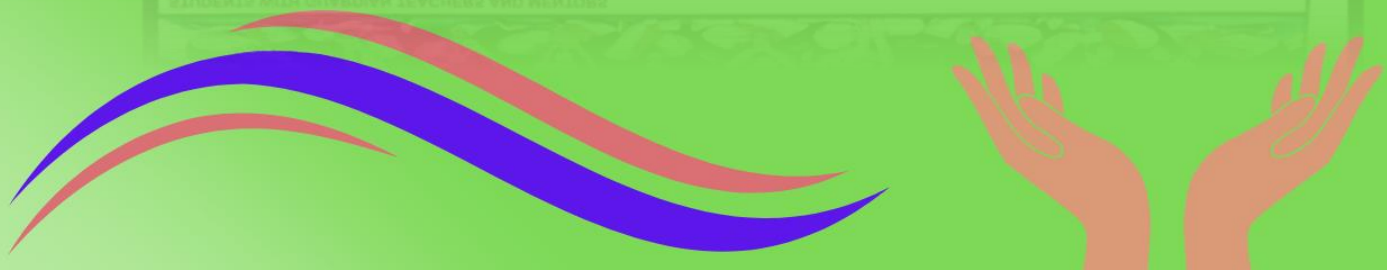


# Prerana 2024



## Six Days of Insightful Learning A Memorable Experience at Prerana A Report by Ms Sanskriti Chaudhury

Batch- 24 (25 August to 30 August, 2024)



# Prerana 2024

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Class X

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Headmistress, AECS-2, Mumbai

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## *An Account of the Transformative Experience at Prerana 2024*

by

*Miss Sanskriti Chaudhury,*

Class X

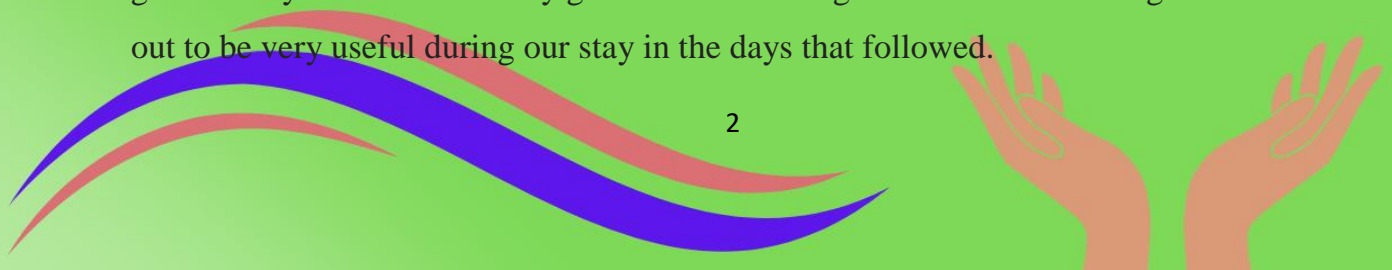
Atomic Energy Central School-2, Mumbai

“Prerana” translates to inspiration. In the 14 years of my life I’ve had many fantastic experiences, but this seven days’ journey will remain the most amazing and memorable one. My awe-inspiring journey with my teachers and (new) friends began on 24 August, 2024 when we reached Gandhinagar from Mumbai. What was to come next was intriguing. It officially began on..

### **25<sup>th</sup> AUGUST**

After a lengthy two-hour bus ride, and an interesting walk (that taught us so many things) through the ancient town of Vadnagar, we finally reached our destination – the captivating Prerana Centre. While looking around the lobby, one sees the portraits and paintings of the great visionaries of Bharat. We were welcomed in the traditional, cultural way – by putting a tilak on our forehead, and giving each one of us pretty red roses. Then, we all gave a brief introduction of ourselves, while also conveying our ambition in life.

That is when our splendid journey started. Our hungry stomachs gladly accepted the warm samosas and hot brewed milk tea. That really helped us after our travel. We were informed about our Houses (Bhagat Singh House/ Savitribai Phule House/ Eklavya House/ Kalpana Chawla House) and kept the luggage in the allotted rooms. After that, we visited the Activity lab, where we were given all the instructions and guidance by the mentors. They gave us Prerana Bags and some more things that turned out to be very useful during our stay in the days that followed.



