



MITRA Upakram: Maharashtra's Student Meditation Initiative

Mind In Training for Right Awareness Program — A collaborative initiative between the Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, and the Vipassana Research Institute, bringing the practice of Anapana meditation into the state's school system for students from the 5th standard onward.

[EXECUTIVE SUMMARY](#)

[EDUCATION POLICY](#)

[MAHARASHTRA](#)

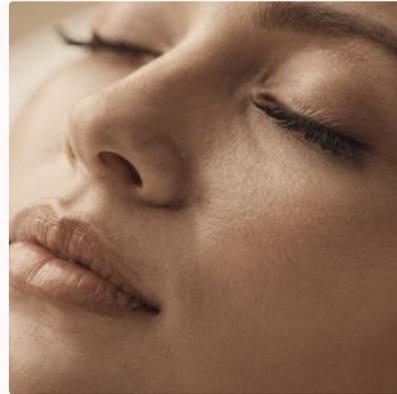
Overview of the MITRA Upakram Initiative

MITRA stands for *Mind In Training for Right Awareness*; **Upakram** translates to "Program" or "Activity." Together, they represent a systemic effort to integrate structured mental training into Maharashtra's formal education framework – reaching students of all backgrounds through a technique that is entirely non-sectarian.



Secularism

No rites, rituals, or religious affiliations. Anapana is accessible to every student regardless of faith, caste, or background – making it a truly inclusive practice for government schools across Maharashtra.



Naturalism

The technique centers on *Ana* (incoming breath) and *Apana* (outgoing breath) as they naturally occur – no forced breathing or visualization, just pure observation of what is already present.



Self-Observation

Students are trained to direct their attention to the entrance of the nostrils, observing the natural rhythm of breath. This cultivates present-moment awareness and strengthens the capacity for inner focus.

The Three-Step Methodology

MITRA Upakram follows a carefully structured progression, ensuring that meditation practice is grounded in ethical conduct before advancing to deeper states of mental discipline and compassion.



Step 1: Abstinance & Foundation

Students commit to abstaining from killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and intoxicants. This ethical grounding forms the essential foundation for taming an "unruly mind" and building genuine self-discipline.



Step 2: Anapana Practice

Attention is directed entirely toward the breathing process — experiencing the natural movement of breath as it enters and exits the nostrils. Students develop concentration, clarity, and moment-to-moment awareness.



Step 3: Metta Bhavna

The peace of mind and inner happiness cultivated through the technique are consciously shared with others. This final step fosters empathy, collective well-being, and a spirit of goodwill among students and the wider community.

Institutional Implementation & Teacher Involvement

The long-term success of MITRA Upakram depends as much on the educators as on the students. The initiative has embedded teacher participation at its core – ensuring that those who guide children through the practice have experienced it themselves.

Government Resolution

The Maharashtra Government has formally institutionalized a plan requiring teachers in all government schools to receive Vipassana training – embedding the initiative into the state's education policy.

Paid Leave for Training

Teachers are granted paid leave to attend full Vipassana courses. This removes financial and logistical barriers, signaling the government's commitment to genuine practitioner-led instruction.

Firsthand Experience as Pedagogy

By experiencing the benefits of Anapana personally, teachers are far better positioned to encourage and guide students – transforming instruction from theoretical to deeply experiential.

Scale of Impact

As of June 2013, the program had already benefited hundreds of thousands of individuals, with leadership calling for continued expansion across all districts of Maharashtra.



"Teachers who have walked the path themselves carry an authenticity that no curriculum can replace – they become living examples of the practice they teach."

Documented Benefits for Students

Daily Anapana practice equips children and adolescents with lasting internal tools to navigate the pressures of school life, adolescence, and beyond – building both psychological resilience and academic capability.

Psychological & Emotional Development



Emotional Regulation

Students learn to overcome fear, anger, and nervousness through daily breath observation and self-awareness.



Inner Strength

Builds self-confidence and the capacity to control thought processes, impulsive reactions, and personal conduct.



Anxiety Management

Provides a reliable mechanism to address the "fear of examination" and the general pressures of adolescence.

Cognitive & Academic Enhancement



Concentration

Significant improvement in focus and mental alertness, directly supporting classroom engagement and retention.



Memory & Decision-Making

Increases memory retention and the power to make clear, considered decisions under pressure.



Overall Performance

Leads to better outcomes in studies, sports, and extra-curricular activities – and increases capacity for sustained effort.

Technological Integration: The Anapana Mitra App

To extend the reach of MITRA Upakram beyond the classroom, the **Mitra Vipassana Academy** developed the **Anapana Mitra App** – a free digital companion available on both Android and iOS platforms, designed to support daily practice and ongoing training.



Free to download on Android and iOS. Built for both independent practice and structured training – accessible wherever students and teachers are.

1 Local Storage for Offline Use

To reduce dependency on consistent internet connectivity – a real concern in rural Maharashtra – the app stores key data locally on the device until a connection is available.

2 Practice Logging

The app maintains session logs – including device details, app version, and the type and duration of each practice – to update user profiles and assist with troubleshooting.

3 Data Security & Privacy

Personal information is protected using commercially acceptable security standards and is collected solely to provide and improve the service. Data is not shared with third parties beyond the scope of the stated privacy policy.

📌 The Anapana Mitra App represents a meaningful step toward scalable, technology-supported mindfulness education – extending the program's reach into homes, study halls, and communities across Maharashtra.