

GANDHI COLLEGE

ENGLISH READING AND WRITING WORKSHOP



January - March
2010

Cover Photo: Students in front of Chandran Memorial Hall on the last day of class

This group of Gandhi College students remained in the workshop for the entire five weeks. In most cases, these are also the students whose work is included in this book. The students are holding their course completion certificates

Girls left to right

Row 1: Priyanka Shukla, Shalini Pandey

Row 2: Aakansha Singh, Jyoti Shaw

Row 3: Swati Uphadhay*, Satya Uphadhay, Soni Pandey

(Missing: Madhu Singh)

*(Swati lives in Mirdha but attends college in Gajiabad. While home on break she attended our workshop every day.)

Boys left to right

Row 1: Arvind Kumar Yadav, Bipul Kumar Dubey, Abhishek Kumar

Row 2 Sunny Singh, Ram Pratap Sharma, Anurag Shekhar Singh

(Missing: Shravan Gupta)

Cover photo: Sue Wallace

Selected Prose

Dedicated to the students in the
Gandhi College Workshop in Reading and Writing English
January-March 2010

My husband and I first visited Mirdha in 2008 at the invitation of our friend and my husband's colleague Dr. J. Shukla. I was intrigued and inspired by Shukla's vision in establishing Gandhi College in order to provide higher education opportunities for students from rural villages, especially girls.

In 2010 our friend Marylynne Evans and I returned to Mirdha to help support this effort by providing an opportunity for students to explore and develop English in an environment free from the demands of the exacting national curriculum. Marlynne and I were joined for the first week by Shukla's daughter Sonia who proved to be a natural teacher and a great inspiration to the students. After that it was just the "elderly ladies" as we were referred to in one newspaper article.

Working with up to sixty students from advanced to beginning levels was a challenge but our efforts were more than rewarded by the enthusiasm of the students who came to class every day for two hours before their regular class schedule began. Although sometimes struggling with English, these students shared their personal stories, their pride in India and their concerns about issues ranging from the dowry system to lack of rural schools.

The selections in this book were chosen by the students, this is their book and it is with great pride and affection that we dedicate it to them.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Gandhi terminated the British rule from India. We called him father of the nation. He made many revolution for the freedom of India. Gandhi-Ji believed in simple life.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Gandhi was a great person in India.

Satya Upadhyay



THE PROBLEM OF INDIAN EDUCATION

India have many problem and education is the one of the biggest problems in India and many villager are suffer by it because they are poor and they (can)not afford expensive education for their children because education (cost) is very high. Poor people want to become a doctor (but) because of high coast they can't afford it. (Bad) education creates many other problems.

SOLUTION: Government should provide good jobs for poor people.

Madhu Singh



THE DOWRY SYSTEM

In our Indian society dowry is a very big problem. Nowadays everyone is facing this problem. In India in past times our forefathers used to give some gifts to groom side and now it takes the form of dowry. In dowry brides side paid handsome money to groom side. In our society the dowry is proportional to groom qualification. If groom has a big property then there is a no limit for the dowry. In the dowry system we think that if the bride comes with a lot of money then she is great. We don't mind about her qualifications. If a girl is unable to pay a big dowry then from that time problems generate. Sometimes the bride is set on fire without dowry. In some families all family members used to ignore her all day. It is odd for us that we know that the marriage is bond between two hearts but we bond only two properties right now.

SOLUTIONS: In my opinion this problem may be solved if everyone comes to the surface and thinks about this problem. This problem is for our whole country, not for a person, not for a family, not for a society. If we send our girls to school and when they will get higher education then they will be able to solve any problem. They will get a good job and they will be independent then groom will run behind them for marriage and from that day they will be able to choose a good groom. We can remove this problem by awareness.

Abhi Kumar

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: I am Abhishek Kumar. I live in Beruarbari and I am pursuing my graduation in B.A. I am in the 2nd year in Gandhi Degree College, Mirdha.



DOCTOR RAJENDRA PRASAD

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the first President of India. He was the son of Sri Mahadev Sahai; he was born in Zeradei village in Siwan, Bihar.* Rajendra Prasad was married when he was barely twelve years old to Rajbanshi Devi. He was a good student in his childhood. He always passed the entrance examinations. His wife Rajbanshi Devi was a true to tradition Hindu lady merging her identity totally in that of the husband. He was a great leader of India, he always worked to the freedom of India.

Personal Response: I think that Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the best President of India. He always think about the new generation of India. And he think that in future India make a good country.