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Then came my favourite part of the day.. yep, the games session! We played games which we had never ever heard of before and ended up laughing like maniacs later on.



One of the Games sessions

Here comes the bumper – we had to submit our mobile phones for the whole day to the wardens and only got half an hour a day to use it. But it did us good to limit our screen times to the bare minimum. For me, it sort of helped me to resist the temptation to use my mobile phone all the time. Many a times I’ve wished that I could play some Weekend or Grande or Madonna but I had to control the desire.

There was Maharashtrian food for dinner that night.

We concluded the exciting day by having a few meaningful discussions, and we learnt about NEP, National Education Policy. We also heard Swami Vivekananda’s speech which he delivered in Chicago in the year 1893. What impressed me was that when he got nervous before giving the speech, he thought of his Guru and that calmed him and gave him the confidence. The next morning we learnt that this is “DHYAAN” while performing pranayam.



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Yoga Session

26<sup>th</sup> AUGUST

KEETTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT!!!!!!!  
!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

That's my annoying alarm which blared at 5 am sharp. We wore our uniforms while we were half asleep and dawdled down the staircase which led to the Activity lab from the dining area. We started off with a few warm up exercises, called "Sukshmasan". Then we learnt four new asanas – Tadasan, Vrikshasan, Ardchandrasan and Hastpadasan. We then performed Anulom vilom, Brahamri, Omkar and Dhyaan.

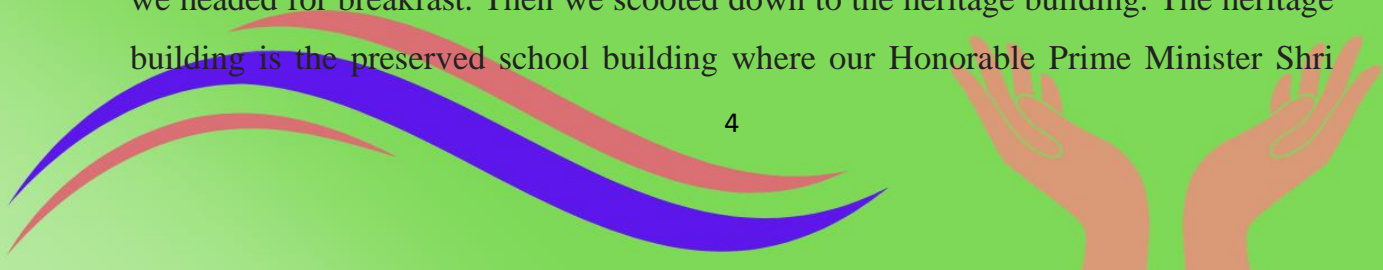
For all yoga enthusiasts looking to expand their understanding and practice-  
Sukshmasan - Sukshmasan is the system of yogic practices which loosens your joints and removes the energy blockages. This system has a strong purifying effect thus, boosting the body energy.

Tadasan - The feet are together and the hands are at the sides of the body. The posture is entered by standing with the feet together, grounding evenly through the feet and lifting up through the crown of the head. The thighs are lifted, the waist is lifted, and the spine is elongated. The breathing is relaxed

Vrikshasan - Vrikshasan or the Tree pose is a lovely meditation which integrates our body, mind and breath. This implores the qualities of mercy, generosity, flexibility, tolerance, strength, endurance, balance and grace which helps an individual to achieve overall growth in his or her life.

Ardchandrasan - Ardha chandrasana is derived from the Sanskrit ardha, meaning "half," and chandra, meaning "moon," and asana meaning "seat" or "posture." This is a graceful, balanced pose which mirrors the image of the half moon in the sky and awakens the opposing sides of the physical body.

Feeling refreshed and awakened, we returned to our rooms and took a bath. Then we headed for breakfast. Then we scooted down to the heritage building. The heritage building is the preserved school building where our Honorable Prime Minister Shri



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Narendra Modiji studied in his childhood days. That is where all our lectures took place throughout the programme.

