

Date- 23rd August, 2021

Activity- Read My Emotions.

Part B (Age 12-13)

For the convenience of preparing an overview I have taken into consideration the activity completed by 10 students from Alok Bharati School.

The questions were asked to determine how the students (any child) feel in the given situation. The activity was to determine and identify each emotion by naming it.

Though most students have not named the emotion per se however they have elaborated how they might feel if the situation arises. Some questions were framed to get a cognizance as to what children might have experienced themselves or comprehend as to what others might have went through.

A total of 7 questions were given. In the first question most have answered they would feel a sense of "embarrassment" (Lokansh), if they secure less marks in a given examination. Most students have also put across their fear of getting "punished" by their parents for getting fewer grades (Kanishka Singh). And almost all of them have said that they would communicate and let their parents or guardians know about their academic performance. Prachi writes that she would try to yield a better result in the next set of examinations.

Most of the students in the second question have answered how "sad" (Latika Sharma) their friend must feel when the teacher praises them but not their friend. An inkling of empathy can be gauged from the answers. Sach Siddhi has mentioned how comparison is carried with all the praises that teachers bestow on the children. Sach has also noted that her friend has the right to get "angry" or "sad" because they were not praised. She wraps this up with the idea that her friend might realise their shortcomings and would give a better result. The answers to this particular question were very insightful as to gauge the idea of "praise" that is lauded to students on the basis of marks. The praise comes at the cost of comparison, one of the crucial limitation of our pedagogical environment.

The third question was regarding the comparison one faces in their individual households. Students feel a sense of discomfort when compared with their siblings. Surabhi Arora has precisely used words like "low" to indicate how she'd feel. She also elaborates as to how "comparison is not the key to judge any person". She also "wishes" her parents stop comparing her to her siblings because she is a different individual. Varsh describes he will feel a pang of regret as he couldn't fulfil his parents expectations.

It's quite significant to note how our education thrives on comparison. As many students have observed the idea of comparison would lead them to feel disheartened but most have also used it as a "motivating" factor to prove their "worth" by getting good grades. The discourse thus highlights the fixation on marks, the engendering of self-worth by proving their mettle in academics which berefts a child of creativity, self-exploration and eventually a dissonance between self-worth and self-esteem.

Many children have explicitly shown their empathy while answering the 4th question. Kashish Anand explicates how she understands the feeling of loneliness and would do her best to become her friend. On the other hand Varsh describes that some people like to stay aloof because many students are mischievous. Though many students follow the trajectory that Kashish has also mentioned.

One can comprehend that many times due to some changes in the family life or just coming to a new place can generate a sense of loneliness. Kids are sensitive but lack the proper vocabulary and hence extend their support by helping such children.

An extreme set of responses were recorded in the question regarding the competitive environment in school. While Surabhi writes how competition is good if it's healthy but in most school settings due to the unhealthy competition "the joy of learning is lost" and it also discourages us to extend a helping hand to our classmates. While Varsh describes that he would rather take it as a challenge. When faced with disagreements Kashish writes how she would feel it is unfair to disagree completely with someone but if her friends lend their opinion to make her understanding better regarding any situation she'd try to accommodate those opinions. Ragini Yadav describes that she'd like to put across her opinion in a better way to come to an agreement.

Students in this situation have unanimously agreed to make their understanding clear of a given subject or be accommodative of others opinion.

Many student have termed feeling neglected as the "worst" part they have ever experienced. And how the neglect has made them angry (Ragini). Surabhi writes how she felt disconnected and lonely at her home when her parents neglected her, until she apologized to them.

Neglect is one of the core reasons as to why a child feel low on self worth and many times (though not stated by the students) lead to inflicting pain by self harm and by engaging in substance abuse.

The detrimental effects of neglect can also lead to numbing of emotions and the child often loses out on the emotional well-being spectrum. It is pertinent to engage in healthy conversations and focusing on empathising with a child's experience. One may not agree to a person's (here child) opinion but one cannot disregard their experience.

With the constant outpouring of information the idea of knowledge that prospers on the principle of listening, understanding and finding solutions is being disregarded in our education system.

The quality that needs to be inculcated in our learning units is to introduce "empathy" in the curriculum of schools and institutions. In Denmark since 1993, the modus operandi for deriving a solution to a child's individual problem is by discussing what each child is going through, teachers and classmates listening with consideration and giving a space to every student for putting across their struggles. The class then comes to a solution by going through this whole process of empathy. This clears the picture that empathy is cognitive and can often be affective when put into practice.

Empathy comes under the national curriculum of the schools across Denmark.

Indian education system needs an overhauling as can be ascertained by the response recorded by the students who completed the Read my emotions activity.

Empathy modules will not only engender empathy as a quality but in the young minds exposed to such a concept would make policies and guidelines that will endeavour to end the systematic oppression that is perpetuated in our world as whole.

After going through the recorded response we would like to do a case study on Surabhi Arora and Kashish Anand as their answers have a profound sense of empathy running as the theme.