

Dear Friends,

The new year 2015 started with great enthusiasm to develop the *Rahrai* school project. Starting all over again, from ground zero, it is challenging and rewarding at the same time. We are getting ready the papers and building plans to start the work, so that the new school can start functioning from April 2016. Our aim is to run this school from nursery to class 12.

The experience we gained from the *Asmoli* project is an asset as we start this new project. The price of land, materials, etc, has gone very high during the last 10 years in India. Last 10 years have seen a lot of progress nationwide as well. However, the quality of rural life has not changed as the villages remain the same without proper schools, unemployment, number of people struggling to meet both ends. We look forward to reach out to this category of people.

Development projects have to be self sustainable at one point and *Œuvre des pains* wanted to make its *Asmoli* school project self sustainable. After completing the remaining work for the building, *Saint-Anthony's School* will be self dependent. The expenses for the running of the school as well as free education of 20-25% of the students can be met by the fees from the students who pay. This gives us the possibility to invest in the new project and bring up the *Rahrai* area...

Our project in *Asmoli* has brought big smiles on the faces of many women and children. People who have not enough land and no skill continue their struggle and the number of this category is on the rise. With the school and the micro credit programs, we can reach out to them...

Some of you may remember *Savitri*, from the Newsletter 31. In the year 2011 her husband met with an accident and died on the spot. She was left alone with her 4 children. Her husband was



Women from the villages came to the school campus to celebrate the New Year.

an unskilled labour and they had neither land nor any income other than the daily wages of her husband. With the financial support of *Œuvre des pains* and the loan from the SHG (Self Help Group), she bought a buffalo and with that she picked up her life. Now she has an income of 3 euros per day from the milk of buffalo with which she can sustain her family... and the baby buffalo will double her income soon.

Both her sons are attending the local government school and her daughters *Neha* and *Nisha* are in *Saint-Anthony's School*. All



*Savitri* has a small income, thanks to her buffalos she can manage her family...



their expenses are met by the organization. *Savitri* dares to smile and hope for her children's better future !

## 70,000 Primary Teachers hired for the Public Schools !

The population of *Uttar Pradesh* is above 200 million. If it were a separate country, *Uttar Pradesh* would be the world's fifth most populous nation, next only to China, India, the United States of America and Indonesia. The size of the state is 243,286 km sq. almost 8 times bigger than *Belgium* and its population is 20 times more than *Belgium*. In 2011, the government of *Uttar Pradesh* had initiated to appoint 70,000 teachers in the primary public schools on the basis of Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) on merit basis as the government schools don't have enough staff. In 2012, new government came in power and the new government included academic record of the candidates in the zone of scrutiny along with TET marks. There has been lots of disputes on this change made by the new govern-

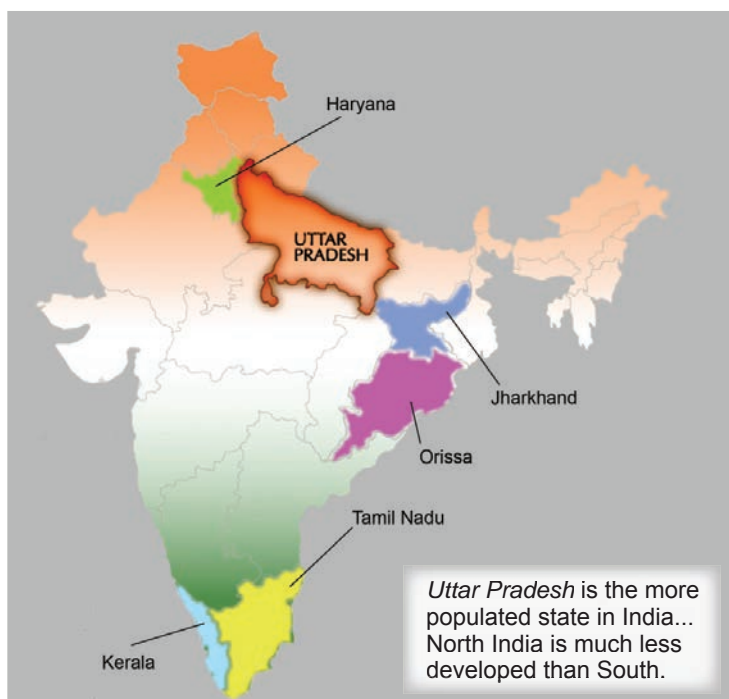


ment and it went to the State *High court* and then to the National *Supreme court*, pending the appointment during the last 4 years.

