

Excellence with a difference

Community School and Socio-Political Perspectives

Community schools were established with the support of the local community. The donated land and the additional financial support from the local community comprised the main source of income for the school. Only a limited amount of grant provided by the Government complemented this funding source. Hence, a greater need to support the community schools was realised. In the last few decades, the private sector schools have expanded from capital city, proliferating into other major cities and even reaching to the remote villages. The Class 10th and Class 12th Board results, each year, shows that these private sector schools dominate in securing not only the highest pass percentage, but also the highest number of students passing with Distinction and First Division results. In contrast, the Government schools show that their students mostly obtain second and third division grades and these schools represent the highest failing rates in Board examinations. This is because the students are deprived of quality education. There is a growing disparity in the quality of education between the government community and the private schools. This has disadvantaged government community school students further in their higher education and employment, given their poor results. Students attending the government community schools are predominantly from poor families who could not financially afford to enrol their children for further education. Nor could the students passing from the government community schools successfully compete in entrance tests for higher studies in a reputed institution or job entrance tests when required. This leads to an inequality amongst the passouts from government community schools private schools.

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Student receiving scholarship

regard, the Government has a primary role to play by initiating the improvement in education, as they control the community schools. Further, as educated citizens of the country, it is also our responsibility to contribute to the wellbeing and worth of the society. This will set an example for the coming generations to lead the future of our great country by rendering their responsibilities towards the society and making our country more prosperous.

Association and Contribution to My Community School

I had completed my primary education from a community school in Sonamai Village Development Committee of Mahottari District in Nepal. This school was established in 1960 as a primary school (up to class 5) with the land donated by the 16 community members. I am deeply concerned about the current disparity in the quality of education in our country. I contributed Nepalese ₹36,00,000 to my community school. This contribution shall be used for the development of the school infrastructure and educational development activities. The construction of additional toilets for girls in the school improved the basic hygiene facilities for the girls else there was only one toilet for 400 girl students.

After I associated myself with this school, three years ago, I encouraged the teachers and the Management Committee members to generate a renewed sense of enthusiasm that would bring about a positive atmosphere in the school. For this, I was regularly in touch with the teachers to inspire

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them and also with the Management Committee members. Consequently, this school was awarded the best community school in Mahottari district on the Education Day celebrations held in 2016. As good as 21 products of this school scored more than 80 per cent marks, which was the highest number in community schools of Mahottari District.

I completed my secondary education in the Shree Saraswati Secondary School, Janakpur Dham, Nepal. This school was established by the local community members in 1947. A large number of doctors, engineers, officers, chartered accountants, politicians were the products of this school including the first President of the Republic of Nepal. However, the infrastructure of the school is currently in a very poor condition and the buildings require major renovations. Now, the school has taken the initiative to launch a big renovation project that includes refurbishing old buildings and constructing modern facilities. The school is expecting to get contributions from various donors including the ex-students of this school. I have contributed Nepalese ₹2,16,000 for the construction of toilet in this school.

Scholarships

After serving United Nations I was inspired to establish a non-governmental organisation *Nawal-Dukhani Yadav Foundation* (NDYF)



Construction of additional toilet for girls

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to institutionalise and expand the scholarship programme.

In order to boost the morale of students and encourage a competitive environment in the community I am providing scholarship to 15 students (i.e.; three highest scorers from each class of 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th examination) of the community school, where I had completed my primary education. This has been on an annual basis for the last three years. Similarly, I have also started providing scholarship to 9 students of another community school situated at Banchauri village of Mahottari district, which is a Middle Level school. Given that the students in the community schools are mainly from poor families, such scholarships would provide inspiration and financial support to the meritorious students to study hard and create a competitive environment among students in community schools.

Professionals could Change the Fate of Community Schools

We all are born with a need of education. The access to quality education creates a significant difference in our lives as we grow up. If good education would be limited to the children from wealthier backgrounds only and quality of education is not taken care at community school levels, it will make the poor students even poorer.

Today, many professionals are a product of the community schools. You could only imagine how would it have been if there were no community schools in the villages. Yes, many of us would not have even got the opportunity to start our primary education, let alone higher studies. In towns, if there were no higher education colleges, many of us might not have gone beyond the primary education. In view of this, many schools and colleges were built by our community leaders and we were fortunate to get benefitted from those institutions, eventually becoming professionals and achieving success in our

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lives. This enabled us to afford quality education for our children in private sector schools. Therefore, now it is our obligation to give back to the society by providing support to the community schools, which will help in changing the fortune of many poor students.

Conclusion

In the above context, the time has come for a change of attitude towards the funding of education because the Government being a major financier of the educational sector is finding it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to cope with the inadequate funding. I hope ICAI members will come forward in supporting community schools where they had studied or choose any community school of their preference. Further, for ICAI as an educational institution, it would be appropriate to initiate new schemes to provide scholarships, at least, to the students of unprivileged group who wants to take up the accounting profession as their career. In this connection, frequent dialogues with ICAI members

is required, convincing them to sign the MoU with the Institute for providing support to the students of unprivileged group in form of scholarships, tuition facilities, internships, etc. Such support will not only benefit the community schools and the society at large, but also will contribute to achieve the United Nations goal of inclusive and equitable quality education for all. The success in quality education will further support in achieving other SDGs (e.g. poverty, good health, gender equality, sanitation peace).

Access to quality education is the need of the hour. A large portion of India's annual budget goes for the education in community schools. However, still the schools are poor in infrastructure and there is still lack of access to modern educational tools, lab and libraries. Most of us have been directly and indirectly benefited from the community school. It is heart-breaking to see that the quality and infrastructure of community schools is deteriorating. It is our moral responsibility to support the community schools. ■

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— Editor