

Vividha

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From the Editor's Desk:

Dear Parents,

We are so proud to restart our quarterly e-newsletter Vividha. We have always looked forward to extending our awareness in the field of giftedness. We are pleased to have become a significant organization in India to reckon with expanding our vision in most areas that cater to children who are gifted and talented. Today most children seem talented in some areas as noted by parents that advanced potential and high ability seems to be a myth and illusion at times. Broadly, children who are showing signs of academic talent, or potential in visual and performing arts beyond their peers by almost a year and above are the group we are addressing through this newsletter. India has several organizations who are trying to endorse these children and their needs and we need to unify our resources and work towards this cause. Kaveri Gifted Education and Research Centre (KGERC) has been working towards this cause for the past 7 years and we are proud to have made significant achievements in each sector. For instance, teachers have been trained to cater to the academic needs of these children, support groups for parents with this group of children have been functioning for the past 3-4 years. Mentoring support to children whose needs are beyond the school resources have been assigned mentors and trained counselors who can guide them on their journey of talent development.

It is a pleasure to work with such wonderful minds, curious, eager and creative children. We will keep the newsletter full of information in each section so that parents, teachers and children will enjoy it.

Let us keep the curious minds engaged.

Devasena Desai.

Editor.

Gifted Programs now a Reality in Indian Schools

by Ms. Malati S Kalmadi, Educationist, and Founding Director for KGERC

The Right to education (2009) has provided education to 250+ Million children across India studying in 15 Million schools. The priority and emphasis has been inclusion of the disadvantaged and Education for all.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has now drawn some attention and focus to the concept of Giftedness in India. This concept, hitherto unrecognised, has to an extent delayed the contribution of the gifted in the growth of the Nation. We still lack dedicated policies and clarity in handling the gifted in schools. The New National Education policy has surely opened its doors to the need for providing some challenging learning experiences to help advanced learners thrive.

According to the NEP - *“Reduction of curriculum content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking will provide space for critical thinking and more holistic, inquiry-based, discovery-based, discussion-based, and analysis-based learning. The mandated content will focus on key concepts, ideas, applications, and problem- solving. Teaching and learning will be conducted in a more interactive manner; questions will be encouraged, and classroom sessions will regularly contain more fun, creative, collaborative, and exploratory activities for students for deeper and more experiential learning.”*

Introduction of these learning experiences will benefit all students but could be leveraged by teachers to provide challenging differentiated learning experiences to the gifted in classrooms.

How will the NEP help the gifted in schools?

The pedagogical changes suggested in the NEP will surely be beneficial to advanced

learners only if the teachers are trained in the needs of the gifted. Curriculum modifications and accommodations can be designed with a deep understanding of the developmental needs of children with High ability. This program would not only trigger better learning experiences for the gifted in but would raise the level of instruction and teacher performance. This would benefit the identified and non-identified simultaneously. It would motivate the teacher to keep the learning experience robust and alive. The essentials to be accommodated and introduced in schools would be enrichment centres, project based learning, problem based learning and research components.

The nurturing program we envision for India needs to take into account many components due to our diversity and socio-cultural context. The nurturing of cognitive abilities has been to some extent highlighted by the NEP, as it has always been central and driven by subject related academic proficiency and marks oriented. Areas that need attention in a gifted program are the social, emotional, psychological, creativity and spiritual exploration. Spiritual exploration will play a vital role in India as it stems from the fabric of our traditional culture. The outcome of our multifaceted nurturing programs will widen the scope and meaning of success from mere materialistic gains and pleasures to a level of gratitude, compassion, and service. Interconnectedness and interrelatedness will bring the concept of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam to reality in the age of globalisation.

Presently due to lack of awareness about Giftedness among parents, teachers and counsellors, the task ahead of us is challenging, but we at Kaveri Gifted

Education and Research Center (KGERC) are committed to the cause of the Gifted in India.

"A dream written down becomes a goal. A goal broken down into steps becomes a plan. A plan backed by action becomes a reality."

We at KGERC have been working in the area of Giftedness since 2009 and today we are equipped in making gifted programs in Indian schools- A reality.

