

TED^xYouth

AKSHARA
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL PUNE

**THE
SPARK WITHIN**

2026

TABLE CONTENT

- Meet The Team
- About The Theme
- Welcome Message
- Speakers Insight



MEET THE TEAM



Mr. Jayesh Rathore

Director

An IIT alumnus and tech innovator turned edupreneur leading Akshara International School with a visionary approach rooted in innovation and dedicated service to education.



Dr. Mrudula Mahajan

Principal

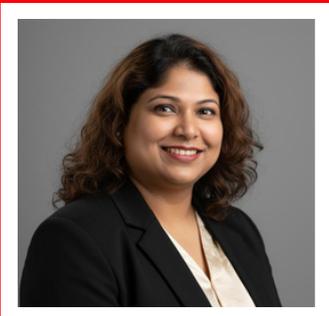
A seasoned educator with 30 years of leadership experience, MSCERT member, and national level sportsperson inspiring excellence through discipline, dedication, and vision.



Ms. Sowjanya Yepuri

Vice Principal

A passionate Chemistry educator whose transformative journey from dedicated classroom teacher to visionary academic leader reflects deep commitment to learning, leadership, and growth.



Ms. Akshata Bhole

CCA Coordinator

A multifaceted creative educator and accomplished theatre artist seamlessly integrating arts with academics through versatility, innovation, and a passionate vision for holistic development.



Ms. Jyoti Sharma

Akshara TED-Ed Club Incharge (Licensee Holder)

A Political Science educator with impactful communication skills and a deep belief in TED-style platforms that spark ideas, dialogue, and critical inquiry.



ABOUT **THE SPARK WITHIN**

Long before ideas are spoken or achievements are visible, something begins quietly within us. It is not always ambition or confidence. Often, it is awareness—the realisation that we can question, choose, and respond differently.

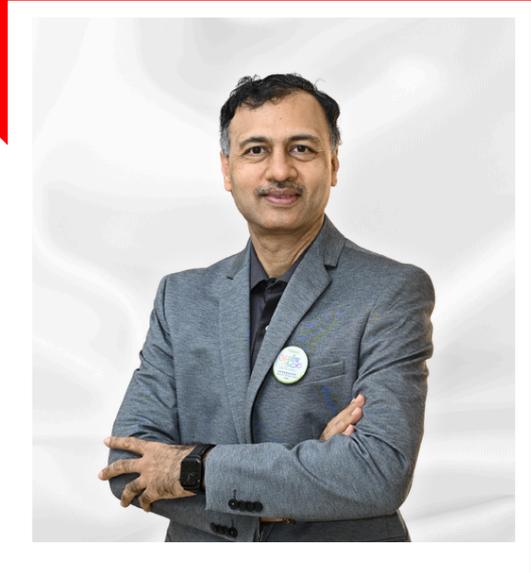
The Spark Within focuses on this inner beginning. It is about the personal moments that shape direction before results appear: choosing to challenge a norm, continuing despite self-doubt, or trusting an instinct that feels uncertain yet meaningful. These moments may seem small, but they influence how we grow and who we become.

For young people navigating expectations, labels, and constant comparison, this theme creates space to pause and reflect. Instead of asking, “What should I become?” it invites a more honest question: “What matters enough for me to act on?” The spark may appear as curiosity, discomfort, empathy, or even failure—but when recognised, it becomes a source of learning and strength.

This TEDx event brings together ideas grounded in real experiences rather than perfection. Speakers will share how inner awareness turns into action, intention into impact, and one thoughtful idea into lasting change.

The Spark Within reminds us that meaningful transformation does not begin with recognition or applause. It begins when we acknowledge the quiet power already within us—and choose to act on it.

WELCOME MESSAGE



Mr. Jayesh Rathore

Director

TED with its tagline 'Ideas change everything' has become a platform for sharing ideas beyond the areas of its acronym Technology, Entertainment and Design. My earliest recollection is listening to a TED talk by Ken Robinson, 'Do schools kill creativity' when we were setting up Akshara. It took us time to put ideas from the talk into action and starting a TED-Ed club in the school was a step to encourage curiosity amongst students through formal conversations. The maiden TEDx event is a reflection of our belief that education carries a responsibility beyond classrooms and credentials.

Through the theme "The Spark Within", this event highlights the inner drive that fuels curiosity, resilience, and thoughtful leadership. The speakers featured bring perspectives shaped by experience, achievements and reflection.

I welcome you to this TEDx event and may today ignite something lasting within you. Thank you for being part of this significant beginning. Let us celebrate ideas, honour minds and keep the spark within us alive.



