

The Journey of 25 Issues of Pathshala Bheetar Aur Bahar

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This is the 25th issue of *Pathshala Bheetar Aur Bahar*. Needless to say, the biggest contribution in this journey has been that of its readers and writers. At a time when we often hear about the continuously shrinking culture of reading and writing, the steadfast journey of this academic magazine is indeed heartening.

Looking back, I recall the intense debates and discussions that preceded the publication of the first issue, where we deliberated on the magazine's relevance and purpose.

The journey of Pathshala began in July 2018, intending to provide quality academic reference material to school teachers, educators and others interested in the field of education.

At the same time, it sought to serve as a forum for individuals and institutions engaged in or concerned with education, offering them a space to share their experiences. In doing so, it worked to deepen and lend authenticity to the discourse on education. One of its broader goals has been to encourage the culture of reading and writing among those working in the field of education.

In the beginning, it was decided that the magazine would be published biannually, and accordingly, the first four issues were published at six-month intervals. The magazine carried articles on various topics related to school education. On the one hand, it featured research-based, theoretical and practice-oriented writings, while on the other, subject-specific articles on the teaching of language, mathematics, science and social studies.

Change has been part of the journey

After the publication of four issues, feedback was sought from readers about the magazine and its contents. Based on the suggestions, certain changes were made in the nature, format and presentation of the articles. The number of pages was reduced while the frequency of issues was increased. Instead of 200 pages published biannually, it became a 100-page quarterly magazine, with four issues a year. Articles were shortened, and efforts

were made to make them simpler and more reader-friendly. To make the magazine more useful, members with direct field experience in schools were included in the editorial team.

The magazine then began publishing analytical articles written with reflective and critical perspectives on various aspects of elementary education. These writings balanced theory with real experiences, making them easy for teachers to understand and apply in classrooms, where positive changes soon became visible in their practices.

At the same time, efforts were made to provide opportunities to teachers and education practitioners working at the grassroots level to document their own experiences by adding depth and dimension. The magazine thus became a medium for enhancing the professional capacities of teachers and teacher educators, providing them with opportunities to read, reflect and engage in dialogue.

Articles in Pathshala have included subject areas in language, mathematics, science, social studies and arts education, exploring perspectives, theories, objectives, teaching-learning methods, and experiences in each discipline.

Currently, greater emphasis has been placed on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and the professional development of teachers. Aspects of language teaching, such as creative writing, teacher diaries, wall magazines, multilingualism and the creation of print-rich environments, have also become part of the content.



Alongside subject-focused content, the magazine has engaged with broader issues in education, including assessments and examinations, the use of local and home languages as mediums of instruction, and the promotion of constitutional values, such as inclusion, fraternity, equality, and gender equity. It has also carried articles on developing scientific temper, fostering mathematical reasoning, and working with text-based questions. Further, *Pathshala* has documented school and field-based activities, summer camps, morning assembly, *Bal Sabhas*, *Bal Shodh Melas*, voluntary teacher forums, and educational excursions.

Pathshala's connection with its readers and its usefulness

Regular discussions with teachers and colleagues in the field revealed that if the reading material and articles were closely connected to their work, they would certainly be read and used in multiple ways. Teachers not only read these articles but also use them in workshops and voluntary teacher groups. Discussions on articles, sharing of experiences related to them, and reflections on changes implemented in classroom processes after reading them became part of these interactions.

Teachers reported that in subject-based workshops organised by institutions, *Pathshala* articles are used to develop understanding through reading and dialogue, which in turn, enhanced teaching-learning processes. This was seen in the '*Pathak Chashma*' column, which is now called 'We've got Mail', in which readers share their feedback.

For instance, after reading the 'Library Special' issue, Barkha Sharma, a teacher at Primary School, Changorabhata West, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, wrote:

'It occurred to me that to awaken children's interest in reading and to connect them to books, I should open a Muskaan¹ Library in my school, bring out the books locked in cupboards and provide children with opportunities to use them regularly. To further develop interest in reading and writing among children, I will also dedicate one library period in my class.' [Issue 20](#)

Similarly, the 'Inclusive Education Special' issue helped readers develop a deeper understanding of inclusion. They became aware of the subtle forms of exclusion faced by children from disadvantaged groups. Approaching the issue with empathy and human dignity, they were able to grasp practical measures to include excluded children and relate these strategies to their own classroom and surroundings.

The comments expressed by readers in the 'letters' section highlight the significance of the 'Inclusive Education Special' issue:

'Reading the article "Menstruation in girls and its relation to learning" made me realise that we tend to view inclusion only in the context of children with special needs, while a large group of seemingly typical students also face various challenges. Without addressing these, the idea of inclusion will remain incomplete.' Anil Singh, Teacher Educator, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, [Issue 23](#)

'The Inclusive Education Special issue compels us to consider inclusion in its entirety. Articles such as "Inclusion at Enrolment Level is Not Enough" and "Everyone Has an Equal Right to Learn" were insightful.' Rani Kumari, Teacher, Darbhanga, Bihar, [Issue 23](#)

Several critical reflections from readers have been received on many *Pathshala* articles. These reflections indicate readers' attachment to the magazine and its usefulness. Furthermore, these responses also help the editorial team understand the kind of content readers seek. Some examples are presented below:

'I am not a school teacher, yet I regularly read all the articles of Pathshala. This magazine does not merely offer articles to read but gives readers a new perspective, enabling them to see things differently and helping those engaged in teaching children to do their work more effectively.' Tripti Yadav, Anganwadi teacher, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, [Issue 19](#)