Research Corner

Meeting the educational needs of a gifted child: A parent's narrative

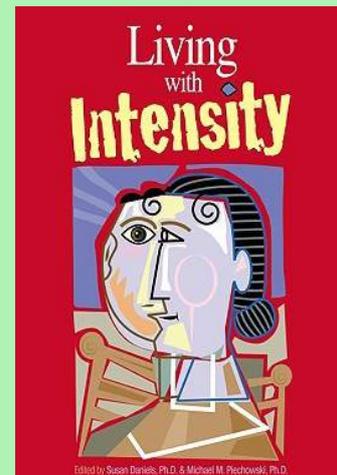
Manasawala, S. and Desai, D.

India is currently focusing on providing education for all, and special populations like the gifted are being neglected. This is evident in the case of Aditya (IQ 145), a 7-year-old boy and his parents who after discovering that their child is gifted attempt to meet his unique educational needs. Despite evidence of Aditya qualifying in examination two grades above his age level, the school authorities neither offer acceleration nor provide appropriate resources. This study attempts to delineate the importance of combined efforts of parents, school, and the community in nurturing gifted children. Finally, the researcher makes a few recommendations for parents:

1. Create support groups to share parenting experiences;
2. Explore online and local learning resources to educate themselves about giftedness and nurture their children;
3. Identify mentors in the community or other parents who can support in meeting the educational needs of these children.

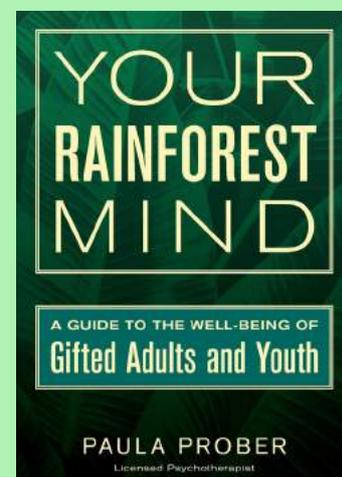
Gifted Education International
2019, Vol. 35(3) 189–200
DOI: 10.1177/0261429419863440
journals.sagepub.com/home/gei

Books to pick up now!



Living with Intensity [PG]

Susan Daniels and Micheal M Piechowski, through this book, brings to you the understanding of various intensities of emotions, sensitivity, and excitability among Gifted Children, Adolescents, and Adults. With a great detail on Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration, this resource aids to empower one with nurturing and practical methods of handling children and adults experiencing over excitability for educators and parents.



Your Rainforest Mind [PG]

In her book titled, "Your Rainforest Mind", author Paula Prober uses the metaphor of a rainforest to describe the mind of a gifted individual, which has high sensitivity, empathy and perfectionism. The book suggests helpful strategies and resources for challenges that those with a rainforest mind would encounter. Our team of counsellors consider this a helpful resource and recommend this book for gifted adults and gifted educators.

That's how we work!

by Mrs. Sowmyalaskhmi, a parent.

Today as we were folding clothes together my younger one declared that she likes the other stars more than the sun. My older one asked her "Why? we survive because of the sun, and you don't like it better?" She said "it's too close to admire and it's too bright and hot because it's near...I like things that I can sit and enjoy peacefully. It's too overpowering." These are some of the random conversations we have while we do regular things at home together. I like these talks. They help me understand without much effort the kind of ideas that they have. Usually with the guards up they choose what to say and what not to. There are the comparisons in the conversations that lead us to nowhere. Or those intellectual conversations that are sometimes overwhelming. But while we do our routines like these together the guard is down and we just talk about some little things. It's more of the time we bond. These lighten up the atmosphere and both my kids calm down to have normal conversations and laughs.

No, it's not an easy habit to cultivate. You have to hold yourself often and remind yourself that you are helping them learn a skill and they are not helping you. As I let them do most of their jobs by themselves, I was mentally prepared for the outcome. What would take 15 minutes if I did it all by myself, takes at least 2hrs if the kids do it by themselves along with the cleaning, I must do it behind them. All creativity, experiments, and ideas bloom while at work and its 2 minds at work so if one forgets to get naughty the other reminds as if all was not enough. But that's what is the fun of being kids. These will be part of their memories of childhood when they grow up though they may fight for a major part of the time or talk of highly intellectual stuff, have those innumerable emotional breakdowns and tantrums. This was one reason I decided that the kids would wash their clothes when my washing

