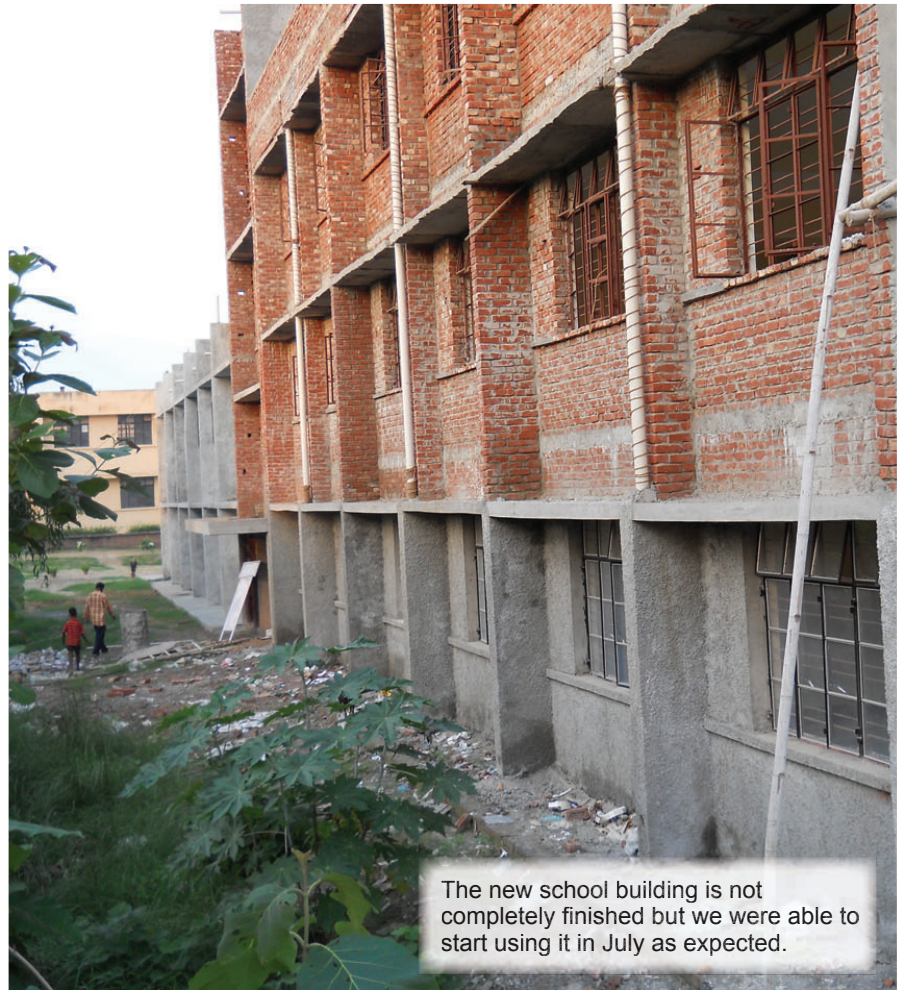


Seven years ago, when ODP went looking for one of the most backward villages in the rural India to start its project, we reached Asmoli Development Block and people from the development block told us that there is a place close to Dugawar, where people are scared to go when the sun is set. There were mud dunes in this area and it gave a hiding place to the thieves who attack people passing by the road. Villages around this area are socially and economically backward (Asmoli block is already a very backward area). We visited the place, met the village leaders and elders of the village and bought that piece of land to start our first project. Also this piece of land, where a teen age girl was raped and killed, seemed to be fit to start our development work, to empower girls and women through education.

Seven years don't seem to be a long period of time for us, but when we move in and around the area of Asmoli, we see big changes taking place in this region. Our presence in there has began to introduce changes in a very positive way. Last year, a doctor from the city has started a medical clinic, 4 kilometers away from our school. There is a private Degree College in Hindi Medium(local language), for the children passing out from the government schools, 3 kilometers from our school. To our surprise, even the Sugar Mill which is situated 3 km away from St. Anthony School started a primary school.

Though all these institutions are charging people a good amount as fees, it gives an opportunity to the people who can afford to send their children or seek medical facility, which was available only in the cities and often unreachable for the villagers. All these are a good start if they survive and produce good results. We know well that a lot of motivation, expertise and money are inevitable to make a project successful specially in this area as we don't find competent people to run the Institutions locally.



The new school building is not completely finished but we were able to start using it in July as expected.



## The New School Building:

You have been kept informed about the on going construction of the secondary school building of Saint-Anthony School. We are happy to let you know that classes from primary 4,5, 6 and 7 have started in this new building from the 1st of July 2010. Library, computer lab and science labs are set up as per the requirements of the Educational Board. We are really happy with this new building. It is well built, hopefully generations will pass through this building and will build up their lives. The primary and secondary school buildings



together can accommodate around 1500 students. Thanks to each of you for your generous contribution to make it happen!

