

Access to quality education is the right of one and all. However in India it is a privilege available to only the urban students. Due to this a vast population of the country is not able to benefit from or contribute towards the current economic growth of the country. Only if quality education reaches the most rural areas of the country, will India be able to emerge as a true economic superpower. Looking at the gravity of the problems currently prevailing in the Indian education system, efforts made by the government alone will not be sufficient. Committed individuals and corporate will have to pinch in with their time, money and people by way of Public Private Partnership (PPP) and / or CSR projects, to help India reach its maximum human potential

Maa Foundation is an NGO working in the Valsad district of Gujarat. It is completely self-funded by a corporate group which aims to bring about reforms in the field of education, by working at grass root level, hand in hand with the government. The organization operates like a company with complete zeal and dedication. It maintains highest level of efficiency and accountability in planning, executing and monitoring its projects. India is a large country consisting of 28 states, 7 Union territories and 626 districts. In order that the benefit of its efforts reach each and every district of the country, Maa Foundation is building projects/models that are scalable, sustainable, and replicable so that other corporate/ individuals can replicate them in areas of their interest.

Maa Foundation is currently working with the entire education community i.e. the students, teachers, principals, parents and the government through its below mentioned projects. Through its efforts Maa Foundation is trying to enlighten/ improve the lives of 250,000 children and 6500 teachers of the 1200 odd schools that it is currently working with in 550 villages of Valsad district.

Vision:- To make each and every school of Valsad district a role model in the field of education.

Mission:- To create models that are scalable, sustainable and replicable so as to bridge the gap between urban and rural education.

Projects

Ken:

Ken means range of knowledge. Project Ken aims at making quality education available to the most rural areas of Valsad district and in spreading awareness about the importance of education across villages.

Maa Foundation is bringing about this educational reform in Valsad district with the help of local talent. The educated, unemployed rural youth of the district have been selected, empowered and trained by Maa Foundation for this purpose. Intensive coaching in everything from English language and IT to personality development, management skills and soft skills helps transform these young villagers into para teachers. They are then deployed as Education Officers in the rural schools of Valsad district. They are provided refresher training every week and during vacations, at Maa Foundation's regional offices. These para teachers act as a catalyst in improving the quality of education imparted in the schools and try to transform each school into a role model.

The following tasks are performed by the Education Officers in each school:-

- Minimum level education to weak students using the 'Learning with fun' method.
- English Language knowledge – spoken and written.
- Basic computer knowledge.
- Teacher's training to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process.
- Vision enhancement of students, parents and the entire educational community.
- Conducting Annual day in school
- Science, math & sports kit implementation
- Aptitude testing & career guidance for secondary students
- Personality development camps

Status as of July 2010: 10 program officers and 300 education officers have been trained and deployed by Maa Foundation in 600 schools of Valsad district.

Vidhya:

Project Vidhya is a ray of hope for intelligent students who belong to financially weak backgrounds. It is a scholarship program that provides financial assistance to undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students of Valsad, Amreli and Bhavnagar districts.

The scholarship amount each deserving student is eligible for is determined after a personal interview. During the interview, the student's potential and their financial background are assessed, their credentials are verified and their plans for the future are discussed. To help these young scholars continue to excel and give them focus, academic targets are mutually agreed upon and set. Efforts are made to ensure that only deserving students continue to receive the scholarship.

The project greatly benefits financially weak parents and students are rest assured that their hard work and academic dreams are backed up financially by the MAA Foundation.

Status as of July 2010: As of April 2010, Project Vidhya has provided scholarships to 5556 students. Undergraduates: 2781. Graduates: 2120. Post-graduates: 655.

Udaan

Growth and prosperity are possible only through education. However, when children come from financially weak backgrounds, the importance of education isn't always felt. Project Udaan provides first generation learners with quality education that can transform their lives and the lives of generations to come.

