

Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program

Vinayak Bhavan, 510 Sadashiv Peth, Pune – 411030, INDIA.
www.tribalmensa.org | www.facebook.com/tribalmensa



Title: Redefining the concept of mentoring underprivileged gifted based on shad shakti as described in Narayan Varm of 6th Adhaya of Sri Mad Bhagavatam

Authors: Chinmayee Kulkarni (Head, TMNP Narsimha), Mayuri Lokhande (Head, TMNP Parashar), Tejswini Gandhi (Head, TMNP Mahindra), Akshata Joshi (Head, TMNP SanYuja), Mitelesh Deshpande (Head, TMNP Abhyasa), Chaitrali Kulkarni (Head TMNP Bharati), Aditi Joshi (Head, TMNP Bharya), Mrs Veena Shepal (Head, TMNP Vasu), Pallavi Abhanave (Head, TMNP Parikshit), Janhavi Thombre (Head, TMNP Saptaswar) Akshay Kulkarni (Researcher)

Contact Address: Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program, Mensa India, Vinayak Bhavan, Jnana Prabodhini, 510 Sadashiv Peth Pune 411030

Email: narayan@tribalmensa.org, website: www.tribalmensa.org

Abstract: Tribal Mensa Nurturing program (TMNP) is a special interest group of Mensa India focusing on identification, nurturing and nourishing underprivileged gifted since 2002. TMNP is an organically evolved grassroots organization. TMNP has screened more than 45000 underprivileged students from six states in the last two decades and identified more than 3800 gifted underprivileged students and 2700 gifted students who received the nurturing. Giftedness nurturing program based on the Panchakosha principle described in Brahmavalli of Taittiriya Upanishad, part of Taittiriya Samhita of Krishna Yajurveda.

Experience of the last two decades in underprivileged nurturing shows that are mentoring is required in six areas. Surprisingly, these areas have been described in **Narayanvarm** of Shri Mad Bhagavatam as Shadshaktis. Thus, understanding the problems of underprivileged gifted, TMNP has developed a unique mentoring program called "**TMNP-Narayanvarm**". *The meaning of Narayan is N means no, ar means fault, and Ayan means habitat. Thus, the meaning of Narayan is that it is a place where a faultless person resides and Varm means Shield*). Focusing on these six Shakti's will provide required and essential mentoring to underprivileged gifted.

'Parashar'

'Sanjuja'

'Vinukta'

'Vama'

'Bharati'

The Shad Shakti (henceforth mentioned as Six Shakti's) are namely *Utsaha Shakti* (Motivational Energy), *Ichha Shakti* (energy of Desire), *Jnana Shakti* (knowledge energy), *Mantra Shakti* (energy of understanding and thinking), *Kriya Shakti* (energy of Action) and *Prabhu Shakti* (energy of leading).

In this paper, we have identified the problems of underprivileged gifted, categorized them under Shakti's and suggested possible mentoring methods in the project form. TMNP believes that if an individual is placed in a project and provided with necessary mentoring will help to boost the six Shakti's. These projects provide broad and diverse experiences, which help underprivileged gifted explore their potential and express the same.

In the current article, we have discussed the TMNP developed projects such as TMNP-Shodh, TMNP-Vanhini, TMNP-Bharya, TMNP-Sudha, TMNP-Parikshit, TMNP-SanYuja, TMNP-Abhyasa, TMNP-Gatiman Gatisheel, TMNP-Vasu, TMNP-Samvardhan, TMNP-Sangopan, TMNP-Trigunatamak Jeevan Sankalpa, TMNP- Tulsi and TMNP-Bharati. TMNP wishes to contribute its experience to the scientific and academic community with its efforts toward underprivileged gifted mentoring.

Keywords: Mentoring, Underprivileged gifted, Nurturing

Introduction:

Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program (TMNP) has been operational to address the needs of the underprivileged gifted. Since 2002, TMNP has worked on underprivileged giftedness identification, assessments, nurturing, and nourishing.

Understanding the ground limitations, TMNP has developed and adopted a non-academic, culturally blended and ritualistically oriented nurturing program. *Sanatan* scriptures such as Vedic text and Puranic scripture teachings have been used as information sources, and thus, it brings indigeneity to the program.