ANAND MALI

Mountaineer
National Player for Sports climbing

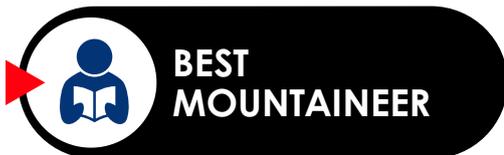
SPARK TO SUMMIT



Anand Mali is an accomplished mountaineer, climbing leader, and coach with over 25 years of experience.

A former National Player in Sports Climbing (2006) and winner of the Best Mountaineer of the Year award (2008), he has summited iconic peaks including Mt. Everest (2013), Mt. Kangchenjunga (2019), and Mt. Kilimanjaro (2018).

He has led over 24 major expeditions across India, Africa, and Europe, pioneered challenging rock climbs in the Sahyadris, and currently serves as a climbing coach at Vidya Valley School, Pune, inspiring the next generation of climbers.



CHHAVI AGRAWAL

Design Thinker, AI Educator, Building Digital Education & Social Change

THE JOURNEY WITHIN



Chhavi's journey blends technology, creativity, and purpose. With an engineering degree from DTU, dual MBAs from MDI Gurgaon and ESCP Paris, and experience at Goldman Sachs, Deloitte, and the World Bank, she followed the classic path of success—until life intervened.

After surviving two rare, life-threatening illnesses, she chose clarity over certainty. Today, Chhavi designs a life centered on creativity and social impact, inspiring others to trust their inner spark and build lives that feel truly alive.



**LISTEN BEFORE
LIFE FORCES YOU**



**AWARENESS
EMPOWERS**



**CHOOSE CLARITY
OVER SPEED**

ANAND MUNSHI

Gobally experienced motivational speaker,
Author & Executive Coach



DECODING MEANINGFUL LIFE

Mr. Anand Munshi is a globally experienced motivational speaker, author, and executive coach with nearly 25 years of work across five continents, eight sectors, and over 250 national and international clients. A mechanical engineer with an MBA in Computer Systems and a Master's in Information Technology from Melbourne, he has worked with leading organizations such as Accenture, Vodafone, and National Australia Bank, and has coached leaders from companies including Google, Microsoft, the World Bank, Disney, and TATA. He is a four-time TEDx speaker and recipient of multiple national and international awards.



**PATH WHICH
FOLLOWS HEART**



**INNER
CLARITY**



**NAVIGATING
PRESSURE**

AMEERA PATANKAR

Kathak Performer,
Choreographer, Educator

**PATIENCE
IS POWER**



Ameera Patankar is a dynamic Kathak dancer, choreographer, and educator trained under Guru Smt. Shama Bhate at Nadroop, Pune. She holds an M.A. in Kathak from Savitribai Phule Pune University, where she ranked first, and is a recipient of the National Scholarship from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. A Rangasetu Fellow (2022) and former TEDx speaker, Ameera has performed widely across India and internationally. Her work blends classical Kathak with contemporary themes, storytelling, and interdisciplinary collaboration, reflecting her belief in dance as a powerful tool for cultural dialogue and personal transformation.



**PATIENCE
EMPOWERS**



**FOCUS
TRANSFORMS**



**DISCIPLINE =
FREEDOM**

GURBANI SAROA

Alumni
Akshara International School

THE CHOSEN SPARK



Gurbani Sabbajot Saroa is a PPE sophomore at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru, a youth leader, and a published columnist. As a Millennium Fellow (2024), she researched the ecological footprint patterns across urban and rural India, with a focus on the interdependence of institutions, politics, and technology.

An accomplished concert pianist who has performed across Maharashtra and Delhi, she is also among the most decorated debaters on the Pune and Bengaluru circuits. Her work in political philosophy, rooted in liberal egalitarianism, explores systemic enhancement of human capabilities and sustained creativity



KEEP IT SIMPLE



CONNECT THE
DOTS



CREATIVITY IS
CHOSEN

SHREYAS BANSAL

Alumni

Akshara International School

MINDSET MAKES LEADERS



Shreyas Bansal is an aspiring Chartered Accountant with an entrepreneurial mindset, strong cognitive skills, and logical reasoning. He is pursuing B.Com (Hons.) from Atma Ram Sanatan Dharam College, University of Delhi, and cleared CA Intermediate Group I (ICAI) in September 2025.

