

While taking a decision to provide quality education to children who have no access to schooling from the remote area, many people known to us in India warned us that it is almost an impossible task to establish something good in a place like that. We knew the risk involved, yet we had to take it up as a challenge and as we all know, we cannot accomplish something good without paying its price. As we climb up the ladder, we do see how difficult it is to bring 'quality education' in an area very backward. The value system, the culture, and the attitude of the people and the absence of educated staff from the locality, all these stand as stumbling blocks. The growing children already started to feel the contradiction from the school atmosphere and their villages. There is a big struggle for them to balance their life. We do our best to accomplish the most as we travel along with them !

600 children in Saint Anthony School : growing responsibilities and the increasing challenges !

Parents from *Saint Anthony School* often ask me, how can they, who do not know to read and write help their children with their studies at home ? How will they cope with the higher classes ? It is true, many parents are worried when their children are not performing well. We have to convince them that having no help from home is difficult, but it is possible. We have many children who come from families with very difficult situations, yet they do very well. Here is the story of *Preeti*, she is an example of a hard working child who wants to grow and make her family grow.

A blooming girl !

To convince *Preeti* to join *Saint Anthony School* 4 years ago was not an easy task as she thought her life was to take care of her siblings at home. *Preeti's* mother passed away when she was 7, while giving birth to her 5th child. Being the oldest, the death of her mother changed her life completely, from that day she became the person responsible for her younger ones. Her father at that time was working for the building construction of *Saint Anthony School*. We knew his family and that *Preeti* has been taking care of her family instead of

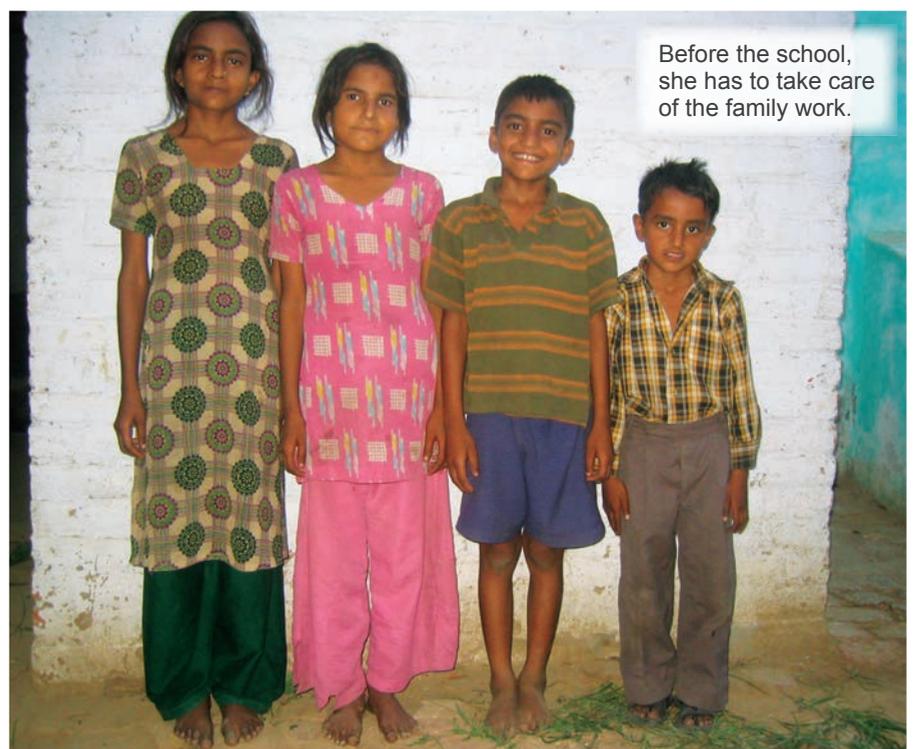
going to school. When we insisted, he sent her to our school, but he had to make other arrangements to take care of his younger children-the solution he found was to get marry again.

He found a women who had left her husband, had a child of 3 years and was already pregnant with another baby. The arrival of this step mother and her child in the family brought a big change again, instead of bringing a relief to *Preeti* and her younger ones, she became a source of struggle for them specially as she got her new born baby soon. The struggles of *Preeti* became even more because she was treating her badly. The family started to break up and after a year, this women left the house.

While seeing the good performance of *Preeti* in the school, her father sent all his other children to our school too. *Preeti* wakes up early in the morning, finishes all her house work and rushes



Preeti is happy in Saint Anthony School !



Before the school, she has to take care of the family work.

to school. Back from the school, she has to take care of their studies. She is happy to work hard and bring up her family. The cleverness of this little girl in the class is also amazing, the girl who stood at the entrance of the school, hesitating to get inside few years ago became very smart in the school, she is performing very well in all her studies. She has a great potential in her and she works hard to bring it to the maximum.

There are many children in our school who have more or less the same background as *Preeti*. The school today, with 600 students, is a place where there is a great potential for the better future not only for these children and their families but also for the whole community. But the challenge is to continue to have committed and tireless staff who will help them to open up. Even at this early stage, we constantly face the problem of retaining good staff. The backwardness of this place doesn't attract the well qualified persons who could easily get a job in the cities.

Having no good institutions in the locality could not produce quality people, who have values and who are capable of meeting the demands of our children. We still have a long way ahead to reach our vision of bringing our children to a fuller human being !

Initiatives from the people !

Though we have provided so far transportation facilities for the children from the near by villages, it becomes expensive to continue to buy buses. We have been trying to conscientize villag-



The children from the *Har-sangput* village use now the «Gugad» to come to school.



ers, so that they find a solution to this problem. At last, Mr. *Lakhan* from *Harsangpur* village, who is a parent of one of our children came up with his own initiatives, he bought a motor and built up its body and now he transports children with this «Gugad». The total cost of this vehicle : 1000 € (he took a loan for this). He approached families from his village, assured them safety and convinced them to send their children with him. He brings now all the children from *Harsangpur* (8 km from the school). He stays in the school till the school hour finishes and takes back the children. He gets a good earning as he transports 40 children and the expense is very little.

We are looking for people like Mr. *Lakhan* to come forward. However, our workers are of the opinion that it was possible for him to do it because he is from a *Yadav* caste and most of our children in that village are of the same caste. If the person taking the initiative was a from lower caste the people from a higher caste would not send their children. Any way, we hope this initiative will be followed by others !



We received donations of some XO laptops (see previous newsletter)... During the vacations, in the month of June, children from the nearby villages come to learn to use the computers. They thank all donors for the opportunity given to them !

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