

A familiar bright smile lit up the room as Sanchita walked into my office with her father, in July 2025. A few years ago, she had told me: « Next time I come, it will be with good news. » She kept her promise. She just had got the selection letter for her first job !

In rural India, a first-generation graduate often transforms far more than her own life : she brings stability to her family, becomes a role model for younger children, and helps make education a natural priority in the community. Here is the journey she narrates in her own words.

Molly Sebastian



There is no greater reward than rejoicing in the success of our students.

The revolution that began with a school

I still remember the day my father had to withdraw me from an English-medium school in town and send me to a village school because there were no good institutions nearby and our financial condition had deteriorated. My brother was already studying in that village school, but for me, the transition felt like a fall from light into uncertainty. I cried endlessly. I was too young to understand finances, but old enough to feel the loss.

The school had no proper roof. We sat on the floor under the harsh afternoon sun. During summers, all classes were merged into a single large room filled with sand, without fans or flooring. There were no functional washrooms; we used near by agricultural fields. Education, in that setting, felt more like endurance than opportunity. That same year, everything changed. A woman we fondly call Molly Mam opened St. Anthony's

School in our area. My father's financial condition was so strained that he shifted my brother there with difficulty. During a routine visit to our home, a teacher noticed me and asked why I was not enrolled. When my parents explained our circumstances, Molly Mam decided to sponsor my education. I was asked to appear for an admission interview. I studied my brother's old books with fierce determination. During the test, I stumbled on a few mathematical problems; my father quietly



Even as a child, Sanchita seized every opportunity to grow and shine.



Early computer learning strengthened the first batch's interest even more in studies.

helped me when the principal stepped away. It was not dishonesty—it was desperation mixed with hope. My father never lacked the will to educate me; he was only constrained by circumstance. I was admitted to Class II, the highest class in the school at the time. From that day forward, there was no looking back. Very early in life, I knew I wanted more. I did not want my identity confined to socially approved definitions of womanhood. I respected homemakers, but I wanted my contribution to be visible, measurable, and transformative.

I scored 86% in Class X. Determined to become a Chartered Accountant, I chose Commerce with Mathematics in Class XI-XII and secured 72%. Yet again, higher education seemed uncertain due to limited facilities in rural areas. I enrolled in a local college for my Bachelor of Commerce, but after a year of persuasion and struggle, I moved to Moradabad for CA (Chartered Accountant) coaching. I cleared the CA Foundation examination on my first attempt and progressed to CA Intermediate. Then the pandemic struck. Lock downs halted examinations for nearly two years. My rhythm broke; consistency slipped. I could not clear the Intermediate level despite repeated attempts. Relatives mocked my “unending exams,” but my family stood firm beside me.

During this phase, I completed my Master of Commerce, prepared for multiple government examinations, and continued attempting CA Intermediate. It felt as though I

was perpetually sitting for one examination or another. I cleared several stages but narrowly missed final merit lists. I then pursued a Bachelor of Education in a reputed government college. In November 2022, I finally cleared CA Intermediate. In December 2023, I qualified the UGC National Eligibility Test with strong marks, narrowly missing the Junior Research Fellowship by a few points. I also cleared the Central Teacher Eligibility Test and a Food Corporation of India recruitment examination (final results pending at the time).

In 2023, I appeared for the Directorate of Stores and Purchase examination under the Department of Atomic Energy—a rigorous two-stage process followed by six months of training. My brother and I both applied. He was selected; I was not. When the next notification was released, I applied again—and this time, I succeeded. Around the same time, I cleared the Junior Judicial Assistant examination for the Delhi High Court, including both written stages with excellent scores. However, nervousness during the qualifying typing test cost me the final selection. Failure visited often—but it never stayed permanently.

After selection in the Department of Atomic Energy, I underwent six months of training in Mumbai and was later posted to Mysuru, Karnataka, where I currently serve. I now work in cities I once could not have imagined visiting. All of this—every milestone, every recovery—was made possible by educa-



St. Anthony's gave Sanchita wings to fly and roots to stay grounded. In every role she played, she grew in confidence and courage.

tion. When I look back at that roofless classroom, I see more than poverty. I see the fragile beginning of a revolution. Molly Mam did not merely open a school; she ignited aspiration in an entire region. Education ceased to be a luxury and became a necessity. Today, more than half the families in that area prioritize schooling for their daughters. I am living proof of that transformation.