A Pranic Psychotherapy graduate and Crystal Healer, trained at the Center for Pranic Healing, Pune (affiliated with the World Pranic Healing Foundation, Philippines), Shreyas actively teaches Mathematics and Economics to Classes 10 and 12, mentors students for competitive undergraduate admissions, and is the creator of 'Ram Baan', a Mathematics booklet for Class 10 students.



**MINDSET
MATTERS**



**SELF AWARENESS
EMPOWERS**



**LEADERS DON'T
QUIT**

JAHNAVI DEEP

Student
Akshara International School

THE SOCIAL MIRROR



**IDENTITY
QUESTIONS**



**AUTHENTICITY
MATTERS**



**SELF-WORTH
BEYOND SCREENS**

Jahnavi Deep, a student, speaker, and a teen in today's world, is also a published poet who writes about self-identity, validation, and perfectionism. Growing up in a culture where likes, views, and comments dictate self-worth, she questions the shrinking space between authenticity and performance.

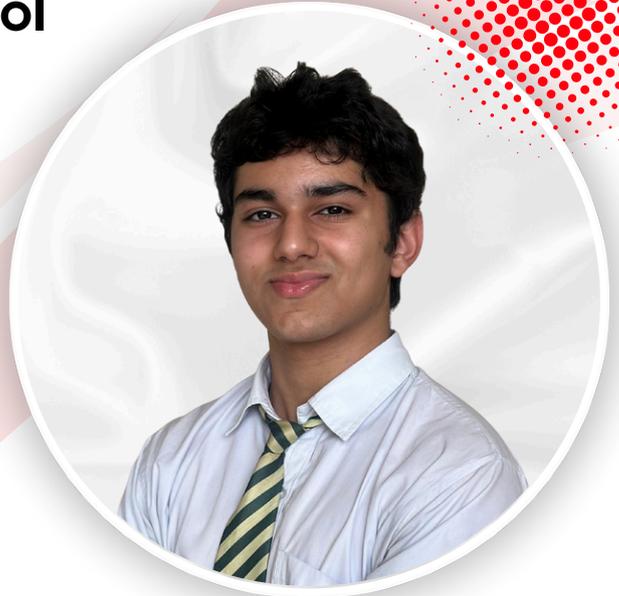
Rebelling against systems that kill individuality, she challenges societal norms and unrealistic standards, calling out the pressure placed on youth to be perfect through her writing and literature. Through her talk, she challenges her generation to unlearn validation culture and reclaim a self-worth that exists beyond screens, metrics, and filters.

AAYUSH KAK

Student

Akshara International School

ECHOES OF APPROVAL



Aayush Kak is a student speaker from Akshara International School who enjoys expressing himself through music, often playing the guitar and other instruments, and has been part of a national-level band competition. Beyond music, he values physical discipline, holding a black belt in karate and staying active through various sports.

Drawn naturally to public speaking, Aayush has taken on leadership roles since middle school, guided by curiosity, reflection, and a strong desire to grow. Through his TEDx talk, “echoes of approval,” he hopes to share personal insights on a crisis that affects millions, inviting audiences to listen, reflect, and grow.



**VALIDATION
CHALLENGED**



**PERFECTION
UNLEARNED**



**AUTHENTICITY
RECLAIMED**

MADHUJA BAPAT

Student
Akshara International School

HEART AS NORTH STAR



Madhuja is a young voice shaped by expression, courage, and curiosity. She finds herself in sharing ideas—through art that speaks without words and spoken expression that gives thought a strong presence. An amateur kickboxer, she values discipline, resilience, and stepping beyond comfort, while her love for reading nurtures imagination and perspective.

Having engaged in public speaking from a young age, Madhuja returns to the stage with confidence and renewed excitement, carrying a journey of growth, self-discovery, and the determination to make her voice meaningful and heard.



COURAGE RISES



**CREATIVITY
FLOWS**



PASSION LEADS

NAMIT KALELI

Student

Akshara International School

THE FIRST FLICKER



Namit Kaleli is a student speaker guided by a quiet yet powerful curiosity about the world. He finds meaning in films and books that provoke thought, and in debates that allow ideas to be questioned, refined, and understood more deeply. Beyond intellectual pursuits, he channels focus and discipline on the badminton court, where agility meets perseverance, and expresses creativity at the piano, where emotion finds form.

Together, these interests reflect a learner who values balance—between thought and action, logic and creativity—shaping a voice that is reflective, expressive, and constantly evolving beyond the limits of textbooks.



CURIOSITY FUELS



**BALANCE
GROUNDS**



**EXPRESSION
SPEAKS**



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