Firstly we prayed to goddess Saraswati. Next, we did something quite different – we introduced the person next to us, instead of ourselves. Our very first session was a captivating one on the topic “Swabhiman aur Vinay” or “Self respect and Ego”, given by Dr. Ramesh Chaturvedi. He told us the fine difference between “Swabhiman” and “Abhiman”. The message that I gathered is that while it is important to take pride in yourself, there should be a balance. An excessive pride can lead to vanity and boastfulness. We heard a short lecture delivered by Dr A P J Abdul Kalam which was very inspiring, and later we saw a short film on Vadnagar and its different heritage sites.

Next on line was an energetic session on “Courage and Bravery” or “Shaurya aur Sahas” given by Ms Richa Tiwari. She spoke about the Surgical Strike and told us about the bold and courageous Indian fighter pilot, Abhinandan Varthaman. Afterwards, we shared our experiences with one another and recounted the courageous acts that we have accomplished as students. Then we all listed our fears and learnt how to get over them. What a powerful thing to do!

After a heart-warming Himachali lunch with my favorite rajma, we spent the afternoon in the Vadnagar Art Gallery.



Vadnagar Art Gallery

At Vadnagar Art Gallery, we learnt about so many things – the many names of Vadnagar in the olden days, the Hatkeshwar temple, emergence of Jainism and Buddhism in Vadnagar, the Kirti Toran, the legend of Tana Riri, the different time

# Prerana 2024

periods. Actually, the place was a museum with a clock tower, overlooking the serene view of the scenic Sharmishtha lake.



Sharmishtha lake

Even though we were quite tired after the visit, nobody wanted to miss out on playing games. After calling our parents and listening to some music, we ate Gujarati dinner – Kadhi (a sweet tangy yogurt based dish prepared using gram flour) and Undhyun (a type of mixed vegetable dish) along with rice and roti. We dozed off to sleep after watching a short film on the history of Vadnagar.

## 27<sup>th</sup> AUGUST

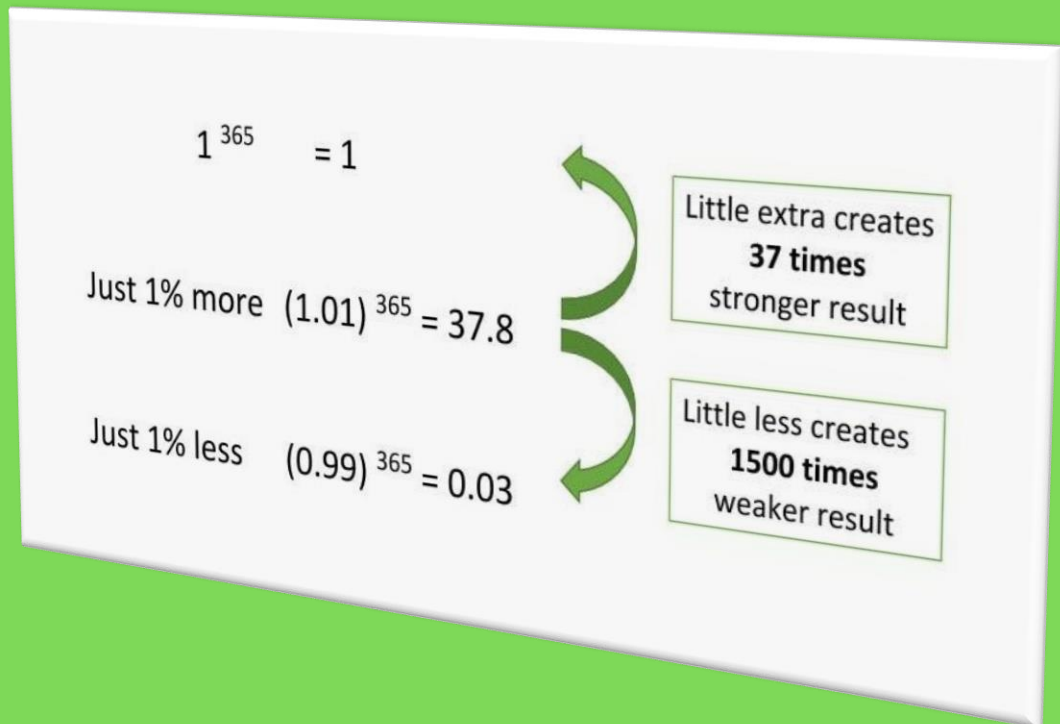
Of course, the irritating alarm again.