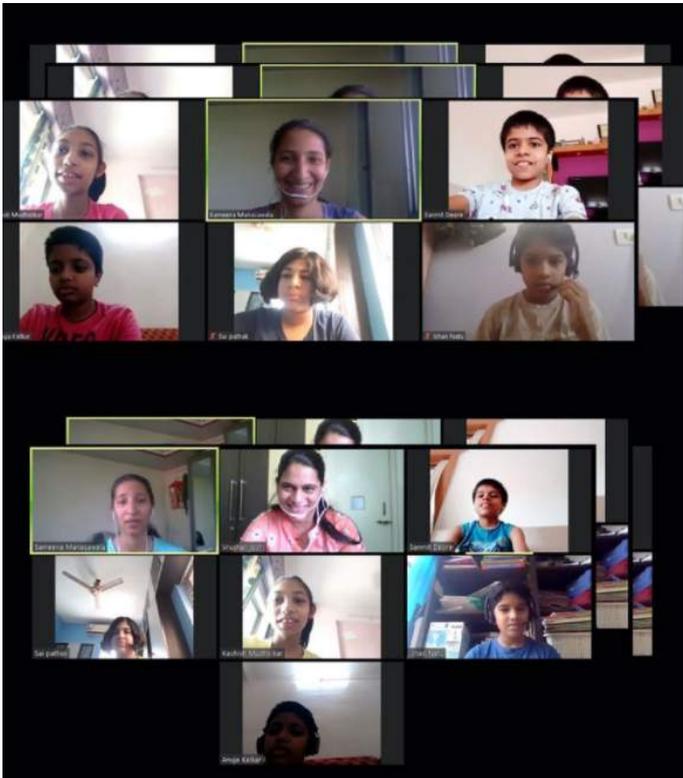


machine went dead during one of the Covid lockdowns. Day 1- they experimented on the amount of water needed to stop the detergent from frothing up. Day 2- they studied the amount of water needed to flood the adjacent kitchen. Day 3- they figured out the amount of soapy water needed to skid. And finally, day 4 work began and by the end of 2 weeks the amount of cleaning up behind them reduced to nil. When I ask them about it now, they only remember the fun and the conversations. They were free to make mistakes and learn. Doing their jobs by themselves doesn't seem to be a punishment but a normal task.

They are independent thinkers, but they need to lead their lives independently, understanding the value of it. These are small steps towards letting them spread their wings soon, without resentment. Yes, many consider me lucky to have such independent kids but it has come with a lot of effort from the beginning.

Thursday Musings with our Kaveri Gifted Katta

by Ms. Diti Nandurbarkar, 13, Student



Thursday mornings start with the usual routine and a certain amount of boredom attached to attending virtual school. As the day wears on, the prospect of a circle of other people and other minds that push yours to think harder seems sort of inviting. The smallest inkling of curiosity seeps into my mind just about an hour before our sessions begin. The curiosity begins building because I don't know what is going to be the topic of discussion for that particular session. Some days we just get together and talk and eventually, we find a topic interesting enough for all of us to think about. It was a little difficult in the beginning because for almost 2 and a half years, we were used to planned and structured workshops and pre-decided activities with predefined aims. I guess they were preparing us for self reflection and action. It was starkly different, this time around because we didn't have that. But one more reason why I felt this year's sessions took a little time to get broken into was because of the great shift in the medium of

communication. We couldn't actually meet and so we met online and chatted there.

Eventually, after one or two sessions, we got used to coming up with topics on our own, sometimes being introduced to us by Sameena our facilitator friend. One of the most striking conversations that we had started out like this. It was one of my personal favourites- when we spoke about addiction. We spoke about how we identify addiction and what it could mean and how we can differentiate it from passion. The conversations eventually turned to whether addiction is a coping mechanism and what are coping mechanisms. Are they good or bad? How do you define good and bad coping mechanisms? It was a very sensitive place from where we started and that conversation really struck me because I don't think we have ever spoken about something so serious with that much empathy. That conversation has made an impact on me.

That session onwards, we decided that every Thursday, each one of us will bring something to the group. Something like a video or an article or a poem or an experience or a venture to talk about and converse about. Thus began the cycle. The first two that we had was someone talk about their start up venture/company related to building rockets. It was akin to a presentation one would make for an actual meeting with a lot of business executives and other higher-ups. Regardless, I actually enjoyed knowing about all these fun and creative and interesting things that my fellow students are doing, while it also gave me a complex because my original creativity has been low to none this past year.

