



Anthony's Charity

ACB News

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« Educating the children for a better world »

Ankita Singh joined Saint-Anthony School in the month of June 2004, in class Nursery. She comes from the village of Asmoli. Having a School near to her village certainly brings a big change in her life !



News from the School

New Admissions

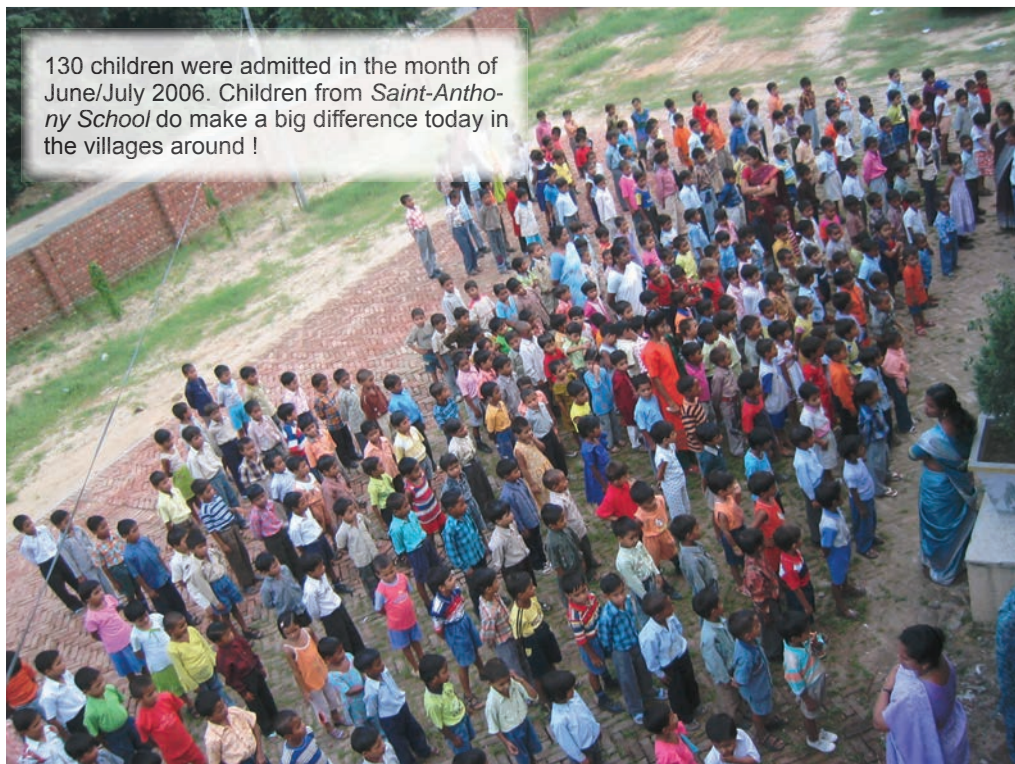
The third academic year of *Saint-Anthony School* started with 430 children, 30 children more than planned and we have opened the 3rd primary class for those children who were in 2nd primary. The demand for admission this year was much more than the last two years. The only way we found to admit some more children was to increase

the number of children in each class, from 45 to 50. Even then we had to refuse many who came to us. Though we are happy to see the awareness taking place in the villages around to educate the children, it is really hard to refuse the admission to some children who come to us.

New transformer installed

In the last newsletter we wrote about the transformer (required to connect to the public electricity network) to be installed in our school compound. As

130 children were admitted in the month of June/July 2006. Children from *Saint-Anthony School* do make a big difference today in the villages around !



you can see on the picture, now it is done !

The chief minister of *Uttar Pradesh* ordered to provide 16 hours electricity

per day for the villagers starting from the first of September. Of course we don't doubt his hidden intention... it is to win the election in the month of march 2007 !

New Bus

With the newly admitted children extended transportation facilities became unavoidable. We had to buy a new bus. At present our two buses take two trips each in the morning to get all the children.



From the leprosy colony

Vikram & family want to thank you !