The TMNP nurturing model is based on Panchakosha (Five Shelves) from Taittiriya Upanishad and Shada Shakti's (Six Energies) mentioned in the sixth Adhaya of Sri Mad Bhagavatam. Panchakosha

'Parashar'

'Sanyuja'

'Vinukta'

'Vama'

'Bharati'

(five Sheathe) is discussed in the Brahma Valli of Taittiriya Upanishad, part of Taittiriya Samhita of the Krishna Yajurveda.

TMNP has developed the program to nurture five sheaths. As per Vedic scriptures, the soul is covered with four bodies, i.e. *sthool sharira* (materialistic body), *shukshma sharira* (minute body), *Linga sharira* (inner body) and *Swarup sharira* (soul itself). Each of these bodies is with Panchakosha. The five sheaths are *Annamaya Kosha* (Physical sheath), *Pranamaya Kosha* (Energy sheets), *Manomaya Kosha* (Mental sheath), and *Vidyanmaya Kosha* (Intellect sheath), and the fifth is *Aanandmaya Kosha* (Bliss sheath).

TMNP defines the underprivileged based on the following three criteria.

1. *Deshatah*: (Spatial): remotely located, inaccessible to basic infrastructural facilities, deprived of nurturing environment and financial support.
2. *Kaltah*: (Temporal): belongs to an uneducated or low educated family, First-generation learners, lagging behind the current development trends.
3. *Gunatah*: (Quality wise): unaware of their intelligence, unassessed potential and capabilities, belong to the backward social community, make them difficult to enter the mainstream of development.

TMNP-Narayanvarm mentoring program focuses more on strengthening the energies. That makes underprivileged gifted capable of solving situations and problems. Scriptures have described this approach as *Ajnana Nivrutti* (removal of ignorance) and *Jnana Prapti* (gaining of Knowledge). Inputs of mentoring will be digested by an individual based on his abilities and capacities (*yatha mati yatha shakti*).

1. **Utsaha Shakti (Motivational Energy):**

Utsaha means Motivation. To perform any work, one should have the motivation and be willing to express. It has been observed that underprivileged gifted lack motivation. Undisciplined behaviour, lack of planning, and lack of motivation bring motivational energy down to underprivileged gifted. It results in low performance in work such as studies Etc. The unpredictable outcome of the work discourages the gifted from work. TMNP has been motivating students through projects TMNP Shodh, TMNP Sanvardhan, TMNP Dhara, and TMNP Shishyavrutti.

TMNP-Shodh (TMNP Identification): TMNP Shodh aims to establish a Giftedness Identification and orientation program to create giftedness awareness. TMNP Shodh brings out the potentiality of an individual. Students are screened through an internationally recognized Mensa IQ test in this project. Recognized by the IQ test and receiving international certificates motivate the underprivileged gifted. TMNP Shodh helps bring pride, boost self-esteem in the students and open new avenues.

TMNP-Samvardhan (TMNP Nurturing): Samvardhan means nurturing. TMNP-Samvardhan is a nurturing program based on Panchakosha philosophy. To make underprivileged gifted aware of their potential and create grassroots leaders for nation-building is the aim of TMNP Samvardhan. TMNP conducts twelve nurturing workshops which focus on individual strengths and weaknesses. TMNP-Samvardhan emphasizes more on Manomaya Kosha (i.e. Mental sheath) to help get self-motivated.

2. Iccha Shakti (Energy for Desire)

It is imperative that even if a person gets motivated, an individual should show the desire for the particular work. Two projects, TMNP Sangopan and TMNP Trigunatmak, encourage individuals to develop their desire in a particular field.

TMNP Sangopan (TMNP Nourishing): Sangopan implies Nourishing. In nourishing, TMNP tries to provide a healthy and nourishing environment to know and work on their qualities and weaknesses. Under this project, TMNP provides network support and periodical guidance. More than 35 WhatsApp groups are formed to bring team spirit.

TMNP Trigunatmaka (Life Goal Setting): To help gifted students choose their career and life goals, TMNP designed the Trigunatmak Jeevan Sankalpa Model. This model collects information from four major areas and builds a simple, logical, feasible, viable algorithm based on the socioeconomic setting of the gifted.

- A. Three predominant Gifted Characteristics
- B. Three predominant Personality Qualities
- C. Three predominant Behavioural Qualities
- D. Three predominant Interest Subjects

The life goal can then be defined by considering these four significant areas listed by the gifted child. The Interest subjects (Item D) expressed by the gifted child must be supported by the three areas (Items A, B, C). Life goal-setting projects help an individual to design a future path and thus, in turn, provide motivation

3. Jnana Shakti (knowledge energy):

Jnana refers to Knowledge. It is essential to acquire Knowledge to explore and exhibit giftedness. TMNP has developed projects such as TMNP Parikshit, TMNP Sudha, and TMNP Abhyasa to enhance the Knowledge about self-potential. These projects help an individual develop the skill set and Knowledge acquiring tools.

