

QUEST

Quality Education Support Trust



Annual Report

2011-12

233, Vadavali Road, Sonale, Taluka Wada, District Thane, PIN: 421303

Our QUEST – President’s Address



Whenever I read an annual report of any NGO, and when it shows a 'growth' and 'increase in the expanse' of its work; I kind of get saddened. NGOs usually work at the deficiencies in the society. And so I always wonder what indicates betterment of our society - the growth in the NGO's work or the declining necessity of the work that particular NGO is doing?

Considering the vastness of our country, the social complexities, deep rootedness of the problems we deal with; it is but obvious that at least for a few more years the 'growth and expanse' in an NGO's work would be an indication of its success in reaching out to more people and probably addressing more issues in the field of its work. In the above respect, I think QUEST has done a satisfactory job considering its age.

I would not go into the work done by QUEST in the last year as you would find the details in the following pages. But I would particularly like to draw your attention towards the 'on line courses' developed in Marathi by QUEST and the way they are being used by teachers from the remote areas. We believe the online training has the potential to revolutionize pre- and in-service teacher's training. And so we intend to continue working in this field vertically as well as horizontally. We would deeply appreciate all the possible advice, help and involvement in this venture. From the bottom of my heart I thank each and every individual and group that has helped us in various ways through our journey this year and the years before.

Hope this report is an assurance to you all, of the trust you have shown and the expectations you have from us in future.

About Us

Within 5 years of its establishment, QUEST has extended its focus from students to teachers and also its work in the areas near Wada Block, Thane district and Dhadgaon Block, Nandurbar district.

Our Objectives:

1. To provide quality education to every individual.
2. To promote education as an enjoyable journey of self-discovery.
3. To develop inspired educators for widening the reach of progressive, child- centred education.
4. To develop replicable models of quality education, for children going to pre -school and
Elementary school from rural, tribal and urban areas.
5. Elementary school from rural, tribal and urban areas.
6. To share knowledge and latest developments in pedagogy amongst educators and educationists.
7. To undertake and support research activities in the field of education

Our strengths

1. Multi-faceted governing board comprising educationists, practicing educators and Professionals from the fields of art, engineering, medicine, law and computers.
2. A diverse, experienced and committed team actively engaged in education in rural, tribal and urban settings.
3. An open, active and dynamic research-action group on quality education and pedagogy.
4. Acceptance by the tribal communities where QUEST is working.
5. In-house learning material development and production by qualified educationists and educators of QUEST.
6. Learning and sharing association with urban and rural schools from Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Highlights of the year

Maze Ganit:

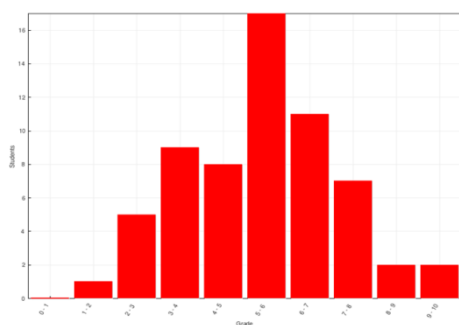
Just as QUEST has developed Maze Pustak for providing inputs in Marathi language, it has developed a programme for Math. Graded booklets for pre-primary students were previously developed. This year, graded booklets for Grade 1 were developed. The set contains basic concepts and related exercises of addition and subtraction

Online course in Regional Language for Math in D.Ed. Programme:

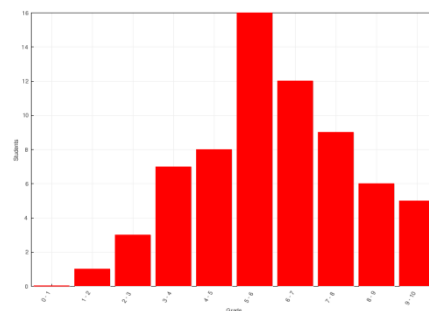
To address the issue of weak content knowledge of as well as to give pedagogical inputs to the student teachers, QUEST along with a team of subject experts, have developed an Add on Module on Mathematics. The strategy is to give the students a more comprehensive input in the form of Add On course during the pre-service training which will be more effective to strengthen their Mathematics content as well as pedagogic knowledge. The course was designed to be conducted partly through contact sessions and partly online through Moodle, an acknowledged Course Management System. It was implemented in 2 phases in D.Ed. College, Shahada, Nandurbar. Eighty student-teachers participated in this add on Math module online programme. After each contact session, they were given assignments which they were to submit online. They were also given an online Quiz, the results of which were automatically generated by the computer instantly.

