

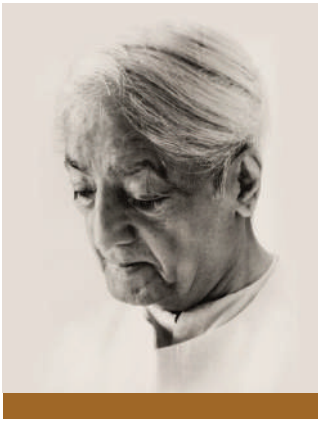


Pathashaala

A Krishnamurti Foundation India School

*“The long vision
contains the near.”*





KRISHNAMURTI ON EDUCATION:

Surely a school is a place where one learns about the totality, the wholeness of life. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but a school includes much more than that. It is a place where both the teacher and the taught explore not only the outer world, the world of knowledge, but also their own thinking, their own behaviour.

J. Krishnamurti Ojai, 1984

These schools fundamentally exist to help both the student and the teacher to flower in goodness. This demands excellence in behaviour, in action and in relationship. This is our intent and why these schools have come into being; not to turn out mere careerists but to bring about the excellence of spirit.

Letters to Schools Volume One, 1 November 1978

J. Krishnamurti (1895-1986) whose life spanned the greater part of the 20th Century, is regarded by many as one whose teachings have had the most profound impact on human consciousness in modern times. He travelled round the world till the end giving talks, meeting individuals, holding discussions with people from a wide cross-section. In 1929, while dissolving the Order of the Star of the East he said that he was only concerned with setting man unconditionally free.

Krishnamurti Foundation India (KFI), oversees the work of the schools and one womens college situated in Rajghat. Concerned with authentic dissemination of these teachings for the future. KFI also runs study centres, publishes books, videos and audio material, preserves originals in the archives, and supports outreach activities through its centres.



INTRODUCTION:

Pathashaala, planned originally as an extension of The School in Chennai, is situated in the villages of Vallipuram, Aanoor, Vazhuvathur and Elimichampet, about 85 km from Chennai. It started in 2010 and is the youngest of the Krishnamurti Foundation schools.

Pathashaala attempts to function in the light of the teachings like the other schools and drew on the thirty-seven years of experience of The School practices in other KFI schools and approaches elsewhere.



APPROACH AND FORM

'Change of form precedes change of culture' Michael Fullian

Krishnamurti said that "Each school must work out its own approach." Pathashaala has tried to build its approach around 'learning through participation'. In its daily interactions it attempts to bridge the urban and the rural, and to foster individual autonomy and intelligent coexistence among humans and with nature.

Dunbar's number, 150, is the rough upper limit for the school, with about 120 Learner-Educators and 20-30 Educator-Learners. Multiple interactions and sharing common tasks across ages are avenues for building resilience and seeing oneself as a participant, rather than as a recipient or provider. Pathashaala is committed to functioning through relationship and conversation rather than rules.

The young Learner-Educators and the adult Educator-Learners, are both learners and are valuable resources for the others' learning. Pathashaala has the circle and L-shaped classrooms as recognisable forms for the shared spaces of learning and living. Circular tables in L-shaped classrooms (and dining hall) enable one to work individually and together with others as equals. Buildings have been designed to keep the inside and outside constantly in dialogue, communicating easily, visually and freely.

ACADEMICS:

Academic learning in the mixed age environment fosters natural, respectful wholesome and healthy interaction among Learner-Educators, regardless of age. The Learner-Educator in Pathashaala participates in observation, reading, writing, discussion, listening, questioning, in individual & collaborative exploration. Older and younger children learn from one another and enable learning for each other.

The teacher, called the Educator-Learner, attempts to create 'the strange atmosphere where learning can happen' as an enabler, a facilitator, seeks to nourish and sustain creative processes of learning, self regulation and initiative among Learner-Educators.

The school is a registered Cambridge International School and prepares students for the IGCSE, AS and A level examinations.

The Middle School years are time for an explorative, deepening learning that widen the students' awareness of the world, and strengthen the foundation for academic and social responsibility. In Senior School, with increasing rigor in academics across all subjects, attempt is made to bridge the experiences in Pathashaala with the rural and urban world outside. Cambridge Global perspectives offered at IGCSE level as a compulsory subject.

For A-level student Pathashaala offers a unique "programme of Autonomous learning" with a range of science and humanities subjects and art for the exams. Global Perspectives is also an option at A level. Elements such as Self Study, Community oriented work, and Contemporary Studies as part of the programme.

BEYOND ACADEMICS:

"The flower is only made of non-flower things" Thich Nat Hahn

Field studies play an important role in connecting with the world-Day trips in Junior school and 3 to 10 day trips in Middle and Senior school are important part of the school's program. These include neighbourhood studies, historical and geographical studies, interning at various organisations and NGOs in different parts of the country.

Physical activities include cooperative games and organized games like basketball, football, volleyball, cricket and frisbee. Reflecting on the quality of participation after games and other physical activities is another avenue of learning about oneself.

