

Access to quality education is the right of one and all. However in India, it is a privilege available to only the urban students. Due to this, a vast population of the country is not able to benefit from, or contribute towards the current economic growth of the country. Only if quality education reaches the most rural areas of the country, will India be able to emerge as a true economic superpower. Looking at the gravity of the problems currently prevailing in the Indian education system, efforts made by the government alone will not be sufficient. Committed individuals and corporate will have to pinch in with their time, money and people by way of Public Private Partnership (PPP) and/ or CSR projects, to help India reach its maximum human potential.

Maa Foundation is an NGO working in the Valsad, Amreli & Bhavnagar districts of Gujarat. It is completely self-funded by a corporate group which aims to bring about reforms in the field of education, by working at grass root level, hand-in-hand with the government. The organization operates like a company with complete zeal and dedication. It tries to maintain the highest level of efficiency and accountability in planning, executing and monitoring its projects. India is a large country consisting of 28 states, 7 Union territories and 671 districts. In order that the benefit of its efforts reach each and every district of the country, Maa Foundation is building projects/ models that are scalable, sustainable, and replicable so that other corporate/ individuals can replicate them in areas of their interest or vicinity.

Maa Foundation is currently working with the entire education community viz: the students, teachers, Principals, parents and the government through its below mentioned projects. Through its efforts Maa Foundation is trying to enlighten/ improve the lives of 250,000 children and 7000 teachers of the 1300 odd schools that it is currently working with in 550 towns and villages of Valsad district.

Vision: - To make each and every schools of Valsad district a role model in the field of education.

Mission: - To create a model that is scalable, sustainable and replicable, so as to bridge the gap between urban and rural education.

Projects:-

Ken:

Ken means range of knowledge. Project Ken aims at making quality education available to the most rural areas of Valsad district and in spreading awareness about the importance of education across villages.

Maa Foundation is bringing about this educational reform in Valsad district with the help of local talent. The educated, unemployed rural youth of the district have been selected, empowered and trained by Maa Foundation. Intensive coaching in everything from English language and IT to personality development, management skills and soft skills helps transform these young villagers into enthusiastic para teachers. They are then deployed as Education Officers in the rural schools of Valsad district. They are provided refresher training every week and during vacations at Maa Foundation's regional offices. These para teachers act as catalyst in improving the quality of education imparted in the schools and making each school a role model school.

The following tasks are performed by the Education Officers in each school:-

- Minimum levels education to weak students using the 'Learning with fun' method.
- English Language knowledge – spoken and written.
- Basic computer knowledge.
- Teacher's Training to enhance the effectiveness of teaching-learning process.
- Vision enhancement of students, parents and the entire educational community.
- Conducting Annual day in school
- Science, maths & sports kit implementation
- Aptitude testing & Career Guidance for secondary students
- Personality development camps
- Around 16 to 20 projects are handled in each school by the Education Officers, as an effort to impart sustainable quality reforms in the entire school.

Status till this date: 24 program officers and 386 education officers have been trained and deployed in 386 schools of Valsad and Amreli districts of Gujarat. The following number of students has been covered and benefited in the project with various need based education, training and resources till date:

- 23340 weak students have been trained for minimum level education.
- 32822 students of class 3rd have been trained for advanced math.
- 41451 students have been taught English language.
- 82608 students from 1068 schools have been provided basic computer education.
- Health education sessions have been taken on every Saturday in the all the schools.
- Implementing pre-defined extracurricular activities in all schools.
- 1, 54,000 school bags including stationary have been given to Class I students on the every first day of academic year.
- Implementing role model school concept in more than 250 schools of valsad district.
- Learning through digital content from standard 1st to 8th

Vidhya:

Higher education is becoming more out-of-reach of many sections of the society and for those students, who are **both, academically deserving and economically needy**, project Vidhya is their ray of hope. It is a scholarship program that provides financial assistance to undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students of Valsad, Amreli and Bhavnagar districts of Gujarat.

The scholarship amount each deserving student is eligible for is determined after a personal interview. The potential and financial background of students is assessed, their credentials are verified and their plans for the future are discussed. To help these young scholars continue to excel and give them focus, academic targets are mutually agreed upon and set. Efforts are made to ensure that only deserving students continue to receive the scholarship.

The project greatly benefits financially weak parents. While students rest assured that their hard work and academic dreams are now backed up financially by the MAA Foundation.

Status till this date: 10,000 (Deserving and needy) students have been provided scholarships which have approximately covered 6000 students of Valsad district and over 4000 students of Bhavnagar and Amreli districts annually. More than 3600 Undergraduate, 3000 Graduate, and 1000 Post-graduate students have been benefited under the project.

Disha

In the rural areas of India, there is very less awareness about difference types of educational and vocational courses available to the students. Moreover they are not aware of their own interests and aptitudes; hence they are not able to make informed career decisions. Disha is a program that provides career guidance to the secondary students through career guidance program, which is conducted using career talk and aptitude test. The Aptitude test is conducted using Personal Response System (PRS), an indigenous technology and software based assessment, which can cater to the masses. This helps the children select a career based on their aptitudes and areas of interest.

Status till this date: Over 85,000 students have received career guidance under this project till date. Every year approximately 45,000- 50,000 students from class 8 to 12 have been covered under this project.