TMNP Parikshit (TMNP Assessment): TMNP Parikshit is the assessment department of TMNP to carry out gifted assessments for selected students and strengthen the gifted nurturing and nourishing program through standardized and non-standardized tests. This project helps the gifted to understand their status and area for improvement. It also involves preparing need-based tools for individualized counselling.

TMNP Sudha (TMNP Research): Considering the need to effectively use ancient Indian Knowledge to preserve eternal things and answer present-day questions relating to student-family-education, TMNP has started a research project called "TMNP Sudha". The main objectives are: to study Upanishads, Itihasa and Puranas in the context of human principles and ethics, to promote gifted education by studying the principles of ancient Indian psychology mentioned in the scriptures, to cultivate intelligence by studying ancient Indian stories (Mahabharata, Ramayana), incarnations of God, characters of deities, conduct through stories & puzzles.

TMNP Abhyasa (Study skills): To achieve better academic performance and confidence by understanding the academic subjects simply. The project provides simple study tools and techniques. The project created unique study orientated formats for subject and time management.

4. Mantra Shakti (energy of understanding & reiteration):

Reiteration helps to understand the content more deeply. TMNP has set up a separate project to make students recite problems that can be addressed. The project is named "Ashtavasuu".

TMNP - Ashta Vasu (TMNP Counselling): Under this project, a unique counselling model for identifying and solving gifted's problems based on Vedic principles has been created. It considers eight aspects of gifted children for their counselling. Moreover, here word Vasu is used as an abbreviation of 'Vivid Aptitude for self Upliftment'.

TMNP - Gatiman Gatisheel (TMNP Syllabus Acceleration): TMNP has also developed the concept of 'Gatiman Gatisheel' (गतिमान गतिशील); the word Gati (गति) signifies Speed. It is an accelerated learning program that aims at developing and promoting speedy or accelerated academic learning among underprivileged gifted children. The concept focuses on academic acceleration through the non-academic method. It ensures no gaps in learning, and their education becomes a continuous and steady process.

5. Kriya Shakti (Energy of Action):

Turing motivation, desire, understanding, and Knowledge in Action is essential. TMNP - Bharati is a vital project to mentor this shakti. Limited availability of resources and lack of appropriate planning led to Kriya Shakti's problems. To achieve kriya shakti, TMNP focuses on-field activities and projects.

TMNP - Bharati (TMNP Achievement): A unique project has been set up called TMNP - Bharati to encourage the holistic development of nurtured gifted girls and build their life goals. TMNP ensures to provide the financial and logistical help they need to fulfil their goals for the next eight years and create grassroots leaders in the society.

TMNP Dhara (TMNP Portal): It is a digital portal in the developing stage that will provide continuous online nurturing and nourishing activities. TMNP Dhara's significance is that it can reach out and offer nurturing to a large number of students. Registered underprivileged gifted students can earn a scholarship by completing nurturing tasks and allied activities. This project will attract and engage students to work more in challenging activities and attract donations to deserving students.

6. Prabhu Shakti (Energy of leading):

Prabhutva implies leadership. To have mastery in any work or subject reflects through leading the group. Low confidence and peer pressure can cause the lack of Prabhu shakti. To boost Prabhu shakti, TMNP has developed diverse projects such as TMNP Bharya, TMNP Sanyuja, TMNP Vahini,

TMNP Saptswar and TMNP Tulasi. These field projects are to explore and express their leadership skills.

TMNP Bharya (TMNP Economic Empowerment): TMNP - Bharya is a pilot project for married underprivileged gifted girls. Under this project, TMNP provides seed money to start a business of available natural resources at the local level. She can utilize her giftedness and offer economic sustainability to herself, her fellows, friends, family, and relatives through the project.

TMNP Sanyuja (TMNP Nation Building): In tribal and rural areas, women are forbidden to work; because of societal norms and conditions backed by a poor mentality with a lack of resources. Thus underprivileged women are financially dependent on the family. Moreover, the underprivileged gifted girl or women are unable to express giftedness.

