



Smiles and hope :
welcoming our newest
students to St. Anthony's.



Opening its doors to the new children

Once again, after the summer vacation, the classrooms have come alive with the laughter and energy of children eager to learn.

By mid-August, admissions were closed, with 246 new enrollments in *Dugawar*, 172 in *Rahrai*, and 185 in *Jadwar*.

Though the *St. Anthony's Schools* are keeping a very low fee to all students, making quality education affordable even to poor families, the project in *Rahrai* has been slow to respond to changes. Our field workers continue to encourage members of local *Self-Help Groups* (SHGs) to send their children — both boys and girls — to school. In some cases, we provide sponsorships and special support for girl children from the poorest families.

The *Right to Education Act* is a government program designed to promote schooling among children from economically and socially disadvantaged families. Under this scheme, children from the lower strata of society can be enrolled in schools with government support. Unfortunately, many poor families are unaware of this opportunity, while more privileged families sometimes take advantage of it to secure free education

for their own children. To address this, our social workers actively identify and assist deserving families from villages around our schools in applying for the program. Through this initiative, the government pays a portion of the tuition fee directly to the school, while parents receive limited financial assistance



Kavita's parents are overjoyed, sending their daughter to *St. Anthony's* each day with hope and pride.

for books and other essentials. In *Rahrai* we have admitted 4 children under this program. By uplifting the weakest and prioritizing those from the lowest social classes, we aim not only to educate individuals but also to transform village life as a whole.

Kavita joined *St. Anthony's School Rahrai* in July 2025. Each morning she arrives happily and on time, full of eagerness to learn. A bright and curious child, she already reflects the joy of discovery what education brings.

Kavita is the second of four daughters, the youngest being a newborn. Her mother, an active member of a *Self-Help Group* (SHG), supports her husband in making both ends meet. Her father is an unskilled laborer who does his best to sustain the family, while her mother contributes through SHG activities. The family owns a small piece of land, but as it remains in the name of the grandfather, *Kavita's* father receives little benefit from it.

When *Kavita* turned five, her mother was determined to send her to our school. Recognizing the family's difficult socio-economic situation, our social workers took up her case for sponsorship. In line with our policy, which limits support to one child per family, *Kavita* was selected. With this opportunity, she not only gains an education for herself but also holds the potential to influence her sisters' future by inspiring them to follow in her footsteps.

Shifting our focus away from Dugawar

Two decades of education and development work have brought remarkable transformation to our first project area, which includes around 100 villages like *Dugawar*. Today, the very first batch of students are parents themselves, bringing their own children to school. Families are smaller, with most limiting themselves to two children, and nearly



Kavita is happy in her class, learning to read and write alongside her classmates.

every child is enrolled. Many new schools have opened, women are more empowered, poverty has lessened, and families now engage in income-generating activities. In *Dugawar*, we can truly say that our mission has borne fruit.

For this reason, we are gradually winding down field work in this project and focusing our energy on the *Rahrai* project, launched in 2014–15. After ten years of effort, a solid foundation has been laid, but we expect another decade of sustained work will be needed to achieve full transformation.

The road is not without obstacles. In *Rahrai*, widespread alcohol consumption slows social progress and contributes to family distress, including a rise in suicides. These challenges make our educational mission all



In the *Dugawar* region, the women now stand as true drivers of development.



the more urgent. Through educating children and working with communities, we are shaping a future where families live with dignity, stability, and hope.

Our senior field worker *Jena*, who faithfully served *Dugawar*, now coordinates activities in *Rahrai* and *Jadwar*. In *Rahrai*, the team has begun a house-to-house survey to identify school-age children and encourage enrollment for next year. Step by step, progress is being made. Adult illiteracy remains a major challenge, particularly among men. Many parents of our students cannot read or even sign their names. To address this, our field workers organize literacy programs during village meetings, teaching adults to at least write their name and signature. A small but vital steps toward dignity. In *Jadwar*, most parents are still illiterate, while in *Rahrai* slow progress is visible. Encouragingly, many children are now teaching their parents at home, showing how education begins to uplift the entire community.

New uniforms in the three St Anthony's schools

To strengthen the identity of each of our three schools, we have introduced distinct uniforms for each campus. This gives children a sense of belonging to their own school while remaining part of the wider St. Anthony's family. For many students, wearing a school uniform is a first experience of dignity, pride, and unity.

The new uniforms of St Anthony's School Jadwar.