I had a quick breakfast of cereal, yogurt and berries after the 5:45am yoga session. We dashed off to the heritage building for our sessions.

The first one – “Integrity and Purity” by Anita Gupta Ma’am, is one of my favourite sessions. We learnt

about our responsibility towards truth and how our mind and heart must be pure, for us to be successful in life. We were mathematically shown how much our progress changes with the amount of effort we give:

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Fascinating, isn't it? This made me realise how much I have missed, but it gave me the motivation to do a little extra, always.

The next session was on the topic "Perseverance and Dedication", which burnt a fire of 'I will' in my heart. I mean, it was exactly what a student needs. Some of the quotes to awaken our highest aspiration –

Turn challenges into opportunities

If you have infinite patience and perseverance, success is bound to come.

You live most of your life inside your head. Make sure it is a nice place to be.

Your direction is more important than your speed

Then we heard a moving speech by our former President Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, on how a student can become successful. This session was followed by a Maharashtrian lunch. A tip – crush papad and dip it in rasam. It's bomb!

Feeling full, we went to visit an excavation site and an underground Buddhist monastery. After returning, we played many games and later spoke to our parents at 7.30 pm. I was on cloud nine when I saw my favourite South Indian cuisine for dinner.





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That evening, we also watched an inspiring short film called “Chalo Jeete Hain”, which is based on some aspects of the childhood of Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji.

## 28<sup>th</sup> AUGUST

Yep. You guessed it. THE ALARM.

Okay – this was the least expected time to go off for a site visit after the morning yoga session, but we enjoyed walking in the rain through the town. We first visited the scenic Sharmishtha lake, followed by the Tana Riri theme park, which had 10 structures representing 10 raags- Kedar, Vrindavani, Yaman, Bahar, Basant, Pahari, Deepak, Bhairavi, Malhar. Then while returning to the centre on the way we saw the marvellous Kirti Toran on the way.



Kirti Toran

Again, after a light breakfast our sessions in the heritage building commenced. The lecture on “Innovation and Curiosity” delivered by Amit Kumar Sir was a captivating one. We learnt about the difference between Invention, Innovation and Discovery.

“Average people discuss people. Great people discuss ideas.”

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“I have no special talents, I am only passionately curious.” ~ Einstein

Our second session was focussed on “Compassion and Service”. We were made aware of numerous inspirational stories of individuals dedicated to serving both Mother Earth and humanity such as Tulsi Gowdaji, Trinity Saioji, Harikel Hajabbaji, Dr. K S Rajannaji.

The site visit was interesting, and quite different. We visited Seva Ashram – an old age home where we met doting grandpas and grandmas who warmly welcomed us, chatted and sang with us. We also played some games that gave us beautiful moments of laughter and true joy. I do wish to visit them again someday! They reminded me of my grandparents.



Seva Ashram

We ate dinner after returning and did not watch any video that night. We tried to complete our activities. As for me, my team and I finished all the Rubik’s cube patterns. Then we snoozed off.

## 29<sup>th</sup> AUGUST

Surprisingly, by now, the alarm didn’t seem as annoying anymore because we were now used to waking up to its ring.

After the yoga session, we visited the Vadnagar railway station, where our Honourable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modiji’s father had a tea stall.

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Vadnagar Railway Station

Next, we visited the Hatkeshwar temple, an intimately carved 17<sup>th</sup> century temple. That is one of my favourite places that we visited.



Hatkeshwar temple

Later, that morning we attended another marvellous session on the topic “Faith and Trust”. It was conducted by Khevana Joshi madam. During the session, we learnt that to create something special, we must first believe that it is special. This lesson was illustrated through the remarkable lives of individuals like Dashrat Manji ji, Arunachalam Muruganathamji, Salumarda Thimakkaji. The most inspirational one for me was Arunima Sinhaji.

