



Ásmi



From the Editor's Desk



Childhood is the most cherished phase of our lives. The experiences, events, incidents, observations made during this stage of our lives, not only make an indelible impression on the rest of our life, it also shapes our perceptions and help us to form our opinions. What is most interesting is that Sage Publications publish a journal called *Childhood*, which speaks volumes about the importance of this phase in each one of our lives. It was in this journal, that I came across an entire editorial on what is called an Indian childhood. Strange as it may sound, that what is so important about an Indian childhood, we need to realise that we are a sub-continent carved out by the departure of the Raj and the remnants of colonial hangover. Apart from that, we have children growing in different regions with myriad cultural practices, dotting different economic and social strata. Each of these little bundles of joy grow in their own home and then step out in the schools and playgrounds, where exchanges and absorptions of each other's cultural practices, opinions and perceptions take place. Our campus is a miniscule reflection of our country. Our children have learnt to live and breathe in a space which is sans any kind of fear and cultural inhibitions. This stokes curiosity in a child, and also helps in building adaptability. Once you learn to adapt then the lessons of tolerance, equity and appreciation are automatically learnt. They have grown up to be confident individuals as from a very young age, they have learnt to be independent. They have cycled down from their respective homes to the football field or to the swimming pool or to the stadium completely on their own from as young as a six-year-old. They have never seen or asked about gender bias. You may say it is a cocooned world, simulated atmosphere, extremely artificially curated, yet it is these formative years spent in the campus, that our children have experienced the actual essence of childhood: carefree, happy, and confident. The hustle-bustle of the city life, the constant fight with pollution, everyday negotiation with horrible traffic, were myths to our children. Thanks to this campus, they have grown up in an idyllic surrounding, enjoying their growing up years. Though in the pre-covid years, the iconic 'jhula park', the Olympic-size swimming pool would be filled with the excited voices of children, today with the on-set of technological dependence, the sounds have ceased. As I pen my thoughts today, all I wish for is that we as the guardians of our society should be responsible to see that our children do not lose out the essence of childhood to the ever-surging technological influence. It is a tool and should remain like that. It should not take away the innocence of a child's physical play time, because that is where a child's mental development actually takes place.

Angana Sengupta





WA Secretary Message

Greetings from the Women's Association, IIT Kanpur! The Women's Association (WA) is thrilled to kick off a new year with a vision to build an even stronger, more connected community on campus. The WA is a vibrant and inclusive platform that brings women together with opportunities for interaction, personal growth, and shared joy.

We've planned a variety of engaging activities for the year, including health and fitness camps, yoga sessions, sports events, social work, creative workshops, cultural evenings, and learning circles. These activities are designed to promote wellness, celebrate creativity, and strengthen the bonds within our community.

This year, we're also excited to relaunch our newsletter "Asmi", which features member contributions, campus stories, event highlights, and articles that reflect the spirit of the WA. We invite all members to contribute and share their voices in this meaningful publication.

The annual membership drive is now open. We warmly encourage all women residing on campus—including faculty, staff, research scholars, and spouses—to join us. The annual membership fee is ₹1,200.

For more information on our activities, membership, and past events, please visit the WA website at <https://www.iitk.ac.in/wa/>.

We look forward to an exciting and enriching year ahead with your enthusiastic participation!

Chandana Konjengbam Dutta
WA Secretary

Newsletter Team

- Akansha Dwivedi
- Angana Sengupta
- Chandana Konjengbam Dutta
- Chitralekha Bhattacharya
- Nalini Sankar
- Shirolly Anand



Growing Up Green - A Toddler's Life in Campus Paradise

Nikita Naik



Being a campus resident since 2019, I had the privilege of living amidst a close-knit community and experience the vibrant cultural mosaic that makes this place so unique. But it wasn't until 2022 when I stepped into motherhood at the age of 26, that I truly began to appreciate how deeply nurturing this environment could be, especially for raising a child.

Being a young mother came with its own set of challenges, but it also gave me the energy and enthusiasm to be wholly present in my child's formative years. My husband and I come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which turned out to be a beautiful opportunity for our son. Using the "one parent, one language" approach, we introduced him to both of our mother tongues early on. The campus, with its natural multilingual environment, added Hindi and English to his growing repertoire. Today, at just two and a half years old, he is already developing the ability to switch between languages, a reflection of the cultural richness he is growing up with.

