



Educate The Children News

FOUNDER PREM ADVANI REPORTS ON HIS VISIT TO INDIA

JANUARY 2016

Educate the Children has projects in many cities in India. Due to time constraints only those projects in Mumbai were visited at this time. This report covers the findings in each school.

There is a reference to Sindhis (like the Advani family) who came to Mumbai after India was partitioned in 1947. Sindhis lost their homes, but the first thing they did upon arrival to (now) India, was to open schools for their children. Many of these schools have now a very small percentage of Sindhi students left because they are now sent to International Schools, which are very good and very expensive. While many Sindhis have fared well, there are still a lot of poor Sindhis.

January 16
KJ Khilnani High School

Mr. Khilnani, is the son of the founder of two schools in Mumbai after India's partition in 1948 that are unfortunately no longer in operation. I had attended one of those schools as a high school student.

The school visited was started 30 years ago. ETC has been supporting 30 students there for the last 10 years. Its neighborhood has changed over the years. Currently, 95% of the students there are Muslims. However, the students celebrate Hindu, Christian, and Muslim holidays acting the appropriate religious displays.

The school premises are fully utilized. 4000 students that include Pre-K are enrolled here. High school students attend classes in the morning and primary students attend in the afternoon.



The school fees for Pre-K to 4th grade need to be paid by the students; 5th to 10th grade fees are paid by the government. In India or in its states, the rules or guidelines for the government assistance, are not consistent. However, for the government assisted schools, the teachers' salaries go up 6% every 6 months in an effort to catch up with the cost of living in Mumbai.



The school fees are currently RS 900 per month. When ETC started supporting them ten years ago, the school fees were RS 300/mo. These increases make it very difficult to keep up with the school fees. ETC tries to select students from single mom families when possible.

Sankranth day was being celebrated during my school visit; all the students made kites. It was an exciting day for the kids and I had an opportunity to see many cute kites.



The principal in the school has been serving there for the last three years. The school's condition has improved substantially since his appointment; it is much cleaner and better organized.

One of the interesting things they do is to surround a weaker student by two good students on a bench. While the weaker student is able to get help from the other two, this system also provides him/her with an incentive to do better.

Every student is expected to wear a uniform to attend school, except on their birthday. This enables everyone to identify who has birthday on that day. Our visit was treated with candy by one of the birthday girls.

January 16
Ulhasnagar

About a three hour ride from Mumbai central brings you to Ulhasnagar. There are 30 schools which have a total of 100,000 students in the five village area. I visited only four schools due to the time constraint and the school hours. These schools receive no assistance from the state. All monthly school fees are payable 14 times (12 months, 2 term fees and computer lab fees).



ETC supports 250-300 students within these thirty schools. For some students ETC pays full fees and for some 25-75%, depending upon the income of parents. Many of the students supported by ETC have a single mother.

The grading system in India is very different.

- C grade 40%
- B grade 60%
- A grade 80%
- A1 grade 90%

The exams are graded starting with zero and going up for correct answers. In the United States the exams are graded starting at 100% with deductions for errors. The 70% "C" grade in the U.S. is equivalent to a 40% in India.



HCL sells digital boards for the classrooms and many of the schools in Ulhasnagar have them.



SES (Sindhi Educational Society)

This school was the first established school in Ulhasnagar in 1948 after the partition of India. It was the only Sindhi medium school at that time.

The school has 1500 students. ETC supports 11 students at this location.

The SES has 5 branches, one degree college, and three junior colleges. The students in this institution are very poor. 4 students stopped attending the school a few weeks ago because they could not pay the fees. Our trustee told the school to have the students' parents contact him. We hope to help them with the fees, which are RS 500/mo paid 14 times.

In the 2014-15 school year, 100% of the students passed the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) exam conducted by the state.

Jhulelal Trust School & Jr. Col

The Jhulelal Trust School & Junior College serves 3650 students. ETC supports 26 students in grades First through 10th. The fees are RS 775/mo paid out 14 times (as explained earlier).

Sindhi students make up 70% of the school population. 10% of Sindhis attend Sindhi medium classes, whereas 90% attend English medium classes. The classrooms are separate for boys and girls. There are 6 heads of departments.

The school has recently installed Digital boards (Internet access & key board access) and Audio-Visual equipment.

Their running competition (they call it a marathon) can be seen on YouTube



Balkan Ji Bari Trust School

This school has 2000 students of which ETC supports 11 students. Sindhis make up 30%.

