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REDEFINING EDUCATION



# diversive

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Edition XXI

## Once Upon - When the Child was the Father of Man

by Dr. Shruti Shankar Gaur

The civilization has evolved into a continuum of complex systems that are difficult for a single human being to decode. Think of it: can one person have equal expertise in quantum physics, nanotechnology, metaphysics, astronomy, herbology, psychology, art, human anatomy, music, or machine learning in the same proportion?

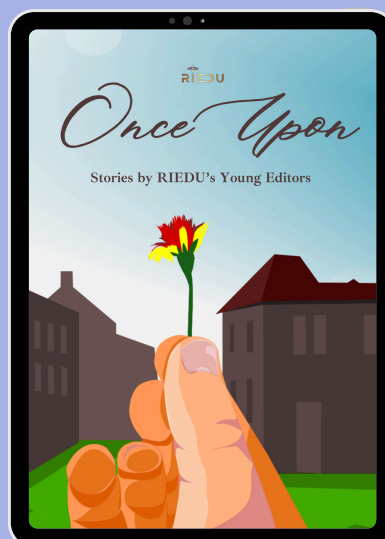
We are in the age of information, and when I say information, I mean all sorts of information. Aren't we drowning in it? The worst impacted by it are the children of today.

I have two contentions. First, think from the perspective of a child. Being surrounded by the virtual world through gadgets from day one, their curiosity is drawn to the shiny blue light coming from mobile phones, tablets, or smart TVs, which have immobilised us all including them. Their curiosity to discover the natural world has been taken over by curiosity about the virtual world. On top of that, the concrete jungles we live in don't give them much scope to become explorers.

Secondly, when a child is trying to grasp the world around them, we take charge in innumerable visible and invisible ways through systems we have created, like the formal education system, or civilized structures like social norms.

The main narrative of our culture here is: We know because we are older, who have survived the world, it's better to follow our lead. How many free spaces have we created within these systems where the perspectives of children can breathe and flourish? How often are we curious enough to view the world through a child's lens?

These questions have always bothered me. It pains my heart when I see children, from a tender age, carrying heavy school bags and being institutionalized.



amazon kindle

They study what they are told to study, not what they want to learn. I wonder, what other path could we follow? For innovation to happen, inherent curiosity must remain alive, and for curiosity to thrive, we need freedom to explore, question, and learn to embrace idleness – to remain bored without any gadgets around us.

Personally, I'm always curious to view the world from a child's perspective, to take a sneak peek into their world, and to understand what they perceive. Most of the time, it amazes me and fills me with hope.

At **RIEDU**, whatever we do, the core is to nurture curiosity, to provide a platform and freedom, and to let children venture out in their own way using reading/writing as a tool while we revel in their curiosity. This time was no different.

Recently, I was proofreading RIEDU's upcoming publication **OnceUpon**, written by Young Editors, children between 10 and 15 years old from across the globe, during the summer program—**Young Editors Program** in June 2024. OnceUpon features ten stories, all crafted by these brilliant young minds.

As I closely inspected each story, I couldn't ignore the pattern. These were stories of the future, and most of them depicted a dystopian future. Except for two stories, where parent-child relationships were explored, strong friendships were the foundation of every other story. Children loved magic—we've all loved it at some point, which is why Harry Potter has been such a massive hit among kids. The common themes were magic, aliens, chemical warfare, diseases and epidemics, mutants, the multiverse, and friendships.

It was clear: children loved weaving their own worlds. They are drawn to fantasy, in awe of magic, and curious about the future. However, two things were missing: a) nature and connection with animals, plants, or mother Earth. b) None of the stories were about the past: our rich culture and heritage that they are about to inherit. I pondered whether the stories reflected children's disconnect, be it with the natural world or real human world. I just hope that's not the case.

P.S. OnceUpon is out on Kindle. **Check it out!**

If you happen to know a young book reader, help him join **RIEDU's Young Editors Book Club**. It's virtual and it's free!



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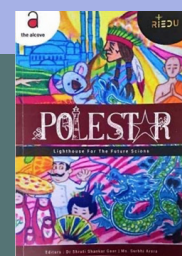
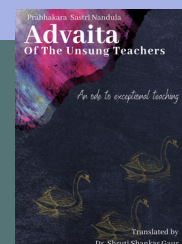
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## PUBLICATIONS





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By RIEDU



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Even if your child isn't an avid reader, encourage them to take the first step by immersing in the ambience of books along with fellow readers at RIEDU's Book Club.

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