We always have someone asking questions

from the “other” side if we ever get into too much of a unilateral thinking channel. We always have someone willing to question the foundation of the argument or the statements that we establish. This is how we find that questions lead to even more questions and answers lead to questions too. Sameena often puts in questions that would streamline the discussion or would provoke certain thought processes. She often plays the part of the devil’s advocate so as to ensure that we think and speak from both sides of a story. One of my favourite things about our talks is that we aren’t afraid to build on each other’s thoughts. We don’t shy away from building ideas together and using each other’s thoughts as bases for new ideas.

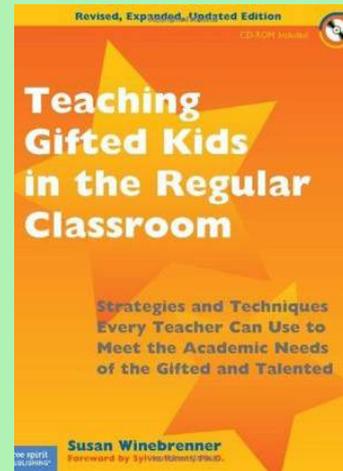
The Kaveri Gifted Katta is part of the Gifted Nurturing Program offered by KGERC . Its a platform for gifted teenagers to interact openly, without fear of judgment or criticism with those of similar ability and interests. It is facilitated by trained mentors and offers a safe space for these sensitive teenagers to voice their opinions, share their ideas in the hope they learn to think critically and communicate compassionately with the world around them.

Myth Busters!

Teaching all the children in a classroom using the same methods is fair!

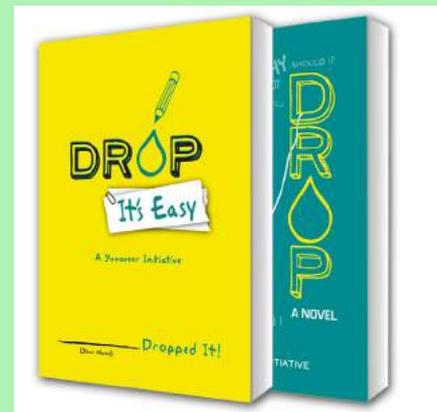
This is one of the common myths in an educational setting. A classroom of any grade is filled with children with different learning styles, unique developmental milestones, and personal preferences for knowledge acquisition. Hence, a teacher must ensure that they respect these differences and accommodate various needs in their teaching methods and classroom activities.

Books to pick up now!



Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom [PG]

Susan Daniels and Micheal M Piechowski, through this book, brings to you the understanding of various intensities of emotions, sensitivity, and excitability among Gifted Children, Adolescents, and Adults. With a great detail on Dabrowski’s Theory of Positive Disintegration, this resource aids to empower one with nurturing and practical methods of handling children and adults experiencing over excitability for educators and parents.



Drop It [UG]

While on the path to self-discovery, one crafts their story including various aspects from the culture and philosophy. Drop It (Chinmaya Mission Publication) is a two-part workbook and novel for children to creatively assess their qualities while shaping the child’s thoughts, imagination and sincerity. It is embedded in Indian philosophy and ancient wisdom. Gifted children and teenagers would surely benefit from this set of books to develop their values and ideals.

Perfectionism – A Boon or Bane?

by Ms. Devika Deshpande, Lecturer,
Dr. Kalmadi Shamarao Junior College

Giftedness and perfectionism go hand in hand most of the time. The dictionary explains perfection as 'the action or process of improving something until it is faultless' and perfectionism as the 'refusal to accept any standard short of perfection'. The need to be perfect in any activity by an individual is a trait that many lack, inciting a feeling of jealousy towards those who strive to be perfect. Perfectionism is a bane when it does that as it invites unnecessary attention. Perfectionism brings a huge baggage of obsession too. A perfectionist may start moving from being a normal perfectionist to a neurotic one. That is when the obsession needs to be thwarted. This then becomes a bane as it brings along anxiety issues and the need to strive hard, albeit at the cost of loss of valuable time. The perfect individual then starts being looked at with raised eyebrows and being avoided by others as work timelines get hampered.

The perfectionist must remember that this is a gift that is rare and can always be used to seek pleasure and satisfaction of having done a good job of any task that is undertaken. Very few people have this skill anyway and hence, it is always advisable to use it with grace. If done correctly, it attracts a lot of appreciation and acknowledgment too.