Results of the On-line Math quiz attempted by D.Ed. students

The student-teachers were given an online pre and post-tests, the results of which are shown below



Pretest scores_Add on Math module_Dec '12



Posttest scores_Add on Module_Dec '12

There is a definite shift towards higher scores in the graph to the right which indicates increase in the content knowledge of the student teachers.

Out of the 80 student-teachers, 22 were selected based on their performance in the assignments and given a small project in Math that was to be done with 10 – 15 school children and a small report was to be compiled from that along with the data and its analysis. It was seen that all the selected students had done their work meticulously. They were then shown how to enter the data in excel and analyse it. Almost all the students have completed the project.

To view the online course in detail, please visit <http://elearning.quest.org.in/>, log in as a guest and use the word Leelavati as the enrolment key.

This effort has proved to be an insightful experience. The salient features of such online courses are

- Can be used for student-teachers, practicing teachers as well as Parent community
- Participants can be mentored over a longer duration
- Outreach at a single point of time can be more as online model can overcome the Geographical constrains of participants' location
- Being the first On-line teacher education courses being offered in Regional Languages would help to bridge the digital-divide in the teacher community.

The Math Add On online programme was not only very well accepted by the students but also got popular in the faculty of this D. Ed College and also appreciated by many academicians, teachers, teacher educators.

Looking at the potential of the On-line courses, QUEST is planning to start similar On-line courses in other subjects as well.

Shikshan Samruddhi Karyakram:

The sapling of Teachers' study Circle planted on January 27, 2008 has spread its branches through 'Shikshan Samruddhi Karyakram'. In this programme, the teachers are provided pedagogical inputs on Math & Language. Simultaneously, in order that the teachers avail of the forum facility and the rich resources available on internet, they are given IT inputs in Regional Language. It includes introduction to and enhancing their Marathi typing skills and use of the internet. Through these sessions many teachers in and around Wada block are now connected with the organization, as well as through its online forum.

Sr. No.	Name of the Session	Total Sessions Conducted	No. of participants
1	Information and Technology	9	12
2	Language (Marathi)	5	14
3	Math	5	14

Liaison with Government agencies:

The Anganwadi project which had faced the risk of interference of a few local people has been given a new hope with the government agency extending its hand. After consistent talks and follow up with the ICDS, which included arranging visits of the officials to the Centres, QUEST has been successful in explaining the need and the efficacy of the programme and subsequently has been asked to provide support to the Anganwadis in Wada Block.



N.S.S. Camp at Dadhare:

As part of the N.S.S. curriculum, every college organizes camp in a rural area. This year, A. L. Chandawarkar College, Wada organized their N.S.S. camp in coordination with QUEST at Dadhare village. The camp was organized for from January 18-22, 2012, where 44 students participated. The major focus of the camp was to build a contour bund and biological bund, with the help of these students, to prevent continuous erosion of the stream bank in Dadhare village. The idea was put forward by children of Dadhare whose project on the same subject was acknowledged at National Children Science Congress in 2011. The N.S.S. students completed the contour bunding work. The value of the students' labour is estimated at Rs. 25,000 and they have built 29m long contour bund of stones along the eroded bank of the stream. This emerged as a learning process for students and for the organization as well. This joint venture has enhanced the collaboration of the college and the organization.

LiRIL Test:

Ms Shailaja Menon from Azim Premji University along with SRTT is conducting a longitudinal study on early literacy. This research aims to study the various patterns of learning reading and writing for a child. The children involved in the study will be tracked for five consequent years to understand and evolve the patterns of learning reading and writing. Many researchers have conducted such studies in the western context, but none in the Indian context. On request from SRTT, QUEST is participating in this exercise as a part of the pilot study along with KSU from Karnataka. A battery of tests was developed and refined with the help of Mr. Nilesh Nimkar in Marathi.