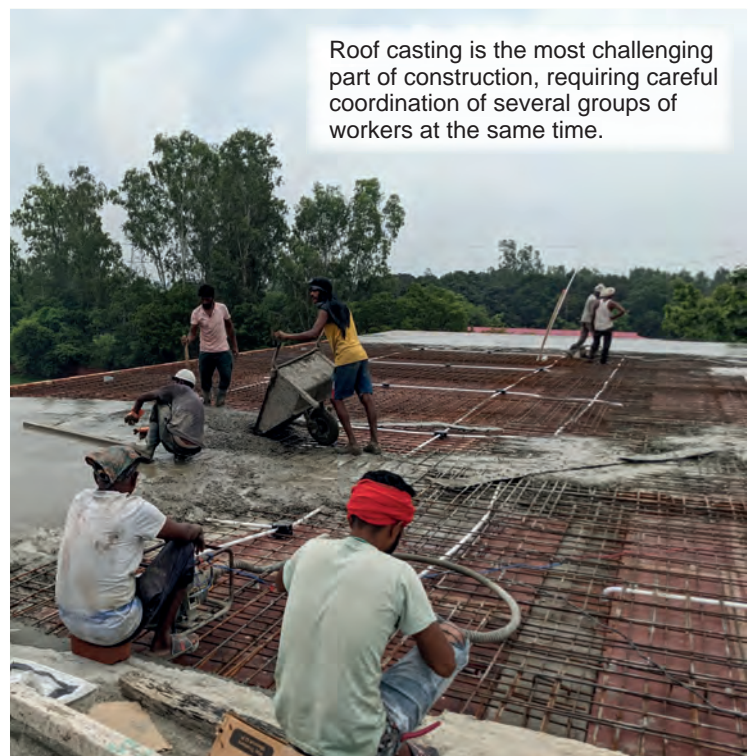
The new uniforms of St Anthony's School Rahrai.

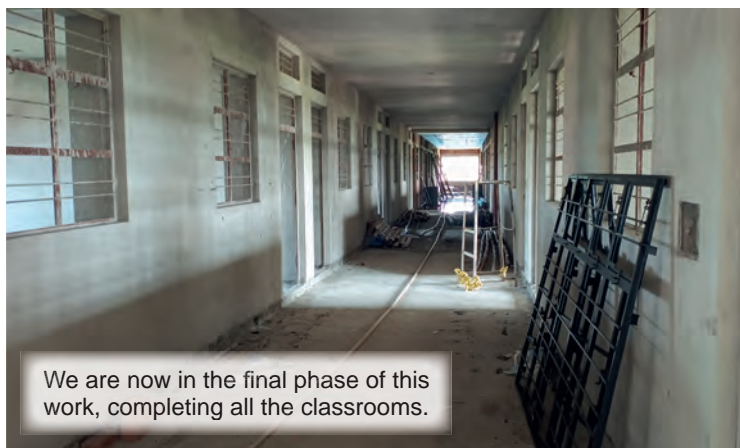
Roof casting — A stressful day in Dugawar

In our last newsletter, we shared news of the construction work at St. Anthony's School *Dugawar*. Step by step, the building is taking shape. Following the completion of roof casting, plastering work in the classrooms is now underway. Once the interiors are finished, exterior plastering will follow.

Roof casting is always a delicate task, especially during the Indian monsoon. The process requires more than 14 hours of uninterrupted work, plus several hours for the cement to set. Rain during this time would destroy the effort and waste costly materials. The second stage of roof casting had been scheduled for late June, just before the school

Roof casting is the most challenging part of construction, requiring careful coordination of several groups of workers at the same time.





reopened on July 2. But with the monsoon arriving earlier than usual, forecasts showed only a 50% chance of clear weather... too risky for such an important step. Finally, after much hesitation, the contractor decided to proceed on a day with better prospects.



The day began under heavy clouds, and tension was high. By evening, rain fell just a few kilometers away, but strong winds kept our skies clear. Plastic sheets were prepared as protection, but to everyone's relief, the night passed without rain, and the roof casting was completed successfully.

Yet the season also brought hardship. A violent storm uprooted several trees on the *Dugawar* campus, including teak trees near the primary building. Thankfully, none fell on the classrooms or the new structure, though the side road was badly damaged.

Preparing for the next phase of the building work

As enrollment continues to grow, infrastructure needs are urgent. In *Jadwar*, classrooms are currently divided to run classes, but new rooms must be ready by July 2026.

In *Rahrai*, the situation is equally pressing. The main building is already full, and a new block is required to accommodate additional students. At the same time, the staff residence, pending for several years, must be taken up without further delay, since adequate housing for teachers is vital for sustaining quality education.