It was planned to build a new staff quarter as well, for the incoming teachers for this year as the existing residential building is full to its capacity. However, the contractor could not start the work on this new building as he had to get the school building ready before the starting of the new academic year. Now that the main works in the school building is over, he has started the work on the Staff Residence. We hope to get this building ready as early as possible, so that the new teachers could move in. The compound around the land is open and often animals and people get inside the compound. This is also something we have to think about, in the near future.



We just started the construction of the new staff quarter in August.

2010-2011 was 200 new admissions, we made it up to 275 since we had the new building ready with class rooms.

It is logical that a single school alone cannot educate a highly populated region. However, the difference in our case is that there is no other school that provides quality education in this region. Now that the parents are becoming aware of the value of education their children can attain from St. Anthony School, they are coming for it. This rush may compel us to get more organized to categorize our selection of new entry, so that we find the right place for the weaker sections.

## New Teachers

It is a herculean task to get qualified teachers for the school. Those of you who follow our News Letter know that each passing year, we have been struggling to get teachers for the school due to the absence of qualified people in the locality. When the school closes for summer vacation, our main concern is to find enough new teachers for the coming academic year. This year we needed 8 new teachers. Since we could not find all the 8 needed teachers from outside the region, we did a publicity in the local news papers and the local TV, hoping that we might get a few candidates. We did get applications from some candidates and we interviewed all of them. However, none of them was up to our expectations. Having no other

## Rush for admissions — A new attitude

Last few years our social workers have been motivating the villagers to send their children to school. The feedback from them this year shows a big change in their attitude. There was a big rush for new admission and we had to send back many children. Though our target for the academic year



5th of September is «Teachers's Day» and children celebrate them with lot of excitement.



## Yogesh Puri and his family

*Yogesh Puri* is from the village of *Dugawar*, just 5 minutes walk from *St. Anthony School*. He is married to *Kanta* and they have five girl children. All his children, except the last child, are studying in *St. Anthony School*. While I visited the school last time, *Yogesh* came to me requesting to admit his 4th child, *Rohini*, under sponsorship. Since his older children are already supported by ODP, he was a bit hesitant, he knows our policy is to sponsor one child from one family and he is already getting more benefits. I raised my concern that if he keeps having children every year, how could I help him all the time? He told me that they wanted a baby boy and now they give up their hope.

It is the most important thing for a couple to have a baby boy and I personally know many couples aborting girl children until they have a male child and I highly appreciate this family for not having aborted their girl children. This is one of the reasons he is an exceptional case.

*Yogesh* with his family lives in a joint family, consisting of his parents, brother and his family. His parents are still the owners of the little land they have. What *Yogesh* receives from his father is a portion of wheat harvested from their land and it is hardly enough to meet both ends. Of late *Yogesh* found a small job in the city and he gets around 40 euro per month from that work. *Kanta* takes care of a cow and a calf, gets some income from selling the milk. She is part of the Self Help Group of ODP and tries to save some money, to support her family in need.

I know this family personally and whatever might be their earnings, I can really say that they are a happy family, living in hope, while struggling to build up their lives. Unlike many other villagers, they work very hard, take care of their 'girl children'. Their children are happy, very well behaved, clean, and good at school. Teachers are very proud of them.

ODP is proud to partake in the lives of families like that of *Yogesh* and see them moving towards building up a better future !



*Molly Sebastian.* (Project Manager).



option, we filled the vacancies and are giving them special training.

There are candidates with high qualification in the paper, but when we interview them, they know hardly anything. Here is an example: We received an application from Sanjay (name changed), living near the city of *Moradabad*. His Qualification: Masters in English Literature (M.A) Bachelors in Education(B. Ed), Masters in Philosophy (M.Phil). Normally with this qualification he is eligible to teach in the University. Though we were taken aback with his high qualification to teach in a primary school, we called him in for interview. To our surprise, he was neither able to follow a conversation in English nor able to write correctly. It was shocking to see that he holds a Master Degree in English Literature. After the interview his request was to give him a chance in our school, so that he can improve his English and learn. It is true that, our primary school children can understand better. You may be wondering how he could get his diploma? Some universities and educational institutions are selling the degree certificates.

### **New School Bus**

Children from 61 villages are attending St. Anthony School and 70 percent of them are relying on the school bus for transportation.

There is always pressing demand for the expansion of this service. Besides the two buses the school runs, there is a bus and a Jugad (locally made) run privately. However, it is not enough to meet the need and this year, we had to buy a new bus.

Early in the morning, at 5.45 the drivers of St. Anthony Schools leave the school with the buses to fetch school children from the villages. Each bus is going into an average of 20 villages and the roads from one village to the other is often not in a good condition and it really takes time to reach from one place to another. The children from each of these villages gather at one place, so that we save time to reach the school on time. The average number of children transported by one bus in two trips are 200 and each of these buses runs around 100 kms per day.

Bigger children started using bicycles and we are encouraging them to do so. However, parents are afraid of their safety since kidnapping of children in the villages happens occasionally. I could see many parents worried about this problem and most of them are not ready to send their children alone by bicycle unless they are in a group. Kidnapping of the children happens in the villages in India. These children are said to be sold to people from outside the States who use them to generate money.



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