Regular Activities

Balbhavan:

Through the Balbhavans, the Balmitras support children in improving their education attainment levels in Language, Mathematics and Environment Studies. The main feature of the Balbhavan is that the children are grouped together based on their attainment levels and inputs are given accordingly, thus, giving the child an opportunity to learn at his/her pace. Periodic tests are conducted to assess these levels. Children are also encouraged to take up extra-curricular activities like sports, sky gazing, bird watching and understanding the biodiversity in the immediate surroundings. At present, QUEST runs Balbhavans in 7 villages in Thane district and 9 villages in Dhadgaon block of Nandurbar district and provides Resource support to Jeevan Vidya Trust in Nandurbar to run 9 Balbhavans in Nandurbar. The total outreach of QUEST's Balbhavans in these 3 years is as follows:

Balbhavan	Outreach (No. of Students)
Balbhavans in Sonale	365
Balbhavans in Nandurbar	1875
Balbhavans by Jeevan Vidya Trust, Nandurbar	778



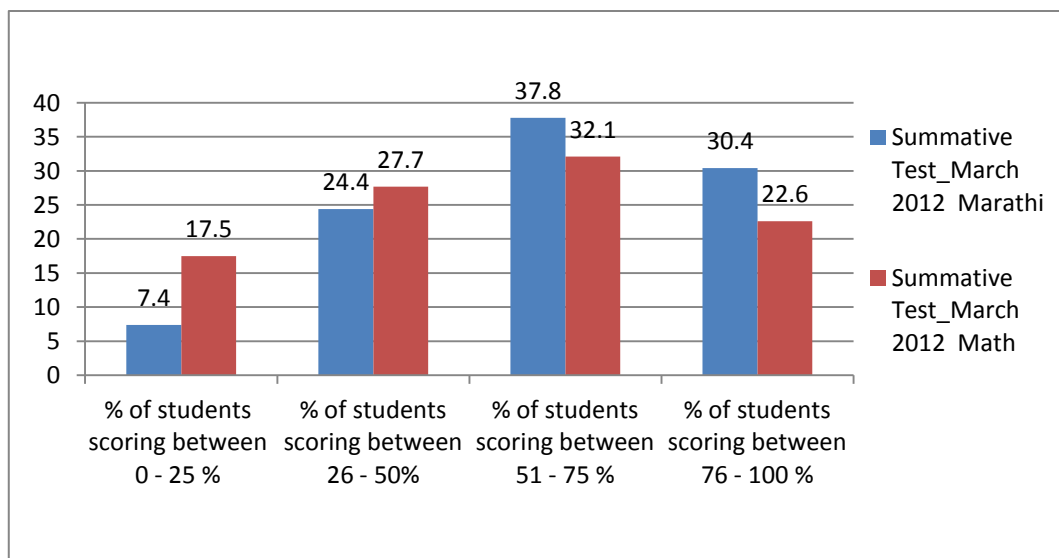
QUEST has got overwhelming support from many organizations that have come forward to sponsor Balbhavans in Thane district.

Sr. No.	Name of Balbhavan	Sponsors
1	Wada	SPA Education Foundation
2	Sonshiv	METORES Trust, Pune
3	Kasghar	PRAJ Foundation
4	Sonale	SPA Education Foundation
5	Gaothan	Forbes Marshal
6	Nishet	Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust
7	Dadhare	Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust

Analysis of Performance of the students

Every year QUEST conducts post-test in the Balbhavans to analyze the performance of the students as a response to the inputs given to them in Language (Marathi). This year, post-tests were conducted in the Balbhavans for Marathi and for the first time for Math as well.

The performance of the students in these tests is shown in the following chart:



Performance of students from the Balbhavans in Language and Math post-test conducted in 2012.

From the above graph it can be seen that 68.2% of students have scored over 50% marks in Marathi while the corresponding figure is 54.7% for Math. Overall it is seen that the performance in Language (Marathi) is better than Math. One of the reasons identified is that for Language a structured programme is being used while no such programme was used till

now for Math. To overcome this problem, from the coming academic year, Maze Ganit, the structured programme for Math developed by QUEST will be used in the Balbhavans.