A little planning and timekeeping can avoid all these problems. To make this trait a boon, the perfectionist needs to keep in mind a few tips and tricks to avoid unnecessary tensions. Using a planner and having to-do lists are the first step to achieve perfectionism with a penchant. Remember- 'Time is money'. Don't procrastinate... act by setting deadlines. Planners are a good way of keeping track of all your activities. Invest

Binge-able Bits for you!



Killa (Marathi) [PG]

This critically acclaimed and National Award Winning Marathi Feature film revolves around the life of a 11-year-old Chinmay who is forced to move to a smaller village from Pune due to his mother's transfer. While a single working mother does her best to avoid financial distress, we see Chinmay cope with new friends in a novel environment and change his perception of the village. This movie can form the basis of a valuable discussion with gifted children on being sensitive to their environment and coping with life changes.



Vitus [PG]

This drama film shows the life of 12-year-old Vitus, his relationship with his parents and his musical success. Vitus is a gifted pianist who is also gifted with overprotective parents. As the film advances, we see him become independent, aid his family to pursue their dreams and follow his love.

in a good planner and USE IT daily.

Teachers need to be very conscious of this habit in gifted students. Projects, assignment submission deadlines may be missed by the student if the project “seems incomplete or less than perfect for the students”. A good way to handle this would be to gently nudge and remind the student to submit on time. Helping them set deadlines and writing that planner is vital. Timely reminders are an added advantage. Teachers also need to observe the students

and look for other signs of disturbance like anxiety or obsessive compulsive disorders and seek help from counsellors and parents.

Try changing your unwanted habits one at a time consciously and you will be surprised at how much you can achieve. So, if you are gifted and strive for perfection, stay motivated and inspired by perfection around you but be cautious about not being too obsessive. Imbibe these tips in your life and see the change for yourself!

Giftedness from KGERC

Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Arts, Theatre, Management, Leadership, Finance, and all other fields have their fair share of intellectually gifted personalities. We look into the achievements and inventions from students of Kaveri Gifted Education and Research Center!



Aniket Ghisad and Nachiket Mendki

Young Inventors, Student - Class X

Light from gravity has been one of the prominent discoveries of humankind to aid in accumulating light and warmth from easily available sources of energy. But optimizing gravity sources for light through the Gravity Lamp is expensive for many. While a commercial gravity lamp costs around 10,000 rupees for emitting 20 minutes of light energy, a normal Indian cannot

afford this latest solution to power his home. But the invention by Aniket Ghisad and Nachiket Mendki eliminates this problem for you! The two class X students of Dr Kalmadi Shamarao High School in Ganeshnagar invented a lamp that runs on gravitation energy using Gurutva Urja and it is named Project Guru. Project Guru was developed as part of the Atal Tinkering Lab and Atal Innovation Mission of the Niti Aayog. This invention was the only project shortlisted for the Atal Mission Marathon from the state of Maharashtra. With the project being affordable (Rs 500 to 700 for 10 minutes), the students had presented the same in front of the Hon'ble President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Children's Day along with their teacher and mentor Mrs Swati Kale. The students have worked on this project over 3 years, often seeking help to manage one's emotions and use effective communications skills from facilitators at KGERC. We are proud of their achievement!

