innovative solutions to problems that we face everyday.

Who can participate : Children (Class VI-XII)

How to participate : Register at the SRISTI-NIF stall at Bal Vividha. You will get a list of problems. Choose one. You will get one hour to think and present your innovative solution in the form of written text and/or drawings.

What happens next: The entries will be displayed during Bal Vividha. The outstanding entries will receive special prizes.

What you as a volunteer have to do:

Please keep the list of problems ready. Show it to the children who come. They can select a problem. They will be given one hour to think and present their solution as text and /or drawing. These entries should be displayed. Please do this for all the days of Bal Vividha. In the end, collect all the entries and send them over to us here at Ahmedabad.

In case, you are asked about prizes- you can say that a further round of screening will take place later and the outstanding entries will be rewarded.

Other responsibilities :

You will have to be at the stall. We are sending some literature. We do not have enough of that now. So pls let visitors see the material. If they express interest, then pls take down their names, addresses with email id. They can fill the Honey Bee Subscription form also.

On the last day, you can give away the literature.

Samadhan

(Organized by SRISTI and NIF, Ahmedabad)

This event is for students of Class VI-XII. Students who come to the stall should be given paper and pencils, crayons, sketch pens etc. They can choose one topic from this list of problems. They will be given one hour to think of some innovative solution. They can present their solutions as text and/or drawings. These should be displayed on the stall. The entries should be sent to us later. We will screen them and the most outstanding ones will receive special prizes.

1. Comfortable crutches

Many people who use crutches or similar walking aids face many problems when it comes to climbing stairs or crossing the roads.

You have to design crutches that are easy to use and will help the user in climbing stairs, crossing roads and in other day to day activities.

2. Water carriers

Women have to carry water pots on their head. Often, they walk huge distances carrying as much as 20 kg of water. Carrying such loads and in this manner is quite painful.

You have to design some way such that the load is transferred to the shoulders and back. The device that is used should be comfortable and allow easy loading and unloading of the pots. You could also think of a completely new way of carrying water that is inexpensive and comfortable.

3. Mountain trolley

People who live in hilly regions face a lot of problem in carrying heavy loads of firewood. While coming down the slopes, they have to be careful that they do not slip and have to balance their load accordingly.

You have to design a trolley that can be used in hilly regions. It should be easy to control.

4. Easy way to climb steps

Every time we climb steps, we always wonder if there is another easier way of climbing. Of course, we have escalators and lifts. But don't let that stop you.

You have to devise another way of climbing steps that is more comfortable and involves less energy.

4. Greening grey architecture

With decreasing number of trees and increasing number of high rise buildings, our cities have begun to look very grey.

You have to think of some innovative way for 'greening' the buildings i.e., some way by which the buildings look more bright. You could use plants and anything else from the environment to make the buildings look more attuned with nature.

5. Involve a neighbourhood in a campaign on traditional knowledge

Our country is rich in traditional knowledge. Our grandparents, for instance, learnt a lot from their grandparents. But a lot of that knowledge is not really valued or passed on. We are in the danger of losing this rich resource which actually holds solutions and remedies for many problems.

You have to design a campaign that will spread awareness about the need for preserving traditional knowledge. The campaign can involve any number of events. The focus will be on highlighting this issue in a neighbourhood (colony).