Science on Wheels /Math's fair:

- **Science on wheels**

The project is primarily aimed at increasing the scientific temperament of the students in the rural areas, so that they can opt for science related careers and enhance their employability chances in the future.

In order to give the rural students of 5th to 8th standard better concept clarity and to attract them towards this seemingly difficult subject, Maa Foundation has converted a bus and some vehicles into mobile science laboratories. The bus is equipped with audio-visual equipments, countertops, cupboards and a generator. Activities like showing educational

videos, experiments or hands-on activities, teaching with the help of educational toys and display of science models mapped to the curriculum are conducted with the help of this bus and vehicles.

- **Math Fair**

Maths fair is a fair organized by the children in which various games and activities are conducted, related to various concepts of Maths learned in school, so as to make learning Maths fun and to engage the parents and the society in the activities conducted by the school.

Status till this date: 55,000 students from 234 schools have been covered for the Science Bus activities and over 50,000 students and their parents have benefited through the Math Fair which includes approximately 22,939 students annually in both the sections.

Step- Up

In some government primary schools, it is observed that there is shortage of teachers and / or classrooms which results in an imbalanced teacher: student ratio and multi-grade single classroom. Due to this, the quality of education imparted is greatly hampered. In order to address this problem and to actively engage the students in the teaching- learning process, Maa Foundation has adopted an innovative method of teaching which is called the Step-up approach.

Step-up is a multi-level multi-grade innovative method of teaching in which the curriculum is divided into units and each unit is taught to the students with the help of various types of activities. The activities are completely teacher supported, partly teacher supported, peer supported or independent activities, thereby reducing teacher load and allowing weaker children to learn at a slower pace. In this system the role of the teacher is that of a facilitator. It focuses on concept clarity, where the center of focus is the child, thereby engaging the child in learning.

Status till this date: Maa Foundation has implemented this method of teaching for 1st and 2nd standard students of 6 schools of Valsad district.

Gnyan

There isn't a profession more honorable than spreading knowledge. Gnyan is a project designed to felicitate teachers and to upgrade their knowledge and skill by exposing them to **various activity & AV based training programs**.

It also circulates newspapers among students to instill in them the valuable habit of reading, followed up by quiz, scrap book & essay competitions.

Status till this date: 1650 school **teachers** have been provided professional training, 241 teachers have been felicitated under the teachers' section. Every week approximately 42,500 copies of **newspaper** (student edition) are circulated to Valsad District school students by Maa Foundation.

Parvarish

It is found that the students that graduate have the required bookish knowledge, but lack essential soft skills like communication skills, right attitude required for team work, public speaking abilities, problem solving attitude etc. that are required for succeeding in work life. Moreover they also lack essential social and human values required in order to live a happy and satisfactory life. Due to this, inspite of possessing high education, they are not able to live a happy and successful life.

Project Parvarish equips students with essential soft and social skills by organizing 5 to 7 day personality development camps in which they are introduced to various topics like leadership qualities, manners and etiquettes, communication skills, time management, SWOT analysis, India's economy and its future etc. through presentations as well as activities.

They are taught essential human values like respect, patriotism, honesty, self discipline etc which can help them lead a happy and satisfactory life. They are taught meditation techniques essential for maintaining a healthy mind and body.

Students are also taken on educational and industrial tours in order to give them a glimpse of real life working environment.

Status till this date: Over 4,750 students have participated in personality development camps till this date.

Udaan

Growth and prosperity are possible only through education. However, when children come from financially weak backgrounds, the importance of education isn't always felt. Project Udaan provides first generation learners with quality education that can transform their lives and the lives of generations to come.

The children are empowered with knowledge that helps them drive home the message of 'Prosperity through education'. They receive financial aid, admissions to boarding schools and professional courses, soft skill training to shape personality, and exposure to career awareness programs. Their academic and personality growth are monitored right through their student age, so that they are able to emerge a part of tomorrow's mainstream society and be a part of India's growth story.

Status till this date: 1000 deserving and needy students have been adopted for educational upliftment.

Vikas

Today most of the graduates are not found to be directly employable as they lack essential soft skills and English / computer knowledge. Project Vikas aims at empowering the rural graduates with essential skills and quality knowledge and provide them proper career guidance, which is presently available only to their urban counterparts, so as to help them pursue professional courses and/ or increase their chances of employability.

Status till this date: 800 rural graduates have been groomed and trained for skills required for professional courses. 163 students have taken admission in various professional courses till date.

Samarthan

It isn't enough that knowledge is accessible. It should be available easily and freely.

Samarthan is an educational portal with information on every area of education. It is a single window that provides information absolutely free of cost to students, teachers, parents and the entire education community.

UNNATI

Skills development is an area that spans across all sectors of the economy. Currently a major proportion of the population is not productively engaged in economic activities due to a 'skills v/s jobs requirement' mismatch. The skills v/s jobs mismatch often leads to economically inactive working age group people.

It is aimed at upgrading the skills of the tribal youths in various traditional / modern vocations depending upon their educational qualification, present economic trends and the market potential, which would enable them to gain suitable employment or enable them to become self employed.

Status till this date: Nearly 247 dropouts have been provided computer hardware and software training as well as over 40 unemployed rural youth has received housekeeping and hospitality training to make them employable through various vocational training.