

Celebrating >>> **WOMEN LEADERSHIP**

Leaders must keep an open mind as leadership is a process and requires constant adjustment



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What changes did you embrace to continue educating children during the pandemic?

>> At the Narayana Group, we have championed the use of technology in education for many years. Our in-house products such as nLearn – for curated learning and assessments, nConnect – for better school and parent connectivity were widely adopted even prior to the pandemic. Consequently, we adapted rapidly to the initial challenges of the

pandemic and rolled out our live classes just 2 days into the first nationwide lockdown.

Having said that, it is a big shift in approach for our teachers to go from classroom teaching to online classes. We have conducted numerous trainings for teachers on presentation, body language and use of technology to ensure that education is delivered effectively to the students. Furthermore, we have added new features such as doubt solving, assignment delivery and correction,

resource libraries to our nLearn platform, aimed at ensuring that we are easily accessible to students. I am proud to say that we conduct over 10,000 online classes every day.

Testing is another area where we have shifted enmasse to online platforms. Even prior to the pandemic, we had developed and deployed our own proprietary test engine. However, the pandemic necessitated rapid scaling of our testing capabilities and we were very successful in meeting these challenges. Over 1 lakh students have simultaneously taken a test on our nLearn platform. No

other platform has had such robust usage in India other than the NTA (National Testing Agency). Overall, we have conducted over 85 lakh online tests during the pandemic. We continue to innovate and leave no stone unturned in providing the best education for our students.

How do you inculcate gender neutrality along with leadership qualities among the children?

>> We focus on building competency in all our students. Our teaching frameworks are oriented towards building skills and providing individualized feedback and instruction for stu-



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dents. As such our teaching is gender agnostic. In addition, we inculcate collaboration through group projects and assignments. Invariably, these are mixed teams and responsibility is equally shared among all team members. Students

view each other as co-collaborators. One example is the NSS Space Settlement Contest by NASA, where our mixed student teams have been the best in the world for the last 5 years.

We also have an extensive calendar of extracurricular activities and clubs. These are designed as group projects, which require research, analysis, presentation, skill showcase etc. in a wide variety of subjects. Students actively take up responsibility and leadership roles within projects and collaborate with minimal interventions from teachers. Our activities begin at a class

level and go all the way up to a national level showcase. This kind of unique exposure we provide helps our students to hone their leadership abilities through deliberate practice and execution.

Your pearls of wisdom for the aspiring women leaders of India?

>> Believe in yourself. If you do not have faith in your own abilities, then the world will not take you seriously.

Build your competency. If you are competent in your line of work your team will automatically respect you and look up to you for direction.

Be patient and empathetic. It is essential to understand your team members - their motivations and apprehensions – to get the best out of them.

Be a good listener. Great ideas can come from anyone at any time; you will miss it unless you practice deliberate listening.

Empower. Motivation and autonomy are closely linked. Empower your team to take decisions and be accountable for them.

Most importantly, keep at it and keep an open mind, leadership is a process and requires constant adjustment based on the context and situation.