Correlation between performance and attendance

QUEST has collected data of students' attendance in order to establish the relation between the attendance and the performance of the student. The analysis at the end of the year shows that the students attending Balbhavan regularly show better results in post-test. In other words the inputs given in the Balbhavan are instrumental in increasing the achievement levels of the students.

Development of Library & Resource Centre:

'Resource Centre' has evolved as a rich resource base for the teachers and students from surrounding areas. The organization has developed two resource centres at Sonale and Dhadgaon respectively. The Centres have a collection of variety of books along with various teaching aids. With these resources QUEST is reaching out to the students of Grade 5 to 7, as well as teachers, parents and other villagers in and around the Centre areas. These Centres have also become a location for Gatsammelan, monthly meetings of the teachers from each Block. In 2011-12, 3 Gatsammelans were conducted at the centre at Sonale while the team at the Resource Centre in Dhadgaon gave inputs during one Gatsammelan. QUEST envisages that these Resource Centres will be a regular meeting point for the teachers. Both the Centres are engaged in conducting science toys workshops for students of Grade 5–7 in various schools.



Online Forum:

Understanding the importance of Teachers' Study Circle and in an effort to continue the interaction on a regular basis, an online forum has been started for the teachers and teacher

educators in *regional language*. Around 133 members participate in this forum to discuss topics of their interest - Language and Math education are major topics of discussion on the Forum currently. The discussions include pedagogical aspects, issues related to practice and theory in teaching. The link for QUEST's forum is www.forum.quest.org.in.

Math Remedial Programme:

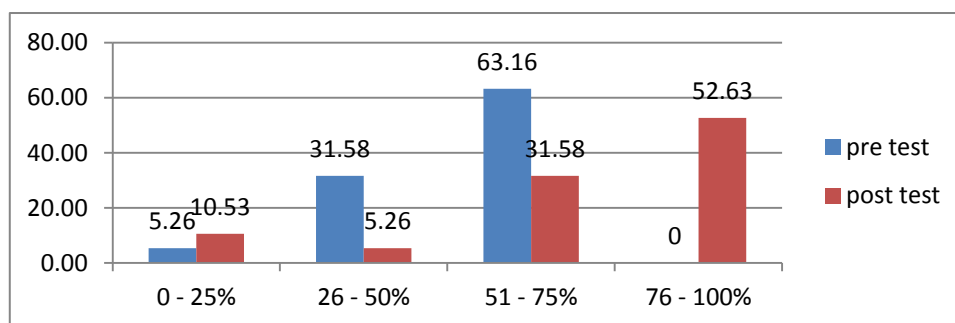
This is one of the core activities conducted at the Dhadgaon Resource Center. The programme is aimed to help the students from Grades 5 – 6 who are poor in basic arithmetic through a need based approach. To overcome this problem, QUEST has developed a remedial course in basic arithmetic along with diagnostic tests for students. During the last academic year, the programme was successfully implemented in Jeevan Vidya trust hostel, Janseva Hostel, Z.P. School Dhadgaon and Z.P. School Juna Dhadgaon and reached out to 169 students.

Name of the school/centre	Grade	Total Number of students
JVT Hostel	5 th	16
Janseva Hostel	5 th to 9 th	48
Dhadgaon ZP school	5 th	49
Juna Dhadgaon ZP school	5 th	56
Total		169

A pre-test was conducted and students were divided into batches according to their levels. They were given inputs in Basic Arithmetic as per the course design and a post test was conducted in December 2011.

The scores of the students in the pre and post tests are shown below:

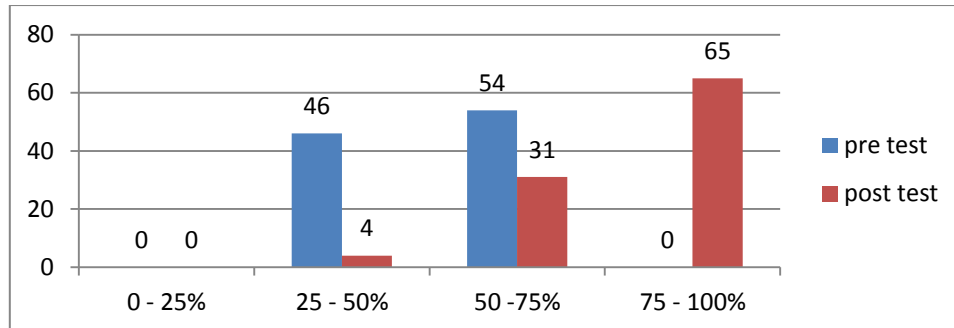
Level 1 Students



Comparison of Percentage of students achieving marks in pre and post test

The above graph shows that more than 50% students have achieved 76 to 100% marks in the posttest where as there were no student who achieved same marks in pre-test.