The school fees are RS 225/mo for Primary & RS 250/mo for Secondary classes, payable 14 times.

At this school they have co-ed classes. Due to the limited sports facilities, sometimes they do physical exercises right in the class room.

Pet Oxford School

Upon a visit of this school 6 years ago, there was a little girl supported by ETC who was number one in her class. Her wishes at that time were to become a doctor. During this visit, it was noticed that her name had been posted as number one graduating from the school last semester. She was also number one in all 30 schools in Ulhasnagar! We wish her well in her pursuit for medical school. She is currently attending a junior college.



For the last 4 years in a row, this school has produced students who are number one above all 30 Ulhasnagar schools. All of their science classes are with actual experiments rather than just theoretical knowledge.

From the 2500 students served by this school, ETC supports eight. The school fees are RS 750/mo payable quarterly as RS 4000, including term fees, computer lab etc.

Vijay Makhija, the vice principal of the school, is also a member of Ulhasnagar Rotary Club. The Rotary club conducts career guidance for college education. Email: petoxford@rediff.com



GEMS OF PET OXFORD IN S.S.C.I		
YEAR /	NAME OF THE STUDENT	PERCENTAGE
Mar. 2000	DEEPAH NIGLET SHIMODA	76.80
Mar. 2001	SURESH PIRAJI BHALI	78.13
Mar. 2002	KRISHNA SIBAL TIJUMAL	81.86
Mar. 2003	YEENA SAKTA KUMAR	80.80
Mar. 2004	MONIKA DIPTA KUMAR	79.80
Mar. 2005	POOJA NARSHI PANDYA	88.25
Mar. 2006	HUSLE NARSHI PANDYA	88.13
Mar. 2007	HUSLE KETAN PANDYA	91.07
Mar. 2008	SUNIL DINESH SURENDRA	88.76
Mar. 2009	PURVANI NELLAM NARESH KUMAR	88.76
Mar. 2010	WADHWA SONALI HARSH	95.07
Mar. 2010	SITESH RANESH SHARMA (1 st in ULHASNAGAR)	99.64
Mar. 2011	NAISALA DIVYEN NASHOTAM	98.55
Mar. 2012	SUNIL DINESH SURENDRA (1 st in ULHASNAGAR)	99.64
Mar. 2013	WADHWA NIKHIL HARSH	91.82
Mar. 2014	BHATTIA BHAVISNA SANJAY	92.60
Mar. 2015	ANITA BANSODI GYAN	93.40

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C Chembur Area Schools

It was only possible to visit one school in this area, where ETC supports about 70 students distributed in five to eight schools.



Sarvodaya School

This school is 50 years old started by Sindhis who came to Mumbai after India's partition. It has low middle income and poor students. Once again, most Sindhis now attend International Schools which are very expensive. Only 10% Sindhis attend this school.



The school has 2400 students ranging from Jr Kindergarten to Jr. College. They have a staff of 100. They are in the process of opening a nursery class also.

At this school, the students have to pay fees up to 4th grade. 5-10 grades are paid by the state government.

90% of the students pay their own fees and 10% get support from various charities.

D. Amchaghar School

This school is located in a fishing village at about a 2 1/2 hour drive from Mumbai Center. It was founded by Susheela Singh, who was a social worker. She convinced the ladies from the Red Light district to give up their daughters instead of continuing the cycle of prostitution. When she came to ETC's attention 10 years ago, she had adopted 10 girls, bought two apartments to raise them in, and started the school. Those ten girls have now finished high school and as of the last year, they are on their own. Some are married, some are going to college, and some have become teachers, nurses, etc. This year, Susheela has adopted 20 new girls.



In the past, ETC paid the school rent, but last year (Dec 2014) they built a new school, which is partially finished. The first two floors are completed and operating, while the third & fourth floors are still under construction. With the help from Mr. Fred Murman, ETC paid for the construction of some of the classrooms. The school plans to add a fifth floor in the future.



70% of the students are Christians and the rest are Hindus and Muslims. Currently, there are 800 students attending the school, out of which we support 30. The school fees for the year are RS 8,000- 10,000/year. The students we support indicated career interests in singing, dancing, medicine, teaching, and police work. Surprisingly, not a single child indicated any interest as a fisherman/fisherwoman.



During the inauguration of a public road, ETC and other various donors who have helped fund the school construction were given bouquets and a shawl, which is an Indian way of greeting the guest.