Art and craft plays an important role in nurturing the student's creative and aesthetic abilities through different forms - folk, classical and modern. Visiting resource people enhance the quality and range of exposure to arts and crafts.

Rota includes activities such as plate washing, table cleaning in the dining hall, sweeping the classroom and toilet cleaning in the dorm. Pathashaala attempts to build a non-burdensome atmosphere of shared responsibility and creates space for initiatives and contextual leadership.

Hands in soil - Pathashaala offers many opportunities for being in nature and working in gardens, fields and helping with recycling. Being part of the natural cycle, of planting to harvest, is a valuable learning experience.



Discussions and conversations - Formal and informal conversations are possible in the classroom, in convivial outdoor spaces and in the dining hall. Conversations flow naturally on themes relating to life - on subjects of fear, pleasure, hurt, ambition, co-operation and responsibility among Educator-Learners and Learner-Educators.

Mentoring - Younger and older Learner-Educators participate in daily activities and chores together. In this process the younger ones find guidance and support from the older students who grow, through appreciation of the attempt at Pathashaala, into a larger responsibility for the place, towards society and nature.



PATHASHAALA AIMS TO NURTURE IN EACH STUDENT:

- A mind that is able to enquire and find out for oneself
- An ability to learn on one's own, collaboratively and take responsibility for learning.
- Sensitivity to relate rightly to the earth and all life.
- A sense of integrity, dignity and confidence to face life's challenges.
- The capacity to make choices of future activities in consonance with one's deepest predilections.
- The intelligence to remain a sensitive human being with openness.

The academic experience and lifestyle choices at Pathashaala create space for the emergence of a thinking, caring, resourceful, inwardly clear and robust, non-divisive human being.

"Life is relationship, living is relationship. We cannot live if you and I have built a wall around ourselves and just peep over that wall occasionally. Unconsciously, deeply, under the wall, we are related."

J Krishnamurti



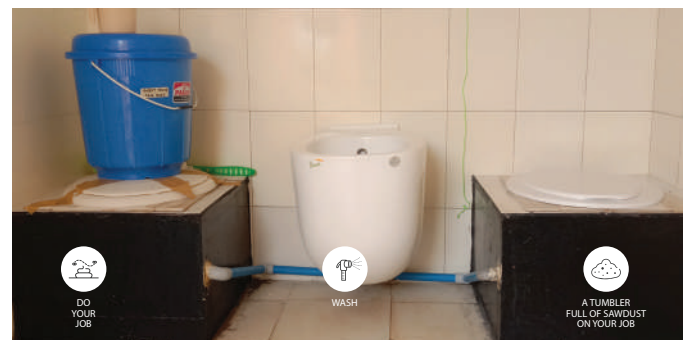


Pathashaala's campus experiences blue skies, dazzling dawns and sunsets and the rhythms of nature in the showers, the daily sea breeze and monsoon rains. Butterflies and birds, reptiles and insects, grasses and trees add enormous variety to the human interactions and the young grow from fear to respect. For children and adults this campus is a valuable home away from home, a place where one discovers a dignified space as a valuable co-participant and an environmentally sustainable way of living.

Land care: The school's kitchen gardens maintained by the staff and students produce organic rice and some vegetables.

Energy: The campus uses energy sparingly and uses solar (PV) energy for lights & fans in most areas. Pathashaala buildings with, Wardha tumbler roofing and domes, are designed to remain significantly cooler doing away with air conditioners on campus. There is a windmill which supplies energy to the Art and craft centre. Pathashaala has a MOU with IIT Madras to set up a pilot solar thermal power unit on its campus to demonstrate power and steam generation along with waste heat air conditioning.

Water & sanitation: Pathashaala has made special efforts at water conservation – whether it is through tree plantations or usage of the phytoid recycling system for kitchen wash water. The campus is also uniquely zero black water effluent. It is designed with dry composting toilets for all residents and visitors. Biogas units provide energy and an avenue for transforming kitchen waste to usable manure.



STUDY CENTRE

The Study Centre at Pathashaala is set within the campus where visitors and residents can access Krishnamurti's teachings through numerous books and audio-video recordings.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Senior Educator-Learners at Pathashaala have over the years initiated several Outreach programmes that have served the cause of urban and rural education, including facilitation of Activity-based Learning in Primary schools, pedagogy in the Balwadis, learning in DIET colleges, CCE in State Board Schools and Active Learning in School Education, TN.

Pathashaala has run several academic learning programmes for the neighbouring schools. This includes 'Kondattams', with diversity of themes, held every term for Class VIII and neighbouring schools.

The project of Home Gardens for select below BPL families, and the collation of a medical bio-register in the neighbouring villages has been initiated.

22 varieties of rice, and 21 herb varieties are being re-cultivated for seed dissemination.

Workshops are conducted for local youth to initiate small production for local use – eg; eco-friendly washing liquid, tooth powder, etc.

The unique feature of the Outreach programme is that it is co-held and co-owned by initiative from Learner-Educators.

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