Rights of Gifted Children



Right to know one's giftedness



Right to pursue one's talent area



Right to seek guidance in the development in one's talent



Right to have multiple peer groups and variety of friends



Right to have a say in all curricular areas of the school



Right to access resources across age grade levels in school



Right to have access to higher education institutions



Right to be eligible for funding research projects



Right to undertake intensive research projects



Right to have flexible school days/timings



Right to be able to choose teacher & mentors



Right to choose subject and topics of their choice



Right to have appropriate assessments



Right to have a platform for ideation



Right to have access to gifted counselors



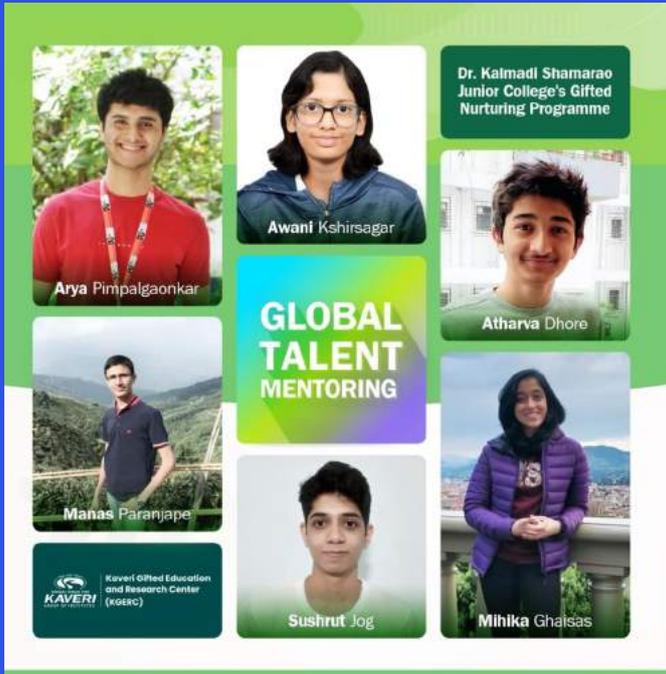
Right to be able to skip grades



Right to have access to spaces to think and ponder

Giftedness from KGERC

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Global Talent Mentoring" is a highly selective, long-term support programme offered by "University of Regensburg", Germany for outstanding young talents in the (STEMM) field.

We feel proud to announce that 6 students from Dr. Kalmadi Shamarao Junior College are selected for this Programme after a strict screening of their outstanding achievement in STEMM field and their motivation.

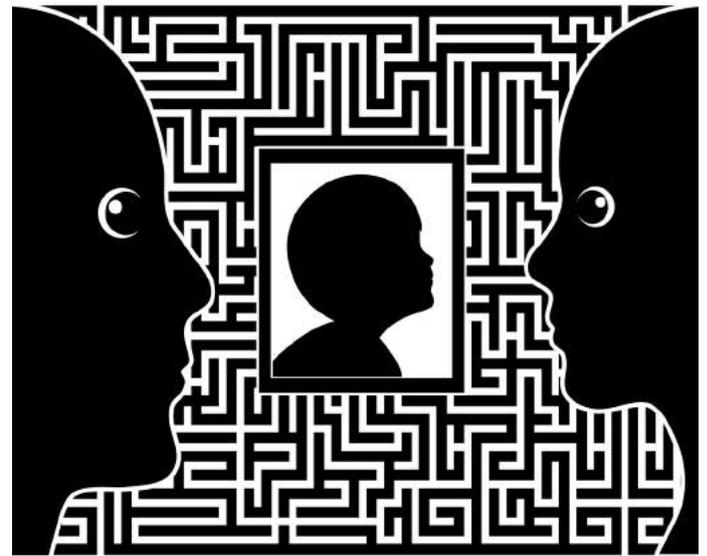
KSJC congratulates:

- Mihika Ghaisas
- Manas Paranjape
- Atharva Dhore
- Sushrut Jog
- Arya Pimpalgaonkar
- Awani Kshirsagar

This platform will give a very unique opportunity to the students, where they will be getting to interact, on one-to-one basis, with STEMM experts across the globe.

Psychology Students: What do you think is Giftedness among children?

by Ms Atulya Venkatesh, Psychology Undergraduate Student



As a teacher enters a classroom, she sees many bright faces awaiting her arrival. As she picks up the chalk and starts her class, the students learn Science, Technology, Humanities, Mathematics and many other subjects through the eyes of this teacher. But does everyone see the same vision? From the kid taking notes to the class prankster, does every student have the same capacity and go through the same learning curves? Unlike the syllabus and curriculum of Education Boards, the children in a classroom have different developmental and learning necessities and difficulties.

In this classroom bustling with hands ready to answer questions and learn, research and studies always focus on the children with learning disabilities. The gifted ones, or commonly called bright ones, are often

neglected. With the lack of awareness and knowledge about the gifted children and their high Intelligence Quotient levels, teachers and parents are not equipped with the right skills and teaching aids to enable healthy competition and establish right learning milestones for these students. With lack of mainstreaming giftedness, the mixed-ability classroom does not feed their hunger for curiosity and offers them lesser opportunities to enhance their inherent abilities. Not only teachers in primary schools, even psychology students are new to this phenomenon too! While several courses and teaching schools enable them to learn remedial teaching and exercise the same, students are neglecting resources and knowledge about this population!