Level 2 students



Comparison of Percentage of students achieving marks in pre and post test

A similar pattern is observed in level 2, where there is dramatic increase in the number of students achieving 75-100% marks in posttest.

Teachers' Study Group:

The intellectually stimulating Study Group which led to the formation of QUEST is still continuing to broaden its focus. The members currently include QUEST team members, teachers from the nearby Zilla Parishad and private schools and also others who are interested in education. The meetings are held once a month. There are interactive sessions on Language, Math, Geography and Astronomy. Mostly the sessions are based on contemporary researches in respective subjects. The members discuss teaching methodologies, new innovations in education, problems in implementing them, training etc. In addition, each member is given some reading material, on which he/she is expected to make a short presentation.

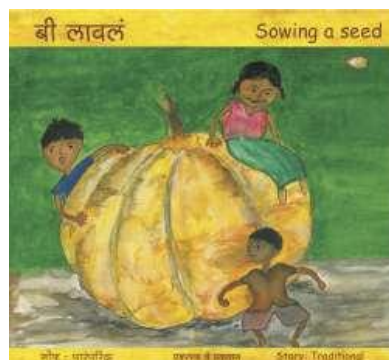
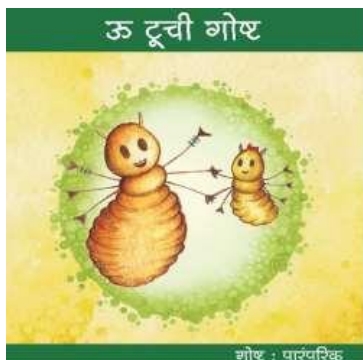
Other Activities

Doorstep Library:

The efforts by QUEST to make books available at the door steps have taken off with 52 members in 4 villages in 2010-11. The main challenges in this programme is addressing adult population and demanding them to create a new interest. A Book Exhibition was conducted at Wada, to get more members acquainted with books and this has resulted in the increase in membership.

Content & Material Development:

Understanding the need for age appropriate books in Marathi, QUEST has decided with the help of its Supporters to develop books on their own in Marathi. Out of the 10 books developed by QUEST, 2 books ('Oo Too' and 'Bee Lavale') were published by Eklavya in Marathi, Hindi, English and Gujarati. Eklavya is ready to publish 3 more books in all the above mentioned languages.



Science Toys:

The idea of science toys is to let children perceive that science education can be fun, too. The Resource Centre Supervisor has received training for the same from Arvind Gupta and his team at IUCCA, Pune. In this academic year, QUEST conducted workshops at schools in and around Wada for 111 students and in Dhadgaon for 512 students of grades 5 to 7.

Resource Support for other organizations:

QUEST is extending its support to various organizations: JNCPT & ARCH, Dharampur; SAMARTHYA, Umarga; ASHA KIRAN, Dedhiapada and Meljol, Akola. The support varies from conducting workshops to conducting onsite training. Support for developing education aids is also provided.

Theater in Education Workshops:

QUEST organizes theater workshop for Balmitras in order to improve their expressions in general and their oratory skills. These activities are mainly group based and so they help in team building as well. In this academic year 2011-2012, 6 theatre workshops were conducted by theatre professionals from Mumbai.

Our Achievements:

This year the students from Zilla Parishad School in Dadhare participated in National Science Children's Congress. Their project, supported by QUEST was selected at Block, State and then at National level.

Our Supporters:

Over the years, QUEST has drawn immense support from its partners and involved them in larger educational discourse. We are grateful to our partners, donors and well-wishers whose monetary support and timely help has given us the strength to upscale and modernize our work.