The story starts in 1972... *Panchengora* is a small village of *Shingwan* district of *Jharkhand*, in the State of *Bihar*. The people in the villages though under poverty, lived united under the Head of the village. Little *Vikram* had a normal childhood like any other boys in the villages. When he reached the age of 12, some villagers noticed that he had white patches all over his body, so he was taken to *Nirmal* Hospital where it was diagnosed that he was affected by leprosy. It was a horrifying news ! The news immediately spread in the whole village. *Vikram* stayed for two years in the hospital for treatment and came back to his village after being cured. But, not only the villagers but also his own family, scared to keep him close to them, started avoiding his presence.

His parents, brothers and sisters did not touch him and said to him to stay near the cattle shed. He was given food in broken utensils. He spent only 5 days in this way, the villagers gathered under the village leader, took rapidly the decision to excommunicate him from the village. The little boy

had no other option except to go back to the doctor who treated him in the hospital. The doctor was good enough to keep him in the rehabilitation centre for some years. When *Vikram* became adult, the doctor arranged a marriage for him with a cured leprosy patient like him, called *Basanti*. After the marriage they both came to a leprosy colony in *Delhi* and settled down. *Basanti* gave birth to a girl in the year 1997 and they named her *Nirmala* (remembering the hospital where they were taking care of). Their dream is to bring up their daughter well so that she doesn't go through the same fate as they themselves. *Vikram* has no permanent job, he goes out every day in search of some labour, but the income from this is not enough for the education of *Nirmala*. He approached *Œuvres des pains* for help. We decided to sponsor



«Nirmala brings back to us all the joy we have lost in our lives and she replaces all our lost families and friends. We thank Œuvres des pains for helping our dreams come true !» Vikram & Basanti.

Nirmala and she goes now to a good school. Today he is happy and grateful for the support we give to them. However, the thought of his family rejecting him and the ill-treatment he received from them continues to haunt him.

News from the villages

Mahila mandals (women's group)

In each of the 5 villages, groups are formed to empower the women socially and economically. The social workers regularly conduct meetings for them and have started «Self Help Groups» (micro-credit) which will help them to have some money for the basic needs in their families.

Collaborating with the government

At present we are working to get the government's grants available for the villagers, like widow pension, handicap pension, loans for the farmers, etc.

Though these kind of programs exist under the government scheme, most of the people are not aware of it. Even if they are aware of it, they cannot get it done without the help of somebody who can approach the government's officials and do the official paper work because they are illiterate. Our workers do all the official work for them to get it done. It is a long process, and we wait to see the result of it.

Tailoring classes

We started this activity for the young girls in the villages. One room is hired in the village and a teacher is employed to teach them. Since the parents don't want to send their young girls out of their vil-

lage, they are happy to have it done in their own village.

Besides these, there are many other works being done in the villages like sending the children in the local schools, motivating the local teachers to improve the quality of education, etc. Villagers are happy with the programs we have started and we hope to reach out many more of them.

Women's Festival celebrated

Teej is a unique festival for women, celebrated in parts in the State of *Uttar pradesh*. The Spirit of *Teej* symbolises «ideal marriage» highlighting the legend of Goddess *Parvati* uniting with Lord *Shiva* after a penance of over hundred years. It is believed that invocation of *Parvati*'s blessings lead to marital bliss.

During *Teej*, women undergo fasts, sing folk songs and dance



in the name of Goddess *Parvati*. It is a belief that unmarried women fasting will luckily find a suitable husband. Fast-ing married women will also find their husband more faithful and bonds of love strengthened. But in areas like *Dugawar* where women are not free to get out of their homes, they never get a chance to play and celebrate a festival freely. This year *Annie* and *Jena*, the social workers of *Œuvres des pains*, contacted the village leaders in advance to inform them of their plan to celebrate the feast for women in the villages. They organized the women in different places and celebrated the feast with them. It was an occasion to let them freely dance, sing and enjoy. There was a festive mood in each of these villages. All the teachers of the school too joined many of these groups. The village leader of *Dugawar* (a woman) came to the school compound with other women to celebrate this feast. It was a pleasant day for the women in the villages.

«It is for the first time that I got out of my kitchen and gathered in a group. It is a great experience, we all had a lot of fun and entertainment ! I look forward to having more opportunities to come together in the group» Babita, a villager.