After 4 years of dispute, on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2014, the *Supreme Court* gave green signal to the *Uttar Pradesh* government to appoint the 70,000 assistant teachers on the basis of the 2011 Teacher Eligibility Test, on merit basis. This was the final decision.

Some of the teachers in *Saint-Anthony School in Asmoli* have been in the list of teachers who were eligible to get the jobs. Though we did not know how long this case will be pending and how many of them will be selected, it was certain that sooner or later, we will have to replace the group of teachers who will be quitting at any time. By the end of the month of December, 6 of our senior teachers were selected and they left immediately.

Meanwhile we made all the efforts to replace those teachers who left the school. *Roy Mathews*, the Director of *Œuvre des pains India*, visited teacher's training schools in his home town in *Kerala* (South India) and interviewed some of the students who passed out from the Institute. He met the parents of those students personally and convinced them that







they will be safe and protected in the *Asmoli* project. Roy's credibility and his presence in *Saint-Anthony school* convinced the parents to send their girls to North. This was a big relief for the school.

### ***The government's schools***

Getting a government job is the dream of young people in India, because this job financially secure their life. The salary paid by the government is higher and they get many benefits including pension after retirement where as in private sector they have to work hard and don't have this provision of pension after retirement. Besides that, in the government sector there is nobody to supervise or control the work being done. Teachers hardly reach the school and students just go to eat mid-day meal provided by the government and leave the school when they want. Hardly any child who come out from the government schools in *Uttar Pradesh* has any base and is able to continue higher classes.

### ***Our impact in the region***

Educating the multitude of children in the *Asmoli* area is not possible with a single school like Saint-Anthony's school. However, to spread the importance of education to the more areas, we have covered 100 villages around the

region as per the request of the villagers. The children who attend our school from these villages inspire the young people in their villages, as a result, more people are motivated to send their children to school and get education. The school buses going to the villages in the morning and evening, simply by its presence on the road, remind the villagers of the importance of education.

This opportunity has been well utilized by a few people from the locality to create private schools and provide a better education compared to the government schools which are still dysfunctional. For example, when we started the project in the village of *Dugawar* (*Asmoli*) 12 years ago, most of the children were not attending the school. Now, in the last few years, two private schools were set up. They take approximately one euro per month for the tuition fees. Parents are eager to send their children to these private schools instead of government schools. In *Dugawar*, almost all the children go to school now. The condition of the government school has also improved slightly as the teachers are challenged by the private schools coming up. It is important to have the children enrolled in the register for the continuation of the public school.

Our school, *Saint-Anthony's School*, integrates these children from the village's schools at different occasions by having common activities.



Government schools are still not properly supervised...



One of the new private schools of *Dugawar*...



## An eclectic staff...

From the beginning, our school depend on teachers coming from South India, mainly from the State of *Kerala*. The reason for this is that the educated youth of *Kerala* when they don't find locally a job, start searching everywhere else in India. The educational Institutes in *Kerala*, unlike in North India where anybody can buy certificates, don't compromise on their quality, only the qualified students go through the exams and receive the certificates.

However, recently the scenario is changing as the number of children in *Kerala* is reducing and more and more cases emerges about the violence against women everywhere in India. Parents are not ready to send their girls far away unless they are very sure about the safety of their children.

Our Dugwar-Asmoli School campus has teachers from *Kerala*, *Tamil Nadu*, *Orissa*, *Haryana*, *Jharkhand* and *Uttar Pradesh* (see the map on page 2). The distance of *Kerala* is approximately 2500 km. The language, food habits and climate are all entirely different from north to south. However, the new staff who come in spite of all these disparities, adapt to the new situations, even in the extreme winter and summer even without electricity. The six new young women who replaced the teachers in January reached in the middle of winter, it was really admirable the way they adapted to the new climate and to the new situation. Of course, these are well educated youths who need a job to make a living and they adapt to the situation.

Many of our oldest staff in the school in the field staff are from the State of *Orissa*. Everything has its own time, we look forward with much hope that our girls and boys, brought up in our *Saint-Anthony's schools* will bring changes into this corner of the world.



Funny cakes ? Caked and dried cow dungs are used as fuel. You can see pyramids of those cakes in the fields nearby the villages in North India.

