

Moving forward

For the last 6 years, *Anthony's Bread* has been sponsoring the education of girl children finishing class 8 (2nd secondary) from the residential school *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)* in the village of *Rahrai*. Children admitted in this school belong to disadvantaged sections of the society such as, scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, below poverty line, etc. It is funded by the government for girl children, but unfortunately it is organizing only classes 6, 7, 8! We had written in the newsletters 58 & 65, how we were helping those girls to continue their studies until class 12 (6th secondary) in other schools of the area.

The first batch finished their secondary education last year. Sadly, the parents of these young women are not able to invest on their higher education.

One of those students is *Kesariya*. We wrote about her in our newsletter 65. After class 8, her parents didn't want to send her to school any more. Our field staff motivated the parents and offered to take charge of her educational expenses. With the support of *Anthony's Bread*, she was admitted in a local school and she was given a bicycle to reach the school. Now, she successfully completed her class 12.

Once again, the field staff intervened with the families of *Kesariya* and her friends who were in the same situation. They proposed to them to go come to *St. Anthony's School ITI* in our *Dugawar* campus to join *COPA (Computer Operator and Program Assistant)*. Following a diploma course will help them to get jobs.

For the parents, the safety of their girl children are the priority. We brought all of them for a campus visit and showed them all the facilities available in *Dugawar*. The parents were reassured and thankful to us for this great support. After the successful completion of their training, two among the group joined our *St. Anthony's School* in the village of *Rahrai* as office assistant and computer lab assistant. They were also registered



The group of young women in front of the *St. Anthony's school ITI* of *Dugawar* waiting for the training class to start.

in the government portal so they could get a scholarship for the first one year of their job. This way, they get a sum given by the government which is added to their salary. After successfully completing the apprenticeship for one year, they will be included in the list of eligibility and preference for government jobs.





The students of the ITI receive their certificate. We only accept students who are ready to attend the training classes.

Improving the quality of the technical education

According to *India Skills Report 2021*, fewer than half of the graduates of *Industrial Training Institutions (ITI)* in India are employable ! The report suggested that there is a gap between the skills demanded by the employers and the skills learned in the education system. Not a surprise ! We have gone through many hurdles to make our ITI function better. Even now, after almost a decade, not many students are ready to attend the classes regularly. They have been already working in the field for some time, but to get a good job, they know that they need an official certificate. This is the reason why they come to be admitted in an *Industrial Training Institution*. In reality, they want to continue to work and earn a living and plan

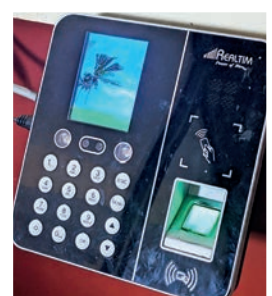
to appear only for the exams ! Unlike other schools, we do not give them the permission to sit for exams without required attendance as per the rules. Those who join *St Anthony's school ITI* know it : only those who are ready to come regularly are admitted. However, many private ITIs in the state of *Uttar Pradesh* are run for business purposes and they grab the fee reimbursement and scholarship given by the government by showing fake admissions.

Government is trying to improve the quality of these institutions by introducing changes in the functioning. Earlier, it was easy for a student to pass the exam by bribing the examiner. Now exams are done online and it has reduced a lot of cheating in exams. Practical exams are also done in different centres. Last year, the *Uttar Pradesh* local government made it mandatory to install a *Biometric Attendance System* in all the ITIs to prevent fake attendance. This new policy will hopefully bring up the quality of education in ITI institutions but there are ways to bypass the new systems when the corruption prevails. Any way, it is good to see the efforts being made to try to make it function better.

A lot of investment is also done by the government to increase the interest of ITI students towards the *Information and Technology* sector. Recently, all the students in our ITI received tablets from the government of *Uttar Pradesh*. The government representative came to our school to distribute these tablets to all the students. Of course, we can't rule out a bit of electioneering.



Government representatives are distributing tablets to students in ITI.





Placement of the graduates of our ITI

St. Anthony's school ITI staff is in contact with different companies and organises job fair times to times. Graduates are all registered in a social media group and the staff inform them about the upcoming job vacancies. Our school office has a well equipped computer room with good internet connection and a wide screen webcam which help to conduct online interviews. The candidates interested come for the preliminary interview and if selected, they go in person for the final interviews.

In Mach 2023, in collaboration with the government, St. Anthony's ITI organised a big job fair. Many government officials were present at this program to encourage the youth. Several representatives from the companies came for the job interviews and many candidates were selected for jobs. Interview of all those candidates were done on the same day and for the final selection they were called to their main offices.



Remote interviews are conducted inside St Anthony's School campus.

We had a recent survey to know about the current situation of St. Anthony's passed out students and we are happy that most of them are making a good living and are happy. With their training, they have good opportunity to get a better job as they have basic knowledge of English as well. Some of them have got government jobs which most of the youth dream of. Many are working in the government on a contract basis as well. Some are working in companies in the cities while others are in the nearby towns. Many are self employed and they get a good income.

Dhampur Sugar Mill factory is situated 3 km from St. Anthony's school campus, Dugawar. This Mill was started in 1993. At that time, this factory was manufacturing sugar from sugar cane and eventually they started also manufacturing electricity and ethanol. Many of our passed out students are working in this factory.



In March, a big job fair was conducted in collaboration with the government in our school.



Housing for Staff in Jadwar

The staff quarter's work in St Anthony's school campus of Jadwar (our last created school) is in the final stage and teachers are waiting impatiently to have a better place to stay. The new teachers who came from south are facing their first winter in Jadwar and we are happy that they will move

in before it is too cold. These are three apartments with one bedroom, hall, kitchen, and bathroom. We can accommodate 4 bachelors in an apartment if we convert the hall into a room. Of course this is not a luxury, but the basic needs are met. The foundation is laid for three floors and the top floors can be built as per the requirements. We have built front part of the compound wall near the road for the privacy and the security of the staff. We have also to build four class rooms on the first floor of the primary school building to accommodate the new comers in July 2024.



Jadwar. These three pictures show the recently build staff quarter.

After the monsoon, the play ground was flooded and there was no way out for the water. So, a big part of the land had to be raised with mud. Getting mud is not always easy. The neighbors wanted to bring down the level of their land which was bit raised and we took the opportunity to buy the mud from those plots.

A lot of work, money and energy have gone in the new project during the last two years. Few people asked us if it is not too much of work and time involved. Yes indeed ! The guiding force behind each step we take is the conviction that a lot of good can come out of this collective effort and life for many will never be the same. This project has taken shape because of your generous support. *Jadwar* children are looking forward to celebrate Christmas for the first time. The teachers are getting them ready with some activities to present to their parents. Be assured of their gratitude and prayers for each of you not only at Christmas, but throughout the year !

Along with all the beneficiaries, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year !



Christmas is celebrated in the school of *Dugawar*.



Jadwar. The school with the staff quarter in the background.