To us, the campus is nothing less than a miniature India – diverse, inclusive, and inspiring. This exposure to different people, languages, and lifestyles is shaping our child into someone who is empathetic and culturally aware from the very start.

One of the most priceless gifts the campus offers is its natural beauty. The abundance of green spaces and birdlife has awakened in my son a sensitivity toward nature that's rare to see in such young children. He doesn't just recognise birds by sight, but has started identifying them by their calls, something we consider a small but meaningful achievement.



My husband and I are both inclined towards outdoor activities, and that naturally influences our parenting. We've made the most of the campus's excellent facilities, especially the swimming pool. With regular exposure and encouragement, our son is now able to swim at the age of just 2.5 years! These activities aren't just hobbies, they're confidence building experiences that foster independence and joy.

Another pillar of support for us has been the on-campus child care facility. It offers parents a precious window to focus on their personal and professional lives. Knowing that our child is in a safe, stimulating, and caring environment gives us peace of mind.

Raising our child in the heart of such a vibrant and nurturing campus community has been a blessing. It has not only enriched his upbringing but also made our parenting journey deeply fulfilling.

Raising children on campus: a point for debate

Anjana Poddar

Being a small-town girl, I had no clue as to what campus life entailed. When I first came to IITK, for library research in 1991, like every first timer, I was awestruck by the greenery and the peacocks. Then I had no clue that I would return, in 1993, to take up permanent residence. My daughter was born in 1994, and I was happy that I would be raising my child in a clean, pollution-free environment. The primary Health Centre on campus sufficed for any minor health care requirements and, also, for all vaccinations for the child.



As she grew up and was ready for school there was Kislaya to begin followed by Campus School and finally KV. Formal school education was taken care of. Apart from this all varieties of extracurricular activities and hobby classes were taken care of. For sports there were facilities to learn swimming, Tae Kwon do, badminton, tennis, basketball, you name it. For arts and fine arts music, dance, painting, and craft classes were available. All facilities needed for a growing child were and still are available. What was not there then, but is now available, is the children's library, CBC.

This could be utopian but for times when the ideal situation ceases to exist. When infants or children fall seriously ill one has to rush to the city. A visit to a specialist can be pretty stressful.

Apart from this, growing up on a campus, a child is away from and unaware of the actual real-world problems. Also, campus life might make some kids 'nose in the air snooties' which is an undesirable trait. It might hamper smooth social interaction later in life. Also, living on a comparatively safe campus children may not learn the much-needed caution resulting in dangerous situations.



The serious academic environs might be a boon to promote love for higher education. On the other hand, this could be undesirable if parents pressurize kids to follow a career path which may not be to their liking.

Whether the pros outweigh the cons or it is the other way round depends on individual thinking and preferences.

PS: On a lighter note; 😊 campus children, who join IITK as students, learn to get independent much later in life. They can visit Mom's 'restaurant' any time. Weekly laundry is done. No worries for the tiniest personal needs. And, God forbid, if one falls ill, is taken care of. Whether this is a pro or con only they and their family can tell. 😊





बचपन आई आई टी कैंपस में

दौड़ती सी है जिंदगी यहां
बच्चों के आस पास
सुबह गुडमॉर्निंग सॉन्ग के साथ होती है जिनके दिन
की शुरुआत ।
कभी साइकिल तो कभी स्कूटी
कभी रिकशा तो कभी कार
कोई स्नेहन, कोई किसलय
तो कोई स्कूल बस का करे इंतजार ।
शाम होते ही स्ट्रोलर या साइकिल
में खिलखिलाते चेहरे और
घुमाते दिख जाते हैं कितने सारे
मम्मा और पापा ।
बाल मेला से जूनियर जज़्बा, कभी डांडिया तो कभी
एनुअल डे
कभी फलावर शो तो कभी पिकनिक या कभी दिवाली
मेला
ऐसे कितने रंग बिरंगे कैंपस फंक्शन से
बना रहे बच्चों में जोश, उत्साह और उमंग ।
हर ऐसे रंगारंग उत्सव का बने हम भी हिस्सा
बच्चों में शुरू से ही शामिल है यह उत्सुकता ।
ढेर सारी रुचियों और क्षमताओं से
मिले नई दिशाओं की ओर बढ़ने का आत्मविश्वास ।
कभी पार्क तो कभी स्टेडियम
कभी स्विमिंग तो कभी डांस क्लास
कभी ताइक्वांडो की प्रैक्टिस तो कभी टेनिस की
क्लास
या संडे हो सीबीसी लाइब्रेरी विजिट
फास्ट्रैक में जीवन आगे बढ़ता जा रहा है ।
बच्चों के जीवन से जुड़े हर पल को
साथ जीने की कोशिश करते हुए,
अपने बचपन की कुछ खास अनूठी यादों
और सीख को पुनर्जीवित करते हुए

