



Shaping minds - Shaping the future of children with
TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Shanti Ashram's Repository of Case studies 2025-26



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Bala Shanti - Manthan Educational Solutions (MESPL) Joint Scholarships 2025-26



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"The power to question is the basis of all human progress."

M.K. Gandhi

Shaping Minds - Shaping the Future of CHILDREN with TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

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The transformative effect of education

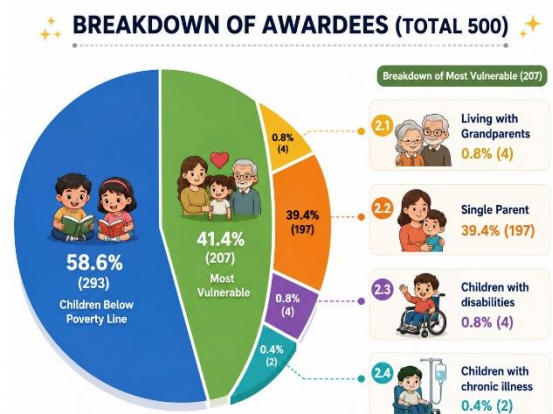
Education, in its deepest sense, is not merely the acquisition of knowledge but the unfolding of human potential. It is a process through which individuals gradually discover their capacities, develop their sense of identity, and learn to participate meaningfully in society. The scholarship programme creates a supportive environment in which children are able to recognize that they are more than the limitations imposed by circumstance. By ensuring continuity of learning, the initiative nurtures curiosity, perseverance, and the courage to imagine a future beyond inherited constraints. The child begins to discover that capacity is not a fixed trait, but an evolving process shaped by opportunity, encouragement, and meaningful engagement with knowledge. Such discovery reflects a philosophical belief that every child carries within them an inherent potential waiting to be awakened through care and trust.

Identity emerges through experience, recognition, and the affirmation of dignity. When children are supported consistently, they begin to see themselves as worthy participants in the journey of learning. Education then becomes a process of becoming—an inward shaping of values, aspirations, and moral imagination. The programme facilitates this formation of selfhood by offering stability and reassurance, allowing children to move from a position of uncertainty towards a grounded sense of self. To participate meaningfully in society is to recognize one’s interdependence with others and to act with a sense of responsibility towards the common good. Education thus becomes a pathway through which the child learns not only to advance individually but also to contribute compassionately to the collective life of society. The programme encourages children to perceive themselves as members of a shared human community, capable of responding to social challenges with empathy, integrity, and commitment. Participation is therefore not limited to economic productivity, but extends to ethical citizenship, peaceful coexistence, and the cultivation of solidarity.

The idea of education may appear distant from everyday realities, and aspirations may remain unarticulated due to the absence of supportive structures that affirm possibility. In such contexts, educational empowerment must extend beyond the provision of financial assistance; it must also foster confidence, motivation, and the belief that learning can create pathways towards a more secure and meaningful future.

Vulnerability Mapping amongst Bala Shanti-MESPL Scholarship Awardees 2025-26- Table 1

S.No	Category	Number of Awardees	%
1.	Children Below Poverty Line with no other considered factor.	293	58.6
2.	Children Below Poverty Line Most Vulnerable	207	41.4
2.1	Living with Grandparents	4	0.8
2.2	Single Parent	197	39.4
2.3	Children with disabilities	4	0.8
2.4	Children with chronic illness	2	0.4
	Total	500	100



This profile of the 500 scholarship awardees under the Bala Shanti – MESPL Joint Scholarships 2025–26 reflects the programme’s strong commitment to reaching children in vulnerable life situations. Out of the total 500 scholarship awardees, 293 children (58.6%) belong to families living below the poverty line without any additional vulnerability

factors considered. The remaining 207 children (41.4%) fall under the category of most vulnerable children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Within this group, the majority are children raised by single parents, accounting for 197 awardees (39.4%). Additionally, 4 children (0.8%) are living with grandparents as primary caregivers, 4 children (0.8%) are children with disabilities, and 2 children (0.4%) are children living with chronic illnesses. These statistics reflect the programme's strong commitment to supporting children facing economic hardship as well as multiple social and personal vulnerabilities, ensuring that educational opportunities reach those who need them the most.