'Reading the article "Madam, My Answer is Correct!" changed my perspective as a teacher. I realised that asking questions is a natural and essential part of the process of learning and knowledge construction. It must have a place in the classroom. We need to be attentive to children's curiosity.' Vishnu Kumar, Head Teacher, Jaipur, Rajasthan, [Issue 12](#)

'I am a regular reader of Pathshala. The magazine provides many pathways to address challenges that arise during teaching-learning with children.' Pramila Bhati, Teacher, Jaipur, Rajasthan, [Issue 16](#)

'The article "Reading, Beyond Alphabets and Syllables" highlighted the importance of reading skills in a very simple manner, presenting it as a vivid portrayal of our classroom experiences.' Arti Bahuguna, Teacher, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, [Issue 16](#)

Loosening the rigid notions in education

Readers' comments on 'special' issues also reflect that readers were able to reconsider and change their pre-conceived notions and beliefs about educational issues. Similar entrenched notions exist regarding other topics and processes, which often pose challenges in educational discussions, writing and classroom practices. Children's

learning, children from marginalised communities, girls' education, mathematics teaching, inclusion of children with disabilities, equality in education, theatre in education, print-rich environments and children's literature are some such issues.

Established notions often create problems in teaching and learning. Addressing these through dialogue is part of the responsibility of *Pathshala*. There are many narratives and cases in the articles of the magazine that attempt to loosen these notions through discussion. Here is an example:

'Before sharing my experience, I want to clarify that presenting any concept or lesson in the form of a play is not "Theatre in Education". I say this because during school monitoring, I found that teachers were teaching stories, poems and travelogues from the Hindi textbook by converting them into plays and claiming that they were using "Theatre in Education" as a pedagogical tool.



Figure 2. A glimpse of some previous issues.

Similarly, in environmental science classes, while teaching water cycles, force and energy, plays were enacted, and it was said that "Theatre in Education" was being used to clarify concepts.

I wish to emphasise that choosing a few children from the class, giving them dialogues related to the text,

asking them to memorise and present before the class, is not in any way "Theatre in Education". Issue 5

Ongoing efforts to make the magazine better

The journey from the 1st to the 21st issue has been significant in terms of connecting with readers. Based on these experiences and the expectations of both the institution and its readership, further changes were introduced from the 22nd issue in the nature, purpose, format, presentation and reach of the articles. These changes are also visible in this, the 25th issue.

The magazine's primary focus is now on the Foundational Stage. To expand its reach, it is being published in three languages, first in Hindi, followed by translations into English and Kannada. This has enabled knowledge and understanding gained by authors from one linguistic and geographical region to reach readers in others. This exchange of knowledge and experiences has expanded the possibilities for richer and deeper dialogue. In its new form, the magazine's focus and reach are pan-India. Most of the content is based on the experiences of teachers and teacher educators, aligning closely with the principles outlined in NEP 2020, NCF-FS 2022 and NCF-SE 2023. Nearly all content is carefully selected with classroom use in mind, ensuring that it contributes meaningfully to teachers' professional development.

Pathshala is now printed in 60 colour pages, making it visually more attractive and handy. New columns, such as 'Pages from Teachers' Diaries', 'Teachers Inspiring Hope', 'In the Spotlight', 'In the Company of Books' and 'Let's do Some Activities' have been introduced, leading to a significant increase in experiential writing by teachers.

Challenges and solutions

One major challenge was the limited availability of quality articles despite repeated efforts to solicit contributions. As a result, the magazine was often published weeks later than scheduled, creating hurdles in timely delivery to readers. Another challenge was the limited availability of quality articles in certain curricular areas, such as mathematics, science and social studies.

The magazine has now overcome this challenge. All issues of *Pathshala* are not only being published on schedule but are also reaching subscribers regularly. The inflow of articles has increased significantly, and there has been an expansion in terms of both the number and geographical reach of writers and readers. The trilingual publication of the magazine has also contributed to this growth. As a result, readership continues to rise steadily, and contributions are now

coming in from across the country. For instance, this issue includes teaching experiences shared by teachers from 13 different states. To ensure that teachers who are performing effectively in classrooms can document their experiences accurately, efforts are also being made to conduct writing workshops aimed at encouraging and supporting them in their writing.

Professional development and reflective writing by teachers

Training programmes for teachers' professional development usually lack space for 'experiential writing' and have no systematic plan for it. As a result, trainee teachers often struggle to feel connected to these training sessions.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 also emphasises that teachers' professional development requires different types of content at different stages of their growth. This content should be comprehensive, relevant, classroom-related and address challenges faced by teachers. Teachers should constantly engage in their professional development through multiple means, and collaborative learning platforms must be made available to them.

The platform of *Pathshala* and the experience-based articles published in it contribute, in their own way, to meeting these expectations. The effort of the magazine has always been to ensure that as many teachers and resource persons as possible continue writing about their rich experiences and share them through *Pathshala* with the wider community of aware teachers.

In the process of inviting articles for *Pathshala*, authors are encouraged to elaborate on their concrete experiences with examples and evidence. The editorial team reviews these articles and also provides constructive feedback to help improve them. Teachers themselves also revisit their articles, reflect on nuances of their teaching and writing and make necessary changes. When other teachers read these, they learn from them and also reflect on their own teaching practices. This creates opportunities for peer learning.

Experiential writing gives teachers a critical lens through which to examine their teaching. They gain deeper insights into the challenges and problems they face and are able to find solutions by refining their methods. It is through such reflective practices in teaching and writing that the journey toward becoming a thoughtful professional teacher begins.

References

¹Muskaan is a Bhopal-based voluntary organisation. www.muskaan.org

Translated from Hindi. Translator: Shabnam Sengupta Vetter: Bhumika Popli



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