The second session that day was truly inspiring, led by our mentors on the theme of ‘Unity in Diversity’. Each mentor represented a different state of our country, and they

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put on an engaging performance for us, highlighting the beauty of our nation's diversity. After this, through an activity of making a colourful paper toran, we realised how we can collaborate and create great things together. Later, that afternoon we completed all the assigned activities. We finally assembled the Rubik's Cube portrait of Major Dhyanchand.

After playing games that evening, it was time to dress up in our traditional outfits for the exhibition and cultural events. Dinner was flavourful and very tasty, as usual. Later on, we had a cultural event where I told a few proverbs in Marathi, some of our batch mates sang songs, some gave dance performances and some narrated folklores. We all did garba that night with Khevana madam, Gopal Sir and our guardian teachers. After a busy and eventful evening, we fell asleep.

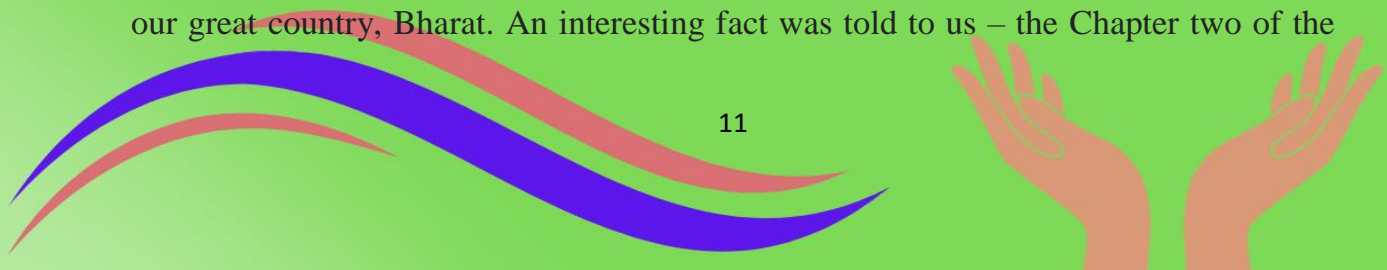
## 30<sup>th</sup> AUGUST

This yoga session was relaxing as usual but slightly different. I mean, Khevana madam knew that we all were extremely tired after programme the previous evening. So we did just one asana – Savasana and most of us fell asleep in that resting pose but after some minutes when we woke up, we felt highly energised.

It was our last yoga session and we were feeling sad. Khevana madam took us to the top floor of the centre, and there lay a view, greater than anything I've ever seen. Breath-taking. Serene. Tranquil. Through the enormous glass windows we saw every site we had visited, and the entire town. Clouds above in the sky and greenery below. The breeze was special, truly enchanting. I felt like I was on the top of the world. Later, as we climbed down the stairs, on each floor was a handmade painting of Vadnagar through the ages.

After breakfast we had a session on "Freedom and Responsibility", by Sonaleeca Das madam. We saw a beautiful video called "Nature is speaking – Julia Roberts", which I highly recommend watching. It was insightful and made us think about our precious Mother Nature.

The next session was on Indian Knowledge Systems. We learnt so much about our great country, Bharat. An interesting fact was told to us – the Chapter two of the



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Bhagavad Gita is a great one for therapy. The following thought provoking topics inspired me and provided some meaningful takeaways.

Age of Technology: Its Consequences

-Heavy smartphone use is linked to lower intelligence.

-People who use their search engines – rather than brain power – to solve everyday problems are lazier thinkers.

~Wendy Philpott

That day, after lunch we had an alumini meet. That was fun. We also got to write a letter to Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modiji. Also, our respected mentors recorded individual videos of each one of us encouraging us to share our experiences at Prerana. In the evening, we received our certificates.

## 31<sup>st</sup> AUGUST

Alas the day had come – we were going to leave right after breakfast for Gandhinagar. We are genuinely going to miss the busy life at Prerana. We woke up at 5 am as usual, and come down to the lobby very silently. Our mentors had laid down a large map of India and had placed diyas all around its boundary. One by one, each one of us lit the diyas, including the guardian teachers.