Priyanka Shukla

*(Ed.: Bihar is the state immediately to the east of Uttar Pradesh where Gandhi College is located.)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

My name is Priyanka Shukla. I read in B. A. Part-2 in Gandhi Degree College, Mirdha, Beruarbari, Ballia, U. P. I have three subjects: English Literature, Geography, and Home Science. When I finished my study then I want to make a good English teacher and do the good teach to my student.

THE DOWRY SYSTEM IN INDIA

“DOWRY” is a great curse and then challenge for Indian society, particularly for the poor masses. The demand may be in cash or in kind. It is like cancer eating into the roots of Indian society. Dowry spoils and mars married life. Thousands of beautiful girls have been sacrificed as its altar.

Even in past time there was (a) dowry system but then it was sweet will and pleasure of those who gave it out of love and affection. It was to help the new married couple to set up their house.

But today dowry has taken a fearful form. It has become a curse for Indian society. This great social evil in which a boy is sold to the highest bidder is ruining poor and middle class families. Dowry rates are fixed for boys of different status i.e., doctor, engineers, lecturers, bank clerks and state government servants etc.; merit of the girls are no consideration.

There are many reasons of dowry such as old traditions, bad social customs, casteism, unequal matches, false pride, lust, or greediness for wealth, bad economy and different social status

Anurag Shekhar Singh

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am Anurag Shekhar Singh from Gignel in Ballia. My state is Uttar Pradesh. I am the student of Gandhi Degree College in BA, first year. I have taken three subjects: Sociology, English, Ancient History. When I will finish my bachelor degree I will go for the preparation of I.A.S. (Indian Administrative Service) exams. This service is the best service of India. So having made an IAS I want to serve my country.

My hobby: playing cricket, reading books, serving my parents, etc.

My family background level is medium. My father is a farmer and a leader also. My mother is a idea lady. And my elder brother is a business man. I have two brothers and two sisters.



THE MAN OF DESTINY: SIR AURVINDO GHOSE

Sir Aurovindo Ghose was the fire-brand leader of the Indian freedom movement. The world came to know him as the seer of Pondicherry.* He had done very hard work for Pondicherry. He fought against the French territory. He had a oath to “secure the freedom of mother India at any cost”. He had completed his education from England and graduated from Cambridge University. He had done something for the education system. I want to do something for the education system. He is my idol.

*(Ed. A former French colony composed of 4 districts in Southern India.)



A NOBLE MAN: RAVINDRANATH TAGORE

Ravinadranath Tagore was the greatest poet of the world. He made his debut as a poet at the age of fourteen on February 11, 1875. In 1913 Ravi was awarded the Noble Prize for Literature for *Gitanjali*.

MY PERSONAL RESPONSE: Ravindranath Tagore was a great poet. He had done great things for education. He founded Shantiniketan as a school in 1901.* He got money by selling his personal property and his wife’s jewels. I admire his hard work for education. I admire his whole life because he had sacrificed his whole life for the education and literature. I am so proud of him because he was the first Indian and the first Asian who was awarded the Noble Prize for Literature for *Gitanjali* **

*(Ed. Shantiniketan means “abode of peace”. Tagore believed that learning in a natural environment would be more enjoyable and fruitful.)

** (Also the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize .
Gitanjali: “*Song Offerings*” a collection of poetry).

EDUCATION IN INDIA

There are many problems of education system e.g. poverty, illiteracy, lack of good institutions, lack of ability and financial problems. I think another problem is the teachers are not interested in teaching. I think that a way out is to pay them a good salary so talented persons will be tempted to enter this field. Government should provide adult education, free education for the poor and genius students and establish schools and libraries, pre-schools for the children, provide child-centered education , universal and compulsory education. Government should be interested in lower castes.

Education is important for whole world. I think: Education is most powerful weapon of the world , which one can use to change the world.

Swati Upadhyay

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: I am Swati Upadhyay. I am studying B.Ed. at the Academy of Business and Management, Ghaziabad. I want be a teacher. I want to do something for the education system. Aurovindo Ghose and Ravindranath Tagore are my idols. They have done great things for our education system. I am in this English class and I really enjoyed this English class.

DISCUSSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Trees are a precious treasure of our country. Trees not only give us fruit but also timber. The match box is made from the wood of the poplar trees. The paper is prepared from the wood of the eucalyptus. Trees prevent air pollution. They also lessen soil erosion. As far as possible we should plant new trees and protect them, we should not cut trees unnecessarily. Trees are our friends. We should protect them and plant them. They are great help for us.

Amrita Shukla



EDUCATION IN INDIA

PROBLEM: lack of institutions so we can't get success. Because we have no money we can't go to city for education. I think money is main problem of here. I think about the overcome of this problem, we should break this problem.

