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A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [July 2022 issue](#) or read any of [the articles](#).

Was it not enough to raise children?

- The journey of SHINE

By Sonali Ambasankar, SHINE teacher, Mumbai



Being a mother is not easy! No matter what I do, there are a million things to still be done. The rebel in me says 'I have had enough of raising children!' And yet, the role of a mother has been a fertile ground for immense growth and maturity. My children have helped me to grow up.

It is with this mindset that I started off on a new journey and a new role that brought more and more children into my life. The role of a SHINE teacher. Had I not had enough with children? Then what led me to take on this new role? What did we observe about children growing up with modern education?

Need for SHINE (Spiritual Heritage of India for Next-Gen Empowerment) – Just like adults (particularly Vedanta students) were seeking answers, children too sought answers to their questions – big and small, from their parents and elders. Due to lack of time and knowledge on the part of the elders, children harbor doubts and wrong ideas which lead to self-doubt, inferiority and ignorance about one's own culture. The foundation of the growing child's identity is thus shaken. Our great spiritual heritage of India has to be passed on to the next generation. But the modern education system is not geared to focus on the spiritual development of our children nor does being a Hindu mandate our children to attend compulsory religious classes.



Recognising this, in 2016, Swamini Brahmajnananda envisioned SHINE and conducted twenty sessions for some of our children (8-13 years) on the spiritual and cultural heritage of India. There was a need to scale and continue it as an ongoing program and hence she asked for a few volunteers to take up this project.

Leading SHINE - I strongly felt the need for sharing the vision of *Sanātana* Dharma that reflects in the tradition, the tradition that revels in doing a puja, greeting with a *namaskāra*, bowing down and touching the earth when we wake up in the morning, seeing that everything

including wealth and knowledge is sacred and much more. Why we revel in and practice all this, needed to be told. There was no time to waste. Some self-doubts crept in. Would I be able to teach? Would the children enjoy and understand? I started off teaching children with a lot of 'woulds' and 'shoulds'. And yet there was only one aim in front of me, that may I be able to convey aspects of our glorious BHARAT and *Sanātana* Dharma, to the children. So, despite thinking that my job with the kids was done, they entered my life again! From 2020-now, it has become my joyful yajna, my offering to my Gurus and Rishis who have blessed us with the vision. Happy to share that the lives of 35+ children have been touched through SHINE classes and more through online content.



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