जब नवयुग की शैली में ढालना
और ढलना एक बड़ा संघर्ष बन जाए ।
मोबाइल के युग में भी बिना फोन और टीवी के
मज़े कराना रोज़ाना एडवेंचर बन जाए ।
पैकेट से निकले चिप्स, चॉकलेट, जैम्स
और ऐसी कितनी ही चीज़ों में रोक लगाना
साहसिक और कठोर हृदय का कार्य कहलाए ।
Alexa aur Google नाम के गांव के साथ
बेबी सिटर के लिमिटेड आवर्स के साथ,
स्नेहन के नियमित रूटीन के साथ
कुछ अपने लक्ष्य और सपनों को
साकार करने की कोशिशों के साथ
हमारे बच्चे बड़े होना सीख रहे हैं ।
हम भी उनके साथ इस मॉडर्न टाइम्स में
एडजस्टमेंट करना सीख रहे हैं ।
बाहर की हर दौड़ धूप से सिमटे और छिपे रह जाते हैं
कैंपस में पले बढ़े हमारे बच्चे ।
पलक झपकते ही जो जाना चाहें
दादा दादी, नाना-नानी की गोद में ।
हम कब जाएंगे और वो यहां हमारे पास कब आएंगे
के इंतजार में रोज़ाना यही रट लगाएं ।
कुछ ऐसी ही घूमती
रहती है हमारी और
बच्चों की जिंदगी
यहाँ कैंपस में नए
पुराने से रूटीन में ।

राशि पन्त



Short Articles



Parenting is a great responsibility for every parents. It is an experience where each day you learn something new as every child is unique and special.

Campus kids grow up in clean and green environment, get to know each other in neighbourhood or schools within the campus. Campus has school facilities starting from play group to class 12. Campus also provides sports facilities and cultural activities. This way kids' study and get to learn the cocurricular activities they are interested in. Children also attend birthday parties and community function thus ensuring their overall development and social

interaction.

Although kids enjoy shopping mall and restaurants in city, they do not like the noise pollution, crowded streets of the city. Campus way of life being more peaceful and civilized. Campus children growing up in protected and pamper environment will find difficulty adjusting to city life when they leave campus for higher studies.

All in all, kids growing up in campus are more privileged than their peers growing up in cities.

R. Bala. Thirupura Sundari



Building community, relieving stress, and strengthening family bonds can all be achieved through bonding activities and shared experiences with kids. Campus amenities provide a natural gathering place for parents, which lessens feelings of loneliness. Stress from demanding work schedules can be reduced by prioritizing values, leading a healthy lifestyle, and participating in high-quality extracurricular activities. But it is important to stay away from the campus echo chamber, which can impede personal development by fostering a lack of diversity, diminished

empathy, and heightened comparison. Parents can lessen this by participating in social activities and small businesses outside the campus, vacationing in a far-off place, to establish a connection with the real world.

Mrs Loka Lakshminarayan





Binding Hearts, Building Futures



Founded in 1967, Opportunity School (OS) offers education up to class 8 for children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in and around the IIT Kanpur campus. From a modest beginning with just six students, the school has come a long way. Initially aimed at keeping children off from the streets, today the school provides quality education to over 230 children minimal cost. In this exclusive cover story, we been able to talk to two dedicated individuals Opportunity School: Ms. Jayshree, former academic coordinator, and member of the OS management committee and Ms. Shikha Sinha, present academic coordinator. In this candid conversation they talk about the goals, community engagement and various challenges they face in the running of the school.