The Bala Shanti – MESPL Joint Scholarship initiative emerges from this understanding that education is both a personal and social process. While financial support plays a crucial role in enabling children to continue their schooling, the deeper objective of the initiative lies in nurturing a sense of agency within each learner. Educational empowerment involves the strengthening of self-belief, the development of perseverance, and the gradual recognition that effort and learning can influence life trajectories. It is a process that requires sustained encouragement, empathetic guidance, and opportunities for reflection. Within this framework, case studies assume particular importance as pedagogical tools that illuminate lived experiences of learning, struggle, adaptation, and growth.

Bala Shanti - Manthan Educational Solutions (MESPL) Joint Scholarships 2025-26: the unique contribution to the educational empowerment of children.



The Bala Shanti – Manthan Educational Solutions (MESPL) Joint Scholarships 2025–26 represents a significant and sustained contribution to the educational empowerment of children, particularly those experiencing social and economic vulnerability. For more than two decades, the initiative has worked to ensure that education becomes not merely an aspiration but an accessible and sustainable reality for children whose life circumstances often restrict opportunities. Grounded in a deep understanding of lived realities, the programme recognizes that financial hardship, limited exposure to educational resources, and social constraints frequently intersect, influencing a child's capacity to participate fully in the learning process. Rather than viewing education only as academic performance, the initiative adopts a compassionate and context-sensitive approach that acknowledges the broader developmental needs of children, including confidence-building, continuity in schooling, and the nurturing of aspiration. The programme's child-friendly structure allows children to directly seek support without intermediaries, thereby reducing barriers and affirming their dignity, agency, and trust in the system. Such accessibility reflects an ethical commitment to inclusion, ensuring that assistance reaches those who genuinely require support.

Importantly, the Bala Shanti–MESPL Joint Scholarships initiative is designed not as a short-term intervention but as a sustained developmental engagement that accompanies children across their educational journey. By integrating elements such as health awareness, leadership development, emotional well-being, and value-based learning, the programme promotes holistic growth that extends beyond financial assistance. Transparency in financial management and clearly defined eligibility criteria further strengthen the credibility and fairness of the initiative, fostering long-term trust among donors and stakeholders. One of its most distinctive strengths lies in the continuity of support, with children receiving assistance from Grade 1 through the completion of undergraduate education, thereby reducing the risk of discontinuity and creating a stable environment for learning and personal growth. Through its consistent, inclusive, and ethically grounded approach, the programme stands as a meaningful model of educational empowerment, contributing to the larger vision of equitable access to education and the cultivation of a compassionate, participatory, and socially responsible society.

Why case studies?



Case study as a qualitative research method offers a holistic way of understanding human experiences by exploring real-life contexts in depth rather than reducing them to numerical indicators. It focuses on a single individual, group, or situation and gathers rich descriptive data through interviews, observations, reflections, and document analysis. This approach helps researchers understand how people interpret their circumstances, make meaning of challenges, and navigate social realities. Case studies are particularly valuable for examining processes such as resilience, identity formation, educational transformation, and social participation, as they capture the interconnected intellectual,

emotional, ethical, and relational dimensions of change. By situating individual experiences within their social and cultural environments, qualitative case study research reveals patterns and insights that may remain invisible in purely quantitative approaches.

Conceptually, a case study may be visualized as a dynamic circle of understanding, where the case remains at the centre, surrounded by interconnected dimensions such as real-life context, in-depth exploration, multiple data sources, and contextual interpretation. Data emerges from diverse sources including personal narratives, observations, creative expressions, academic records, and stakeholder reflections, enabling triangulation and depth of understanding. The researcher engages in iterative reflection, moving between description and interpretation, allowing themes such as continuity, agency, vulnerability, and growth to emerge organically from lived experience. Thus, case study research does not merely document events but illuminates meaning, offering a nuanced and ethically grounded understanding of how human potential unfolds within specific social realities.