SOLUTIONS:

My Indian government should give free education for poor person. If we have a lot of job chance(s) then our parents (will be) interested in education. If I have enough money I will make a school for poor children.

A possible solution is good jobs for illiterate people. But the poor people can't get good jobs because they can't give donation for good job because they have no money. One way to solve this problem is to give good job for well-educated person.

Government should make education compulsory up to age 18.*

*(Ed.: On April 1, 2010 the Indian government passed a law providing legal enforcement for a 2000 law that requires free compulsory education for students ages 6-14).



Shalini Pandey

YOGA

Yoga is a very useful method for health. Until and unless our outer and inner organs are not good we cannot do anything very good. Carelessness of one we cannot maintain another. We know: “sound mind in sound body”.

Yoga had begun in India very ancient for tranquility and good health. Yoga discover(er) was Indian saint “Patenjali”. After him it slowly-slowly spread in all India by many holy men. The word “yog” is from “yoj” in Hindi. Its meaning is “to join” or “to connect”, yoga means to join the spirit and body.

There are several benefits we can get from yoga

- (1) Yoga is for all sort of people. Anyone can take the benefit of yoga who belongs to middle class, high or poor, without pay.
- (2) Method of yoga is very simple. A five year old boy or a 60 year old man can use very simple for cure of his disease.
- (3) For its use there is no use of any doctor. One can get its benefit by seeing T.V. or a book. This very simple and money free and free of caste.
- (4) Yoga is free from side effect. English medicine have much side effect...harmful for kidney and stomach....but if we cure by yoga no side effect..and it make body organs very strong, we will have no need for any medic(ine) in the future. We will not have to find any dispensary.
- (5) We can cure by yoga difficult disease just like cancer, lung problem, we can also control our diabetic disease, etc.

Really it (yoga) is so great cure for our health. We should do yoga exercise in our daily life and also (teach) to other(s). We should (make) yoga compulsory. Yoga is really boon for human beings.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am Ram Pratap Sharma, student of BA – first year. My subject- English, Hindi and Geography. I live in a small countryside village its name is Aleye .

My hobby is playing cricket, sometime singing song and writing poetry some. I have much interest for doing help to poor people, neighbors. My intention is not so clear but I will choose what I have to be, an engineer, in a government job, or I have to be a writer or singer. Since I have a passion for all thing(s). I have to do only that task in which (I) have much money, give good reputation and serve people.

I like to live very simple, only in simple dress. From ancient time in our culture have been said “simple living and high thinking”. I have much kindness feeling for all thing(s). I believe in some God.

I am only one son without any sister. I have much remorse that I have no sister. My father is Awadh Bihari Sharma and my mother is Let Devi. I have much love for my mother.



VIKRAM SARABHAI

Vikram Sarabhai was born in Ahmedabad on 12th August 1919. He belonged with rich and businessmen family (but) he loved the poor. His education is good and he study in unique school (*Ed. Montessori*). His teachers were kind and loving. He got his degree in physics and mathematics in England. There was hardly a topic in physics Vikarm was did not know. Vikram left England and returned to India and was father of Indian space program.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

I am Jyoti Shaw. I am read in B.A. first year in Gandhi Degree College Mirdha, Beruarbari, Ballia. I am like teacher in my life. I am think when I complete my study then I will teach students very well.



VIJAYA LAXMI NEHRU PANDIT

Vjaylaxmi Pandit * was the greatest women of India because she also try to help India to became a free country. When she was born, the India, British had ruled over hundred years and waited for someone to come and show them the way. She was read in Europe and study well. She meet Gandhi- ji and impress to her join and became a freedom fighter of India.

*(Ed. Sister of Nehru; first Indian woman to hold a cabinet post.)

Aakansha Singh



SACHIN TENDULKAR

Sachin Tendulkar is one of the greatest cricketer in the world. Sachin was born 24 April, 1973 in Bombay. Sachin Tendulkar is the pride of Indian cricket team. Sachin Tendulkar had injured many time at playing. Yet he maintained his fitness.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

I have learned about Sachin Tendulkar, how (he improved) his life. Sachin many time flopped but by struggling he once again came in a new form. I want to become a great person (as) Sachin Tendulkar. I want to become name and fame in my country.

Bipul Dubey

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am Bipul Kumar Dubey. I live in Dhanawati. I am student of Gandhi Degree College in B.A., second year. I have taken three subjects – Hindi , Sociology, Ancient History. When I will finish my Bachelor Degree I want to make an Army officer.