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Could you two share your respective personal journey and the motivation behind joining the Opportunity School?

Ms Jayshree: To be quite truthful, I don't remember who found whom. All I know is that within a year of coming to campus, I was volunteering at Opportunity school. In those days, it used to be located in two adjacent Type II houses. I had always enjoyed teaching Math, and so it seemed quite natural that I would be teaching Math to classes 7 and 8. The challenge was that I had to learn all the terms in Hindi, but it was fun.

Ms Shikha: With over 25 years of experience in teaching Computer Science and Physics to students belonging to classes 9 to 12, the idea of supporting underprivileged children in the very society I had lived for so long, deeply resonated within me. And ever since not only has it given me immense personal satisfaction but also a renewed sense of purpose in my journey as an educator.

What is the mission of Opportunity School, and how does it align with the needs of the community?

Ms Jayshree: The original mission was to keep the children off the streets. It used to be quite a struggle to get the children in the classrooms. All children have a right to quality education and that's what the school aims to provide, at minimal cost.

Ms Shikha: This education goes beyond academics, it nurtures cultural and moral values and instills a deep concern for the environment. The school's mission closely aligns with the broader vision of IIT Kanpur, which emphasizes inclusive growth, social responsibility, and holistic development of a child.

How has the IITK campus community contributed to the establishment and towards ongoing support of the school?

Ms Jayshree: The campus community has been one of the main pillars of strength for the school. The school was established only because some faculty wives came together to create a safe facility for children of the domestic helpers where they could learn so much more than the three Rs (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic). Faculty and staff make monthly contributions from their salary. Spouses have volunteered at various times to engage the children in different activities like craft, dance, sports or academics, or to raise funds or help in administrative matters. Faculty members have unhesitatingly offered lab tours, organized workshops or lectures for our students.

Ms Shikha: Also, there have been many one-time donations, for various necessities like furniture, school uniforms, T-shirts, shirts, books, sports equipment, water dispensers, stationery items etc. An entirely new initiative by the student community (Hall 1,3,5,8 GH1) to share one meal with the students at the Opportunity school reflects how strongly the student community feels about social responsibility.

What are some of the biggest challenges you face in running of this school, and how do you mitigate them?

Ms Jayshree: Since the school can offer only minimal salary, it is very difficult to get well-qualified teachers. There are a few good teachers, but we would love to get some more. Also, we don't have resources for engaging qualified instructors for extra-curricular activities like dance, music and sports. In-house teachers do as best as they can.

Can you describe the school curriculum and any special programs designed to enhance the learning experience for the students?

Ms Jayshree: We follow the NCERT books and also teach basic computer skills. Prof. H.C. Verma had taken special Maths and Science classes for a number of years. Slowly and gradually, the hands-on science classes converged to **Vigyanalaya**- a unique lab initiative that encourages the children to explore the scientific understanding without bogging them down with heavy theories. This has taken off so well that today the school invites students from other schools to also share in this experience.

Ms Shikha: Soon, we will be introducing regular **Computer Science** classes for students belonging to Classes 3 to 8. These classes will cover the fundamentals of computing, and include an introductory component on Artificial Intelligence, delivered by experts in the field.

Would you like to share a success story of a student who has greatly benefited from Opportunity school?

Ms Jayshree: There have been many. For girls, this school is truly an opportunity. Many parents send their sons to school but avoid sending daughters because of the expenses incurred. Since the school fee here is minimal, girls get a chance to study. Many students have gone on to study professional courses and done well in life. There are many who work in various projects, in IIT itself.

Recently a student, Vishal, graduated from HBTI and has been placed in TAPI Technology Ltd, in Madhya Pradesh. His father is a washerman and mother works as a domestic help. He sent a very touching thank you note to the school, for helping change the lives of his entire family.

Do you engage the community in school events and activities? What has been the response?



Ms Jayshree: We invite everyone to our annual events like the Sports Day or during the Annual Cultural Program. For smaller events like recitation competition or a craft competition, we invite judges individually. The judges accept the invitation very cordially. For the annual events, only the chief guest and guest of honor attend the function.

