

Rapport från Kokila Vyas maj 2023

Först kommer en allmän tillbakablick och därefter en rapport från läsåret 2022/2023

35 years of Vanpath Seva Samiti [VPSS] trust in Dharampur

Vanpath Seva Trust was started on 02nd October in 1988 , on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti (Gandhi Birthday). The main objective of the trust was to educate the girls and boys in Dharampur tribal area.

Gandhi Jayanti is an event celebrated in India to mark the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation.

Dharampur tribal area of 1988 was not developed and Indian government also had not done much for the tribal people in Dharampur. It did not have basic infrastructure and facilities like road, hospital, school, drinking water, electricity etc. During summer, villagers had to walk 3-4kms in the mountain to get drinking water. Students had to walk 6-10 kms to attend the classes. Literacy rate was negligible. The tribal people used to speak their own language with no script. Now many people can read/write local Gujarati language but still they can not talk in Gujarati which is mother tongue of Gujarat.

Normal life was very hard for the people staying in Dharampur tribal mountain area in those days. There are five rivers in Dharampur tribal area. These rivers have water round the year. But there were no bridges on these rivers. People were using small hand made boats to cross the river. It used to be very hard to carry sick person from tribal area to hospital in Dharampur town which was the only place nearby with facilities like hospital, school, market etc.

People in Dharampur tribal area even did not have bathroom/toilets and go in open.. female will take bath in work around bathroom made up of wooden structure and they go out for nature call. Even some of the VPSS trustees have also faced this situation and managed during their visits to villages in early days.

Dharampur tribal area of present look much different and we can say that work done by all has brought many benefits. Even far distance small villages have connectivity with Dharampur main town thru good roads. Bridges are built on the rivers. Many people have own motorcycle and cycle. 98-99% of the houses have electricity. There are govt schools and primary health centers for the cluster of villages so that they do not have to travel all the way to Dharampur town for basic requirements. Of course, mobile is there in every hand.

Van Path Seva Samiti {VPSS} trust with support from all donors like TUFF has also contributed to the development in a big way. VPSS work is more appreciated because they were the first who started doing work which required lot of dedication and also hard work - right from arranging funds to living hard life in the villages etc. VPSS started with day school with 50 students. Villagers built school on govt land and with some support for roof from VPSS. In first few year, VPSS and villagers with funds from donors built total 11 schools. The schools had grade 4 to 8 and grade 9 to 10 classes. These schools are called Primary (grade 4 to 8) and Middle (4 to 8 grade) schools. Primary schools had students of the age group 9-14 and middle schools had 14-16 age group students. All schools have girls and boys.

One farmer in Bilpudi donated land for building girls hostel. Girl's hostel with capacity of about 65 students was built using funds from donors from India and TUFF.

Around 1000 students have completed their studies up to middle class -10th grade in our schools. Many students went for higher studies. Students became graduated from colleges. Many students did vocational I courses and now working in factories. Boys and girls have also done nursing courses to become nurse at the hospital. Exceptionally good students completed Masters in Science, engineering and one student even became doctor. Few students have also become teacher.

Other activities -

Around 500 small barricades (check dams) were built on the mountains to conserve water on the mountain slopes. As a result following benefits were seen:

1. Washing away of the fertile land in the monsoon stopped which saved thousands of hectares of fertile land.
2. Rain water harvesting was achieved thru check dams. It increased water level in the drinking water wells. The people in the villages started getting drinking water right in their surroundings even during peak summer.
3. Farmers were able to grow vegetables which provided hard cash in the hands of the farmers. The farmers were able to use this money for higher education of their children

VPSS also supported in following way which helped farmers to increase their income and have better quality life over a period of time in last 35 years -

Few examples are ;

1. Around 250 water engines were distributed to farmers to draw water from the rivers. It provided irrigation water for farming and farmers were able to take two crops in a year.
2. More than 165 000 mango saplings were distributed which are now giving fruits and farmers are able to earn money by selling into nearby towns.
3. Cereals seeds were distributed. And now farmers also grow cereals.
4. Farmers also started growing vegetable and get cash from selling vegetables.

As a result of above all activities, new items got added to their daily food menu. Earlier villagers eating only item - NAGLI bread. Farmers also had extra money to buy motorcycle and built cemented houses with long lasting roofs.

