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Mission and Inspiration

Our mission is to make available quality education at an affordable cost for the children of deprived rural communities. As a first step we have undertaken to build a good rural school in Varanasi.

The project has been conceived by a group of senior professors of the Banaras Hindu University. Some students associated with us had started an informal school for children in a village nearby. The 'school' was located in a tin-shed with mud floor, lent by one of the villagers. Within two years it attracted some forty children. Nearly half of them, mainly girls, were not attending any other school. This was because their parents did not consider education necessary for them, or were too poor to afford it. Others were enrolled in a government primary school where hardly any teaching took place. But all these deprived children were keen to have a decent education. They had realised that it was the key to a better future. This first-hand encounter with the harsh social reality prompted us to undertake the present project.

Vision of quality education

- (I) A good education should equip children with the knowledge, skills and values needed to become productive members of the society and to succeed in the modern socio-economic set-up.
- (ii) Simultaneously it should broaden and refine the social and moral temper of the students so that they can grow up as caring and responsible citizens of a modern democratic nation.
- (iii) A rural school should also serve as a catalyst for promoting the socio-economic and cultural growth of the community in which it is located.

Plan for building the school

The Trust was formed to raise the resources needed for building the school. It is registered under section 12A of the Income Tax act and the donations to it are eligible for tax exemption under section 80G.

The estimated cost of building the school with adequate facilities is Rs. 5 crore. The project will be executed in two phases. In the first phase a junior school (up to class VIII) will be built. In the second phase it will be extended up to the higher secondary level (up to class XII) Our calculation shows that if the initial capital cost in building and equipping the school is met from public support then the running cost can be met even with a modest fee structure.

Raising resources and building the school with good facilities is the 'hardware' aspect of the project.

Equally important is the 'software' aspect of providing good education. The key to it is the

competence and the human qualities of the teachers. Such teachers are hard to get, especially for a remote rural school. Therefore good teachers will have to be created out of those who are locally available. Doing that will require in-depth training programmes to enhance the pedagogical skills, communicational skills and other human qualities of the selected teachers. Developing such programmes and conducting them effectively will be a challenging part of the project.

The People

Six of the Trustees promoting the project are senior professors of BHU. The other five are highly respectable persons from other walks of life. Their names and designations are given at the end. Our motivation in taking up the project is to extend a helping hand to those who are less fortunate than us. Having succeeded in life we feel it is our moral responsibility to give something back to the society which gave us so much. And the best way we can do so is by creating a model for good education for deprived rural communities.

Milestones & the road ahead

Shortly after formation of the Trust we launched a fund collection drive. It targeted mainly our family, colleagues, friends and former students. That is, those who know us and trust us. Thanks to their generous support we have been able to raise sufficient funds to acquire a piece of land for the school, measuring 0.261 hectare (2610 Sq. metres = 28084 Sq. feet). It is located in the village Kosara, in the Mirza Murad area of Varanasi, about 25 Km. to the west of the city. The land is sufficient for the first phase of the project.

We now need to raise Rs. 2 crore for building the junior school and another Rs. 2.5 crore to extend it up to the higher secondary level. We realise that it may not be easy to reach this target through personal donations only from those who know us. Therefore, we now seek institutional support, especially from the corporate sector. With the rising economic growth, a growing number of companies are now conscious of their corporate social responsibility to contribute a part of their profits for promoting larger social causes, beyond their business interests or employee welfare programmes. Similar sentiments are shared by many successful professionals and business persons. We appeal to all such persons and companies to join us as partners in this project of providing quality education to the children from the deprived communities. Your contribution will go a long way in changing their lives, and in building a more equitable and caring society. It is well said that 'education is an investment in the future'. On our part we can assure that the support you provide will be well utilised in an efficient and effective manner.