The process of Participatory Monitoring Evaluation



The participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) framework has creatively captured the lived realities of children by transforming case studies into reflective, multi-dimensional narratives rather than static records of achievement. **Portfolio-based documentation** enables each child's journey to be presented as a continuum of growth, integrating academic progress with creative expressions, reflections, achievements, photographs, and mentor observations. **Participatory timeline or life-journey mapping** further situates educational progress within the child's broader life context, illuminating turning points such as overcoming learning challenges, discovering aspirations, or experiencing meaningful encouragement. Photo voice, drawings, poems, and reflective writing allow children to communicate **emotional dimensions of empowerment** that may remain invisible in structured assessments. **Dialogic interviews and reflection circles** create safe spaces for children to articulate changes in confidence, relationships, and sense of responsibility, while mentor and parent perspectives provide complementary insights that situate the child's transformation within a relational ecosystem of care. **Thematic synthesis across case studies** helps identify recurring patterns such as resilience, aspiration, continuity in education, and social awareness, ensuring that evaluation remains grounded in lived experience rather than external judgement. Ethical documentation, rooted in consent, dignity, and respect for agency, ensures that children are represented not as passive recipients of support, but as active participants in shaping their own educational pathways. Through such participatory approaches, case studies become reflective spaces that illuminate how educational opportunity contributes to the unfolding of human potential, enabling the Bala Shanti – MESPL Joint Scholarships to document transformation not only as academic progress, but as the gradual emergence of identity, confidence, and meaningful participation in society.

The process of compiling the case studies at Shanti Ashram and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Peace Leadership and Development was guided by both clarity of purpose and a compassionate understanding of children's lived realities. The core team identified participants using carefully developed criteria that extended beyond academic performance to include vulnerable life circumstances, experiences of early hardship, resilience in adversity, and the inspiring movement from poverty towards educational continuity and personal growth. Ten awardees were selected from eight schools, representing students studying between the 8th and 12th standards, thereby ensuring diversity in age, socio-economic

context, and stage of educational journey. The documentation process was collaborative and participatory, involving teachers, mentors, and authors who worked together to preserve the authenticity, dignity, and voice of each child while maintaining accuracy and responsibility in representation. The final case studies were co-verified by Mr. Vijayaragavan Gopal, Head of the Youth Leadership Programme, and Dr. Kezevino Aram, President of Shanti Ashram, strengthening credibility and ethical integrity. The design and publication were carried out by Dr. Seetha, Academic Lead at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Peace Leadership and Development, in collaboration with Ms. Monica, Focal Lead, reflecting a shared commitment to presenting narratives that are academically rigorous, participatory in spirit, and accessible to diverse audiences, while remaining faithful to the transformative vision of education as a pathway towards dignity, resilience, and peace.

Application touch stone: *Pragmatic use of case studies to inspire children to realize their life goals through education*



As the Bala Shanti – MESPL Joint Scholarship is concerned, the compilation of case studies reflects a commitment to recognising each child as an active participant in the learning process. Each narrative represents a lived experience of striving towards education despite constraints, thereby affirming the principle that potential exists within every learner. The stories demonstrate that empowerment is not an isolated moment but a gradual process shaped by encouragement, opportunity, and sustained engagement. They illustrate that educational journeys are rarely linear; rather, they evolve through reflection, adaptation, and resilience.

By situating narrative-based learning within broader theoretical perspectives, these case studies highlights the relevance of experiential understanding in fostering motivation and self-belief. The Bala Shanti – MESPL Joint Scholarship case studies that follow are therefore not merely descriptive accounts of individual circumstances; they represent a collective affirmation that education becomes transformative when learners are supported with dignity, empathy, and trust. Through the sharing of lived experiences, the case studies seek to inspire children to recognise their own capacities, to persevere in their educational journeys, and to envision futures shaped not by limitation but by possibility.