VPSS also organized mass marriages and it reduced marriage expenses per couple.

Around 200 new wells were built. It solved drinking water problem.

Pregnant women camps were organized. Young boys and girls from villages were trained to treat minor ailments which can be treated with over the counter medicines.

Dharampur and tribal area of 2023 is quite developed and has brought prosperity even in remote villages. There are many NGOs working in the area. There are govt schools and primary health centers in bigger places run by bigger NGOs and Govt. There are many govt and private schools and colleges in the area which are accessible thru road so students can easily commute for schooling and college education.

Many students take admission in colleges and join professional courses in engineering , pharmacy etc and also join vocational course like nursing, fitter, electrician etc.

Parents also support kids for study which was missing in old times. Many students get proper placement after completion of education like they become Teacher, Lecturer , Nurse (female/male) , technicians and so on.

VPSS is also organizing special coaching for brilliant students. Few students are also preparing for admission in Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) under Gujarat -30. IITs are top of the class engineering colleges in India. It is hard to get admission in these colleges. But, we are hoping that at least one student may get admission in engineering in IIT this year.

There is a modern hospital managed by Raj Chander Ashram Trust - Jain and Gandhian Group. Reasonably Well maintained roads to connect the villages. 24 hours electricity and so on.

TUFF supported activities during the academic year 2022-23

VPSS is thankful to TUFF, Sweden, and schools raising fund thru different activities and workshops in the schools. We are sharing below how donation money is used in the year 2022-23.

For fund raising to sponsor Vananchal primary boarding school in the village Chand Vegan . These funds are also used to support partial expenses of Bilpudi girls hostel and other administrative expenses . It includes accountant, driver, coordinator salary and goods carrying vehicle etc expenses.

Vananchal Primary Boarding School has grade 4,5 and 6 students. Total students strength is 119. There are 79 boys and 40 girls aged between 10 to 14 years. Boys and girl are given blue colour uniform every year.

Students get three vegetarian meals in a day. Morning lunch includes - Indian bread, vegetable, afternoon snacks - Biscuits/roasted grams or peanuts, rice flex items, sprouted green gram/black gram etc. Dinner menu is rice and cereals with curry.

There are five teaches (4 male and 1 female) in the school and one cook cum assistant. All staff is staying alone and able to concentrate full time on students. Radha has left and Ramesh (male) is head-master now.

Students learn subjects - English, Gujarati, Sanskrit, Hindi languages, Mathematics, Science, Social studies. Teachers are trained to teach these subjects.

Students are hard working and concentrate on study. Exams are internal only by school teachers only. These students go for Middle school and many students complete 10th standard which has board exam. All the students pass board exam which shows that students are intelligent.

Students have activities from morning 6am to 9PM in the night. It also includes extra-curriculum activities. There is no spare land for farming. There are few fruit trees-Guava, Papaya and custard apple.

School building has 8 rooms consisting of 3- class rooms, prayer room, store room, dining hall and guest room. Prayer room is used as class room after prayer. Class rooms are converted to girls hostel in the night. Students seat on the floor in the class rooms on long carpets

There is Primary Health Center nearby. Over the counter medicines are available in the campus to treat basic illnesses.

This year school building renovation work was done as building had become very old and plasters were falling. Building repairing was done but painting is pending . Building will be painted after monsoon and during Diwali vacation. It will cost around 400, 000 Indian rupees for repairing and painting.

We are spending approximately 1.6 to 1.8 million Indian Rupees per year to cover expenses of the school, partial expenses of Girl's hostel in Bilpudi and other administrative expenses like driver, social worker , accountant , hostel mentor salary.

Few years back, Govt announced Corporate Social Responsibility regulation for companies. All companies have to demonstrate the acts of charities like sponsoring or any other philanthropic activity.

Now, VPSS has stopped other activities and focusing only on education in the remote areas where other NGOs are not present due to operational and management difficulties.

VPSS will continue focus on education in these selected remote areas. We always depend on funds from donors. TUFF, Sweden is supporting Vananchal Primary school. TUFF, Sweden donation is also used for other administrative expenses and to cover partial expenses of Girls hostel in Bilpudi.

We are thankful to all donors and TUFF, Sweden, for supporting all these years and looking forward to the same in years to come.

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