What are your long-term goals for the school, and how do you plan to achieve them?

Ms Jayshree: For the past couple of years, the school management has been trying very hard to get the CBSE affiliation, in order to start classes 9 and 10. This is sorely needed for girls as many stop studying after completing class 8. This will require a large amount of fund. Professor H.C. Verma has been our strongest support in this regard and is working tirelessly to raise the required amount for the school.

Ms Shikha: Integration into mainstream society always has been our long-term goal and challenge. We want our students not just to pass exams, but to thrive in higher education, compete in the job market, and take pride in their identity. It has been possible for a few students with constant support from our advisors and alumni of IITK.

How do you ensure the sustainability of the school in the face of changing economic conditions?

Ms Jayshree: Frankly, we rely on the goodwill of our donors. God willing, we should always have enough to at least scrape by. The DORA office has been very helpful in this regard and has pitched for us to the alumni. A few have generously responded and we pull off taking one year a time. We haven't raised our fees since the last five years.

What message would you like to share with the campus community members who support the Opportunity School, and how can they continue to help?

Ms Jayshree: First of all, a very big thank you for your support. The school runs mainly on donations from various quarters. The school fee collected is enough only to pay about three months' salary to teachers and other staff. So please keep up the financial support.

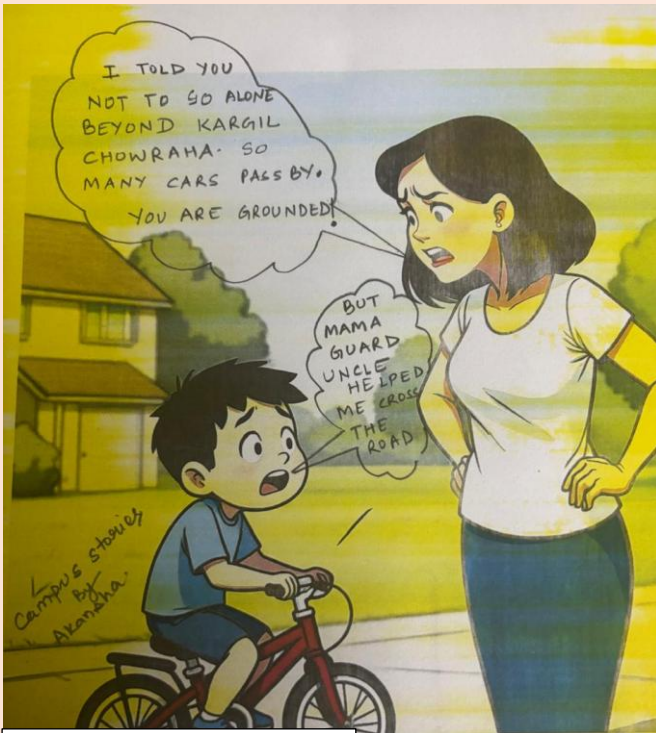
Take time out to visit the school. Please share your talent with the students. Children soak in things of their interest easily. Adopt a child and take care of his/her school needs. Help set-up the Math and Language labs. Start adult literacy classes. Many children who come to Opportunity School are first generation learners. The list is endless...

Ms Shikha: At the Opportunity School, we are constantly reminded that we are not alone in our mission. We are especially thankful to the faculty members and volunteers who go beyond their academic commitments to organize enriching workshops and learning sessions for our children. We would be truly grateful if similar workshops could be conducted for our teachers as well.

As global studies consistently show that education is not just a personal asset but a social equalizer, the Opportunity School reaffirms that transformative change doesn't always begin with a grand policy implementation. Sometimes it starts with the vision of a few determined individuals who believe in their vision and translate that into a mission. Each child born deserves a better tomorrow and a healthy society to live in. So let us build it for them and let this not only be a social equalizer but also a happiness quotient: bringing smile on a child's face.



Creative Corner



Akansha Dwivedi

Nandini Prakash





WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION, IIT KANPUR

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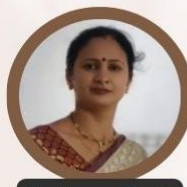
Akansha Dwivedi



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SCAN ME