After breakfast, sharp at 7:30 am we set off for Gandhinagar, back to GCERT, taking all our memories and the nine values together with us. On the way, we also visited the Sun Temple in Modhera, where we took a halt of an hour. The guide showed us in and around the temple, and told us about its unique architecture. Then we climbed back onto the bus to continue our journey, while singing songs together and writing little notes in each other's diaries.

This was a trip that none of us can ever forget. Every student of Bharat deserves this Prerana experience.

THANK YOU PRERANA!!!

Sanskriti Chaudhury

Class X

Atomic Energy Central School – 2, Mumbai



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## *My Impressions*

### A Brief Account of Six Days of Knowledge and Growth

- by **Guardian Teacher, Mrs Sonia Vikas Kapoor,**  
Headmistress  
Atomic Energy Central School No.-2, Mumbai

I congratulate all the selected students for having received the opportunity to visit, feel and imbibe beautiful learnings from Prerana Programme at Vadnagar. It was an extra special moment for me too as an educator. Generally, teachers engage students in different educational activities and take them out for visits to places with scope for new learnings to gather new experiences.

However, it was because of my student, Miss Sanskriti Chaudhury that I got this chance to visit The Prerana School in Vadnagar which has the unique concept of engaging children in an innovative curriculum with a range of hands-on activities.

In the first 11 pages her reminisce, Miss Sanskriti Chaudhury has mentioned about the rich experiences gained through different sessions on the nine chosen values, site visits, hands on activities and different indigenous games. She has also fondly mentioned about the variety of food items served, the well planned daily routine, cultural programmes and the lasting bonds created with friends from different states.

According to me, one of the unexpected lessons for the students was learning to live without their mobile phones, which were collected by the mentors and were given to students only in the evenings to talk to their parents. The students would get so immersed in the learning sessions that they did not miss their mobile phones for any reason, except for reaching out to their parents.

By using their mobile devices only when necessary, instead of indulging in its constant usage, students can become smart, responsible users of technology instead of being controlled by it. This is something that together all the educators and parents are trying to promote among students.



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This programme has been curated in such a way that along with the students even the guardian teachers were involved in memorable and collaborative sessions. These thought provoking sessions have made us, the guardian teachers, competent to inspire students to understand the importance of the different values and practise them. Also, the indigenous games learnt in the evening sessions will help us in enhancing the physical and mental well being of our students.

We owe gratitude to all the mentors at Prerana School who are conducting this insightful learning programme -Dr Rathnakaran K O, Dr. R C Chaturvedi, Dr Gopal Upadhyay, Mr Amit Kumar, Mr Soumendra Sarkar, Ms Anita Gupta, Ms Richa Tiwari, Ms Sonaleeca Das and Ms Khevana Joshi for the valuable learning experiences.

These sessions were highly interactive and engaging, filled with new techniques and practical approaches to ICT integration and gamification. They demonstrated how to teach not just content, but also essential values. The sessions inspired us to reflect on our teaching practices, handle challenges and serve as mentors for students and be good role models for the wider community.

The calming yoga asanas, prayer sessions rich in meaning and rhythm, creative assembly activities, indigenous game sessions with values, finely chosen site visits, knowledge about our ancient culture and present-time achievements, the skill of fine observation of things and events around, importance of routine and self discipline, balance between work and relaxation, interacting with persons from different places, learning from others' experiences.... all this and much more are takeaways of the guardian teachers.

Prerana is a unique set up that is enabling the learning process together for the selected students and guardian teachers instilling new learnings, skills and feeling of patriotism in them to inspire others.

We are indebted to Honourable Prime Minister of our country, Shri Narendra Modiji for this transformational learning experience. We are also grateful to Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture and all the creative minds for this innovative experiential learning programme.



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We, the guardian teachers and students, are deeply honoured to be part of this Prerana family. The values and skills that we have learned will stay with us and positively contribute to the community that we are a part of. Also, our endeavours to make the young children under our care well equipped with life skills, good values and be responsible citizens of Viksit Bharat will always continue.

Thank you, Prerana!

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