A quick round of interviews was conducted among 25 students studying the science of Psychology in their Under Graduation from a premier college in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, about their awareness on Giftedness among school children. Most of the students interviewed were well-versed about learning disabilities among children and remedial teaching. But giftedness, at the other end of the spectrum, was majorly a new topic for these students. First, they needed awareness and web resources to learn about the topic before answering questions. Then, they were convinced that being gifted is not an issue in a classroom setting, reasoning that the child is a top performer in class. Finally, they mentioned giftedness doesn't need any specific remedy as they are not vastly suffering from any aftermath effects. These statements show that the students are unaware of the phenomenon of intellectual giftedness and how it can manifest in an undiagnosed adult.

Responses from these students show us that giftedness is a novel term for them. Some suggest that giftedness is manifested through better studying and

education opportunities. While others refer to giftedness as just being smart and something that is common among top-performing students in classrooms. While students turn into future psychologists, the lack of awareness around this population makes it difficult to assess them and provide the right care for these children.

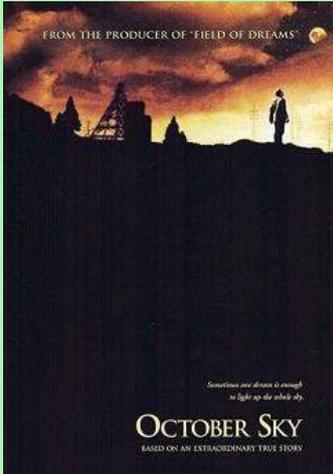
With lack of access to interaction with the Gifted population and research studies, one is bound to come to baseless conclusions and vague opinions about the topic. With the lack of awareness prevailing, it is necessary for students, teaching faculty, and other stakeholders to educate themselves about how giftedness manifests in the society and how neglect and lack of care would lead to maladjusted, or gifted underachievers who missed their chance making it to the top or contribute to the wellbeing and development of the society.

Myth Busters!

IQ Scores are the sole predictor of giftedness in a population

Although used in mainstream assessments, IQ scores or any single score cannot be used to make a prediction about performance, even in academics. Hence, outstanding accomplishments, which are associated with giftedness, are often multivariate and are hard to conclude from one single assessment score. Additionally, Giftedness can also be seen in non-academic zones, which are hard to measure in a standard IQ test. Further, these IQ tests are culture specific and are generally inaccessible to people in lower socio-economic status.

Binge-able Bits for you!



October Sky [UG]

Based on the life of Homer H. Hickam Jr., this movie is the story of a coal miner's son who dreams of building rockets along with his friends and their science teacher after seeing the Sputnik 1 cross the October Sky and ended up becoming a NASA Engineer. The movie reflects persistence in following one's dream and the role that supportive parents and teachers can play in a student's achievement.



Beautiful Young Minds [UG]

Beautiful Young Minds is a 2006 documentary that gives a glimpse into the lives of teenagers who compete to become the top 6 to represent the country, UK, at the International Mathematical Olympiad. Exploring the world of numbers, these teens are pushed through various emotions throughout the journey captured in the film.

Virtual Gifted Counselling

"Gifted students have tremendous variability not only in their cognitive capacity, but in their affective development. While there are clearly common themes to the social-emotional issues confronting gifted students, there are profound individual differences among gifted students."

- Nicholas Colangelo (PhD)

At KGERC, we make it a point to make counselling for gifted children and their parents widely available. We've started counselling them over Skype and it has been a huge success. We've had parents and children from Bangalore, Delhi and Mumbai who seek our guidance in nurturing their child who shows advance potential.

Did you know?

- As the gifted constitute about 3% of the general population, a whopping 12.5 million Indian children between 3-18 years of age are likely to be gifted. (National Institute of Advanced Studies)
- The NCERT and NCTE will develop guidelines for the education of gifted children. B.Ed. programmes may also allow a specialization in the education of gifted children (NEP 2020)
- Support for gifted students and for those with special talents, with additional opportunities is also proposed. Many co-curricular activities are to be incorporated into the academic schedule to unearth and develop the latent talents of children. (NEP 2020)

Our next newsletter out in December 2021! Stay tuned! For more information contact us through gifted.inquiry@kaveri.edu.in