Educating a girl does not simply uplift a family; it reshapes society. Education gave me more than degrees—it gave me intellectual independence, self-worth, and the courage to reject limiting stereotypes. It taught me that respect is not requested; it is commanded through capability and character. When col-

leagues express surprise that I come from a rural background, I smile. What they see is not geography—it is the power of education to refine thought, build confidence, and establish principles. Women's education is not merely about literacy or employment. It is about agency. It ensures that a woman never has to tolerate disrespect out of dependency. It allows her to become the architect of her destiny. And even when circumstances prevent one generation from rising fully, an educated woman ensures the next generation will.

Change is rarely dramatic; it is gradual and resilient. The small decision to open one school altered hundreds of lives. The flame



« Very early in life, I knew I wanted more »



Securing a Job in Department of Atomic Energy. Her dream comes true !

कय एवं भंडार निदेशालय
Directorate of Purchase and Stores
परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग
Department of Atomic Energy
निष्ठ कय सहायक भंडारी प्रशिक्षण 2024-2025
(3rd बैच)
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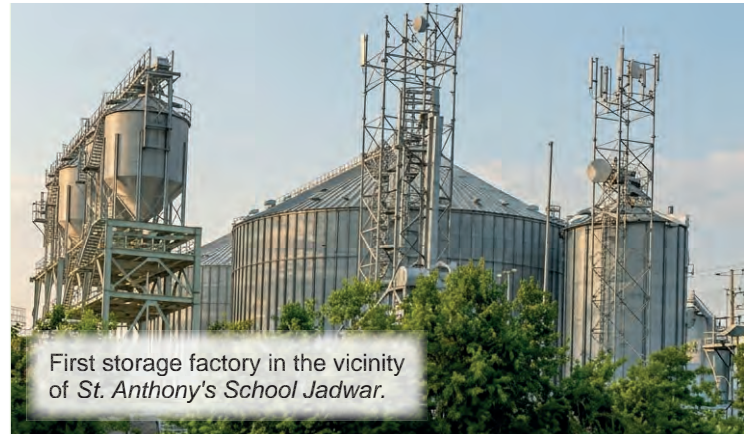
lit by one educator continues to illuminate countless futures. There was a time when I felt embarrassed by my failures. Today, I recognize them as the chisels that shaped my resilience. Without them, I would not possess the depth, discipline, or determination I carry now. Whenever I revisit those memories, my heart overflows with gratitude. People may reduce such stories to financial sponsorship, but some contributions transcend calculation. Without that intervention at the right moment, the fire within me might have been extinguished by discouragement and lack of opportunity. I am eternally grateful.

Yet my journey is not complete. I aspire to achieve far more—to a scale where my name stands not merely as personal success, but as evidence of what educating a girl can accomplish. Because when a girl is educated, she does not just change her life. She changes the narrative.

Sanchita

Visible changes in Jadwar region

Development brings more development—and we can see it happening surprisingly fast. We are now witnessing this shift in *Jadwar*, where our project started in 2023. Since its inception, there is a clear new vibe of progress: land prices have risen, families are moving out of crowded village clusters to build independent houses closer to the roads, and those who own roadside land have begun dividing it into plots for sale. Just 2 km from our school, a new factory has recently been installed. A school in the area attracts families and investment—and step by step, the whole environment begins to move



First storage factory in the vicinity of *St. Anthony's School Jadwar*.

forward, just as we witnessed in *Dugawar*, our first project.

We have received official recognition for *St. Anthony's School, Jadwar*, up to Class 8 from the Government of Uttar Pradesh. Our first batch of senior students is now moving into Class 7, and our next milestone will be to begin the process for CBSE affiliation as they reach Class 9.

At the same time, the campus is growing to meet rising demand. Construction of the first floor of the school building is progressing well and will be ready for the next academic year, enabling us to welcome more students. We also plan to construct the first floor of the staff quarters before shifting major building efforts to *Rahrai*. The current staff residence (three apartments) is already fully occupied, and additional accommodation is needed for teachers coming from outstation.