**A new beginning- Neha Aggarwal**

A visit to the newly opened school named, ANAND NIKETAN was a welcoming and homely experience for me. As an outsider, you might label it as a play school with a little elder crowd of about 5-7 yrs. Though, play here is the medium to teach all the subjects, you can find the children grasping over the colourful books. As the beginners, the small teacher- student ratio of 3:10 has created scope for a healthy interaction with the children and among the children themselves. The ‘differently abled’ child with a poor vision too is given a chance to study in mainstream only to explore the special skills and above normal intelligence in him.

Different classrooms, which more look like a colourful playroom, are divided for not only different but unique subjects like art and aesthetics, ‘Kubaad se Jugaad’, language and play room, along with a rest room for children to sleep after lunch hours. The science innovatory activities with the kubaad were very impressive and attractive to children as well as me. Following the modern system of multigrade teaching, the teacher was observed making an effort to make benefit out of a no-class system. The walls of the school filled with charts and paintings made by the 5 year olds shows their high productivity in a very few days.

A unique practice that you will notice if you observe the school and its functioning keenly is the participation and role on decision making of all the activities that children have to carry out, the timetable they have to follow etc. which is carried out without any lack of discipline. Apart from the democratic functioning in academic activities, the everyday disputes and issues are dealt with the same process in the name of ‘baatcheet’ where the teacher discusses the matter with all the students and take their opinion in solving the crises situations.

The free mobility of children all around the school premises in between class teaching is another indicator of choice or freedom the children have to study or not to study. If that choice is free, then what is it that sustains their attention in the teaching? Looking closely at the practice of teaching or pedagogy, one can guess the voluntary involvement of children in learning, as the teaching is closely related to their everyday life, their language, in groups making it more play-like and rules free to a large extent.

Yet again it surprised me when I framed out the student composition from all the social classes from poor to rich all sitting and studying together. This kind of school system is trying to create a space for them to share their world with each other and get exposed to the social reality of the country since the primary years of their schooling.

The feedback session of the whole day for the teachers too seemed to be quite self-reflective for them. I personally most liked the practice of teacher’s session of sitting together and singing songs that create a sense of ‘we together shall create a difference’ and a brilliant practice to motivate teachers to keep exploring the creativity in teaching.

Concluding my comments on the view of visit in ANAND NIKETAN, it can be said that a bright ray of hope is seen in the bold initiative taken to create a better kind of educational scope for children and it gives me a picture of the children becoming promising social political citizens. I give my warm wishes to the school to prosper and create an ideal model to be followed by the rest of educational system.