TMNP - Sanyuja proposes to work with underprivileged gifted, nurtured girls by providing them with a platform to express their implicit potential. In her locality, a gifted nurtured girl will take "Sanskar Varga" [value addition program] through Sanyuja. Students from the first standard to the sixth will be a part of it; thus, gifted girls of TMNP will contribute to nation-building.

TMNP Vaahini (TMNP Satellite Centre): Vahini is an army of identified, nurtured, underprivileged Gifted children. The Vahini aims to set up small nurturing centres in different parts of the country, replicating TMNP's nurturing model. The project will reach out to underprivileged gifted children with TMNP's nurturing model in as many diverse geographical areas of the country as possible. Current centres under TMNP Vaahini are TMNP Parashar, TMNP Mahindra, and TMNP Narasimha. The upcoming centres are TMNP Nira, TMNP Godavari and TMNP Urja. TMNP Nurtured gifted girls are the satellite centre heads.

TMNP-Saptswar (TMNP - Confidence Building): TMNP-Saptaswara is a project that teaches the tribal, rural, underprivileged students the English language through a non-academic method and a unique syllabus created. The project aims to build confidence and help the gifted individual join the mainstream of development.

TMNP Tulasi (First Aid Counsellors): A emerging project of TMNP. Plant Tulasi has importance in Sanatan dharma as well as in Ayurveda. It is a medicinal plant used as first aid for many diseases. Under the TMNP - Tulasi, underprivileged gifted will be trained as first aid counsellors to work at

'Parashar'

'Sanyuja'

'Vinukta'

'Vama'

'Bharati'

the grassroots level. This team of TMNP Tulasi will act just like Plant Tulasi and be the first-aid solution for different mental health problems and create awareness about mental health and counselling in society. In this way, TMNP creates a platform for nurtured gifted to exhibit leadership skills by taking responsibility for their family and society.

Case Study

We can also go through the case studies to understand the challenges of mentoring. Here these case studies are divided into three levels

1. Individual-level:

A. Behavioural Problems: Vidya belongs to a well-educated family and comes from a small town near Pune. Apart from gifted characteristics and qualities, she has anger issues and stubbornness. Sometimes she cannot cope and is not able to manage to work in a team. TMNP Ashta Vasu helps her in adopting coping strategies. Now, Vidya is a part of TMNP - Bharati.

B. Unrealistic dream: Tejashri, Nita, and Ranjeet come from the interior part of the Pune district. All of them have two-three siblings. Parents' income is not even enough to feed their families. In the case of Tejashri, she is the elder sister, and she wants to be an MBBS doctor with a specialization. Nita dreams of clearing competitive exams and proceeding into administrative service. Ranjeet wants to go in military. In all these cases, child's dreams, their family background, and the financial and moral support from family do not match. To see an unrealistic dream leads to disappointment. Here mentoring helps them keep reality in check and decide on short term goals. TMNP - Bharati and TMNP - Vahini are the projects that take care of their realistic dreams. They will be provided Subject wise mentors, Network and Financial support to achieve well designed and defined goals.

2. Family and society level

A. Bad influence of friends: Raju, Deepak and Akshay come from tribal schools. They are extroverts and have leadership skills. The wrong friend circle and its influence have negatively impacted them, and they have been stuck in alcoholism. TMNP - Samvardhan and TMNP - Sangopan, and TMNP - Ashta Vasu helped them and succeeded in bringing them into the mainstream.

B. Marriage: Sarojini, Lata and Varsha are gifted tribal girls identified in 2002. Despite being intelligent and gifted, they do not have an option to get higher education as their parents feel that educated girls will not get married. So these girls have married at an early age. TMNP - Bharya and

TMNP - SanYuja projects helped explore their leadership quality after the marriage. It helps them to build self-confidence and self-esteem.

3. Education and career level

A. Unrelated Education: Pradeep, Chandana, and Nilesh are gifted tribal students responsible for earning money for the family. Having older parents compelled them to stay in the village. However, they have taken education that is not relevant and will not be applicable in the rural and tribal areas, e.g. Pradeep has done M.A. in History. Such kinds of education choices do not allow scope for career or work. TMNP has started Project TMNP - Bharya.

Conclusion: TMNP has faced challenges and developed suitable solutions over two decades. Nurturing programs based on the panchakosha philosophy and TMNP- Narayan Varm (TMNP Mentoring) mentoring always seek to develop the gifted child ethically and morally strong human beings.