Some of our benefactors and the work they have supported

Name of Funder	Activities Supported
Sir Ratan Tata Trust & Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust	Partial support to activities in Sonale and total support to the activities in Nandurbar
Aurum Foundation	Setting up of Resource Centre
SPA Education Foundation	Sponsors 2 Balbhavans and Nihali Vikaswadi
Praj Foundation	Sponsors 1 Balbhavan
Forbes Marshal	Sponsors 1 Balbhavan
Lions Club of Ballard Estate Charity Trust	Balbhavan Construction
Anuya Mhaskar	Human Resource Fund and Building and Infrastructure Development Fund
Dr. Keki Gharda	Building Infrastructure Development Fund
Vijaya Mulay	Building Infrastructure Development Fund

You can support QUEST in the following ways

1. Sponsoring a Balbhavan:

Rs. 2, 25,000/- Cost of running a Balbhavan for a year

2. Support QUEST:

Rs. 2000/- to support programmes such as Math Remedial course, Science Toys from trash, etc

3. Support the fellowship programme.

A) Full time research Fellow (1 to 2 years)

Rs.35, 000/- per month towards the honorarium & project costs

B) Part time research fellowship in material development and design (1year)

Rs.10,000/- per month towards the project expenses

Contact Us

At Sonale:

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Nayana Yeole +91 90044 68883 nayana.yeole@quest.org.in

Annexure 1: Our Team

Board of Trustees

President: Atul Kulkarni

A National award winner, renowned professional actor. He is concerned with the issue of education out of personal experiences.

Vice President: Dr. Manjiri Nimbkar

A medical doctor, who is running an experimental school in Phaltan (a tehsil place in Satara district) and is also actively associated with many experiments in the field of education over the last decade.

Director: Nilesh Nimkar

An educationist working for last 15 years in tribal belts of Thane district as an educator and as a teacher educator at State and National level. He has also worked as a training consultant to DPEP (District Primary Education Programme, Government of Maharashtra) and consultant to UNICEF and Sir Ratan Tata Trust

Treasurer: Manoj Karyekar

An engineer based in Pune, he has worked for the development of eco-friendly architecture and construction.

Trustees:

Aparna Bhole

A trained and qualified art teacher managing the pre-school section of A K Joshi English medium school in Thane for the last 10 years and has co-founded the "Thane Study Group".

Sanjay Borkar

He is practicing high court advocate by profession; he has provided legal help to quite a few NGOs in Thane.

Dr. Rajeev Chhabra

He is a renowned gynaecologist from Thane and an active supporter of voluntary work on people's issues.

Anuya Mhaiskar

She is an entrepreneur, Film Producer and a Kathak dancer.

Nitin Nimkar

A computer professional and co-founder of "Thane Study Group", he is actively involved in the development of interactive multi-media instructional software programs.

Project Officers

Meena Nimkar

Project in-charge at Sonale. She has several years of experience of teaching in tribal areas. She has co-authored 'Maze Pustak', which is used extensively in the QUEST Balbhavans. She looks after the overall running of QUEST Balbhavans, and trains the Balmitras.

Nitin Vishe

A resident of Sonale, Nitin Vishe is responsible for generating community support for QUEST work. He oversees the Anganwadi component, specially the coordination with the ICDS authorities. He also supervises accounts and construction activities of QUEST.

Archana Kulkarni

Archana is based in Pune, and oversees the component on 'Material Development'. She also coordinates the QUEST Resource Centre activities. She has co-authored 'Maze Pustak'.

Nayana Yeole

She is Project in-charge of QUEST's project in Nandurbar and Dhadgaon. She is based in Thane, and oversees the functioning of the projects, in addition to liaising with the funding agencies.

Junior Project Officers

Sajeetha Kutti

Sajeetha has done Masters in Social Work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences in 2010. Earlier she worked in Samaj Pragati Sahayog, an NGO in Madhya Pradesh in the area of microfinance. She is now living in Sonale and looking after various project activities and research work.

Ashwini Kamble

Ashwini hails from Tuljapur, Maharashtra. She did her Masters in Disaster Management from Tata Institute of Social Sciences in 2010. She had a brief stint with Ashoka as an Assistant Executive. She is now living in Sonale and assisting on various projects.