The children are empowered with knowledge that helps them drive home the message of 'Prosperity through education'. They receive financial aid, admissions to boarding schools and professional courses, soft skill training to shape their personality, and exposure to career awareness programs. Their academic and personality growth are monitored right through so that they are able to emerge as a part of tomorrow's mainstream society.

Status as of July 2010: Project Udaan has adopted and changed the lives of 800 first-generation learners.

Saath

Project Saath aims at creating a 'Role Model School' by improving its infrastructure, quality of education and by using creative methods in the teaching-learning process.

The project has adopted a school and revamped its environment with the use of latest technology. Now students from pre-primary to higher secondary classes benefit from the educational software being used to teach them. Academically weak students no longer fall behind the class. They receive special attention at remedial classes conducted for them after regular school hours. There are quiz contests, sports, craft activities, infotainment, educational tours and career guidance programs to expose students to a range of experiences. This enhances their vision, equips them with essential soft skills and helps them in choosing an appropriate career path for themselves.

An education retail counter set at the school premises helps instill in the students invaluable moral values like honesty and self-restraint. In addition, opportunities are created for them to participate in various community projects so that they can give back to society everything they've got from school.

Status as of July 2010: A school consisting of 2400 underprivileged children has been adopted by project Saath.

Samarthan

It isn't enough that knowledge is accessible. It should be available easily and freely.

Samarthan is an educational portal with information on every area of education. It is a single window that provides information absolutely free of cost to students, teachers, parents and the entire education community.

The educational portal was launched by Maa Foundation on January 15, 2008.

Gnyan

There isn't a profession more honorable than teaching. Teachers are the backbone of the entire education system. However, very little is currently being done to motivate the teachers, and give them their due recognition and compensation. Project Gnyan is designed to motivate and honour the teachers through felicitation programs and to improve their teaching skills and upgrade their knowledge by exposing them to various training programs.

It also circulates newspapers among students to instill in them the valuable habit of reading.

Status as of July 2010: 800 school teachers have been provided professional training at Maa Foundation. 241 teachers across 65 Valsad schools have been felicitated by MAA Foundation.

Weekly 35000 copies of "The Times of India" student's edition is being distributed to 26000 students.

Parvarish

In the rural areas of India, there is very less awareness about different types of educational and vocational courses available to the students. Moreover they are not aware of their own aptitude; hence they are not able to make informed career decisions. Parvarish is a program that provides career guidance to the secondary students through career fairs and aptitude tests. The testing is conducted using Personal Response System (PRS), an indigenous technology which can cater to the masses. This helps the children select a career based on their aptitudes and area of interest. Parvarish also organizes personality development camps in order to groom children and equip them with essential social skills.

Status as of July 2010: 25,500 students have been covered under the career guidance program using the Personal Response System.

1000 students have participated in personality development camps.

150 students have been on educational and industrial tours.

Vikas

Today most of the graduates are not found to be directly employable as they lack essential soft skills and English and IT knowledge. Project Vikas aims at empowering the rural graduates with essential skills and quality knowledge and provide them proper career guidance, which is presently available only to their urban counterparts, so as to help them pursue professional courses and/ or increase their chances of employability.

Vocational training course is being conducted on the college premises.

Status as of July 2010: 581 rural graduates have been groomed by project Vikas. 61 final year students are presently pursuing professional courses like MBA, MSW and BEd.

81 students have undertaken computer hardware and software training provided by Maa Foundation.

Community Projects

Apart from the above projects, Maa Foundation is involved in various other community projects for the welfare of the society.

- Maa Foundation distributes school bag, slate, pen, pencil, rubber etc. to the 1st standard students of all the government schools of Valsad district. Last year it had distributed such 26000 kits to the 1st standard students.
- Maa Foundation has made Traffic signals in Vapi in order to keep the traffic under control.
- In order to create awareness about education & its importance, Maa Foundation has built various circles in Vapi.
- Our housekeeping project includes setting up of dustbins in various remote places as well as hire contract labor to in order to keep the city clean.