NARGIS DUTT

Nargis Dutt was the very famous actress, singer and a film-maker. Nargis was born in Calcatta [Kolkata] on June 1, 1929. She was the child of Jaddan Bai and Mohan Babu.

Nargis was signed (for) the film *Taqdeer* as a lead. After this Nargis married Sunil Dutt in 1958. She was the first film personality to (receive) the Padma Shri Award.* (Ed. 4th highest civilian award in India.) Nargis was very close to Indira Gandhi, the first lady prime minister in India. Nargis was very famous actress in India in my view. Nargis (had) three sons. Her son Sanjay Dutt is also a actor in India. She (died) on May 3, 1981. She was only 52 year old. Nargis was truly the ‘Lady in white’ because she was the symbol of peace.

*(Ed. 4th highest civilian award in India.)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am Arvind Kumar Yadev I read in B.A. part-2 in Gandhi College, Mirdha. I live in Gandhinagar. It is a small village. I live with our mother, father and a brother. My family is very small and I happy in our family. That’s all.

THE DOWRY*

In India there are many big problems. For example-dowry, education, poverty, terrorism, etc. but I have chosen only one topic that is dowry. I am explaining the causes of dowry in India. First of all I want to say that this problem exists due to lack of awareness, lack of education and illiteracy. It is influenced by tradition. When joining the nuclear family it is assumed the bride will have dowry. Groom's side makes a list for example I want 5 lakhs* and a motorbike also. If bride side cannot (give this) they will choose another bride. If the bride side does not give dowry the bride can be killed by groom's side. Due to lack of dowry girls can commit suicide.

Many girls may choose abortion over pregnancy. Due to dowry the ratio of boys and girls decreases it's ratio is 1000-800. The bride (is) set on fire due to dowry. The biggest cause of the dowry is the influence of poverty on human beings.

Dowry is increasing due to illiteracy. If we are educated then it will not happen. In my opinion in this problem the youth have to come ahead. If we do "love marriage"*** it does not happen. But the "love marriage" does not accepted by our society. If any groom's side want to dowry we should go to court. The government should take a decision to remove dowry system from our society. I will not take dowry in my marriage. If my father will not accept me I leave my house because I will do better in my life.

*(Ed.: Dowries are officially prohibited by Indian civil law since 1961 but are still a fact of life, especially in rural India.)

*(Ed.: 1 lakh = 100,000 rupees or approximately \$2,500 US.)

**(Ed.: common term for marriage which is not arranged by parents. Asking someone whether their marriage is an "arranged" or "love marriage" does not imply that there is no love in an arranged marriage and is an acceptable question.)

Shravan Gupta



Editor's Comments

Sue Wallace

The student writing in this book is based on activities during the Reading/Writing Workshop. The selections on dowries and education in India are individual responses to spirited group discussions among both boys and girls. The biographical pieces are the result of a class project in which students were encouraged to read books about famous Indian men and women, to choose a person whom they admired or about whom they would like to learn more, to outline their life and then summarize this life in one or two short paragraphs. Many students also included a personal response to this reading. Amrita's selection on the environment is based on a class discussion of three newspaper articles. As for Ram's piece on Yoga...well as Ram said, "I have a passion for all things".

The reader should understand that, in general, these students have had very little experience in "free" writing in English and, due to the pressure of national exams that coincided with the end of our class, they rarely had time for more than one draft before beginning their final work. In addition, for many this was their first experience using a keyboard. Other than minor spelling corrections, occasionally words (in parentheses) added to assist with meaning and comments to help the reader who is not familiar with Indian history or culture these selections are exactly as the students completed them.

The importance of this small collection lies not in the fluency of sentences, the choice of words or level of grammatical structure but in the window that these pieces provide into the hearts and minds of a wonderful group of young people from rural India. We, their teachers, learned far more from them than they will ever know.



Dr. J. Shukla translates for MaryLynne at farewell event for third year students.



Gandhi College President



Sonia Shukla presents books to elementary students on Republic Day



Gandhi College Rector



Hindi, Sociology and Home Sciences instructors with Marylynn

Mr. Sriram Shukla, Gandhi College manager, meets with college President.



Sue and MaryLynne join girls on college lawn.



Our students discuss a text.

English Teacher



Home Sciences students prepare a meal and clean up.



College library





Our classroom in Chandran Memorial Hall



Our students learn to keyboard.



HOLI celebration



Friends

Tree planting ceremony



Political Sciences
instructor



Gandhi College
Courtyard



College Council



"Three Musketeers"

I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny?

Mahatma Gandhi, 1948

(From Gandhi College brochure)