Once child at a time: Shanti Ashram’s list of case studies



Sl.	Name of the awardee	Class	Name of the School	Author
1	B.M. Ahmed Fahim	11	Saraswathi Ramachandra Vidyalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School	Ms. Aathirai Nallaal. S PhD Research Scholar, Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Peace Leadership and Development
2	Jeeva	11	Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan Matriculation Higher Secondary School	Ms. Suha K Law Student, Gujarat National Law University , Senior Intern, Youth Leadership Programme
3	Kanimozhi Nayaki	8	Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Matriculation Higher Secondary School	Ms. Aathirai Nallaal. S PhD Research Scholar, Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Peace Leadership and Development
4	Mohammad Ajmal	8	Noor Sait Matriculation Higher Secondary School	Ms. Aathirai Nallaal. S PhD Research Scholar, Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Peace Leadership and Development

5	Mounika	12	Sri.P. Mallaiyan Matriculation Higher Secondary School	Ms. Suha K Law Student, Gujarat National Law University Senior Intern, Youth Leadership Programme
6	Neha	12	Sri. P. Mallaiyan Matriculation Higher Secondary School	Ms. Suha K Law Student, Gujarat National Law University Senior Intern, Youth Leadership Programme
7	Prithviraj	12	Equitas Gurukul Matriculation Higher Secondary School	Mr. Akash Ramankutty PhD Research Scholar, IIT Hyderabad Senior Intern, Youth Leadership Programme
8	Sai Saran	3	Chavara Vidya Bhavan	Ms. Blessy , Resident Intern, ICPH
9	Saranya	8	Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Matriculation Higher Secondary School	Ms. Aathirai Nallaal. S PhD Research Scholar, Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Peace Leadership and Development
10	Vijay	12	Sri Rangammal Matriculation School	Dr. Karthikeyan A Senior Resident, Emergency Medicine, AIIMS New Delhi Senior Intern, Youth Leadership Programme

Where can you find the stories for further reading?



The detailed case studies and related narratives can be accessed through the official digital platforms of Shanti Ashram, where the stories are presented as part of the institution's commitment to transparency, knowledge sharing, and collective learning. These platforms provide deeper insights into the educational journeys of the scholarship awardees, highlighting the transformative role of sustained support in enabling children to overcome adversity and pursue meaningful aspirations.

Links for access: Website: <https://www.icphhealth.org/research-reflection/case-study-series/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/shantiaashramcoimbatore/>

We hope you will enjoy reading these case studies as much as we valued documenting them. Each story reflects courage, resilience, hope, and the transformative power of opportunity, support, and human connection. These narratives are not merely accounts of challenges faced, but powerful journeys of growth, determination, and dignity. Through the voices of the children, parents, volunteers, and community members, we invite you to witness the spirit of perseverance that continues to inspire the work of the Mahatma Gandhi at Shanti Ashram. May these stories encourage deeper empathy, meaningful reflection, and a shared commitment towards building a more inclusive, compassionate, and just society.

"The power to question is the basis of all human progress."

M.K. Gandhi

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Acknowledgement

Shaping Futures of CHILDREN with EDUCATION

At Shanti Ashram, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Peace Leadership and Development (MGIPLD) and the Youth Leadership Programme, express our sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to all the students and their parents who wholeheartedly agreed to share their personal journeys and experiences as case studies. We recognize that every story carries emotions, memories, struggles, concrete empowerment through education and a shared hope to shaping the futures of CHILDREN with TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION.

Shaping Mindsand we are truly humbled by the trust that families have placed in us. Prior to the documentation process, detailed discussions were held with the students and parents regarding child rights, privacy, dignity, confidentiality, and the ethical use of personal information. Care was taken to ensure that every participant clearly understood the purpose of the documentation, how the stories would be presented, and the importance of safeguarding the identity and wellbeing of children throughout the process. Only after these explanations and mutual understanding were the consents voluntarily provided by the families.

Their willingness to contribute their personal testimonials goes beyond simply sharing experiences; it reflects a spirit of courage, social responsibility, and hope that their stories may inspire learning, awareness, and positive transformation in the lives of others. We remain deeply thankful for their cooperation, openness, and faith in the values and mission of our institution.

We at Shanti Ashram, are richer by this year of dedicated work for transformative education engaging over 40 schools and 500 scholarship awardees in 2025-26 through the Bala Shanti – MESPL Joint Scholarships.

We rededicate our 39-year commitment to children, especially vulnerable children.

We find continued inspiration in Mahatma Gandhi's words :

Education is for life, through life and throughout life.

"The power to question is the basis of all human progress."

M.K. Gandhi

