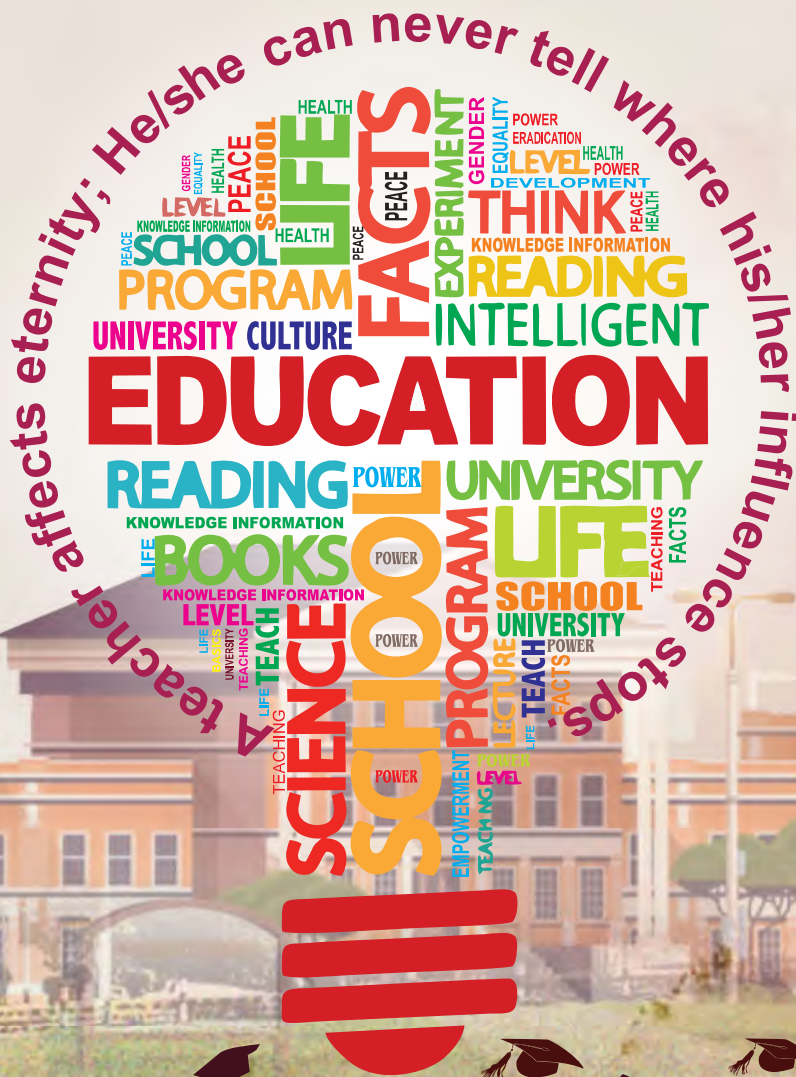




PRESENTS

EDUCATIONAL ALCHEMISTS

Transforming Bihar's Districts

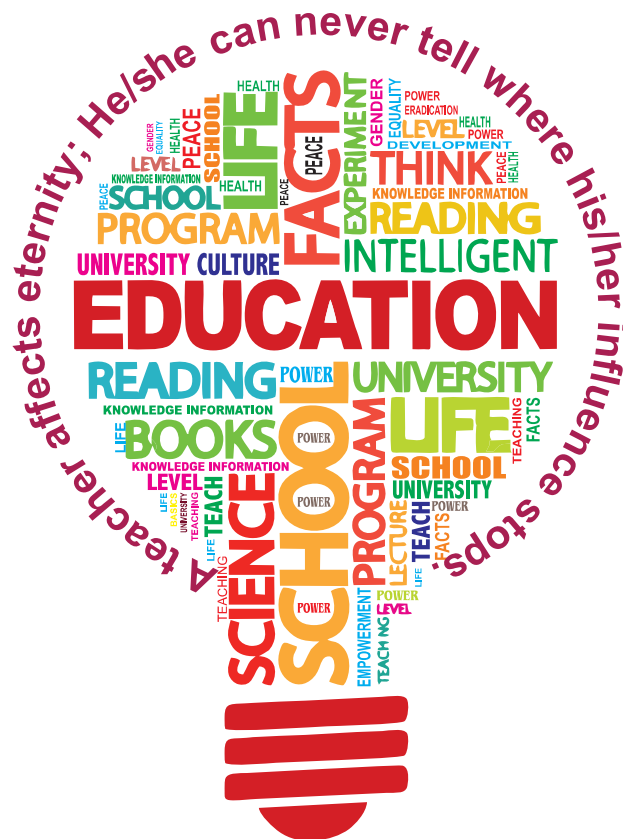




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Published by
MUSIC BROADCAST LIMITED

Project Visualisation
& Sales Coordination
PATNA SALES TEAM

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This inspirational book is a biographical narrative that reveals the unique thought process, grand vision, untiring efforts and enthralling anecdotes of top achievers in the field of private education in Bihar.

Every article is based on the information shared by the featured person in a freewheeling chat with the author. On certain occasions, additional information and photographs were provided by them through their representatives or sourced from the featured organisation's website or its publication available in the public domain.

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PREFACE

Today, people from Bihar are the backbone of Indian administrative machinery. They have been doing exceptionally well in the corporate world as well as in different areas of scientific research, medical and engineering. Credit goes to those selfless souls who truly cared about serving the society and worked tirelessly to upgrade the lives of people around them.

Towards the end of the 20th century, certain people took it upon themselves to prepare the future generations of Bihar to meet the challenges of globalisation as well as to make the most of the opportunities it was supposed to bring to the country.

There was a new awakening. Bihar witnessed yet another phase of reform – introduction of English medium schools imparting modern education. Everyone who decided to make a contribution did it for self satisfaction... no matter whether they belonged to a princely state... or came from a family that has been producing top professionals for generations.

As we are approaching the end of the first quarter of the 21st century, we decided to look for those unsung heroes and document their efforts for posterity. We travelled the length-and-breadth of Bihar and came across several individuals who braved the challenges and continued the mission. We zeroed in on indigenously developed CBSE-affiliated schools and selected one top institution from each district.

This book, “Educational Alchemists: Transforming Bihar's Districts,” celebrates the legacy of twenty visionary educators who transformed socio-economic conditions in their neighbourhood through quality education.

As you flip through pages of the book, you will come across stories of several real life heroes including someone who was a UGC scholar with a PhD degree at an early age of 23 but decided to forego a lucrative career in research and academics to serve the society. The book also traces the cases of top corporate professionals who quit their jobs to give positive direction to hundreds of youth in small towns. While certain edupreneurs came forward and established quality schools offering modern education, several educationists also resigned from top institutions in big cities and returned home to serve children in their neighbourhood.

We present this book to you with great expectations that it will help shine a light on such a dynamic region of India, demonstrating that the challenges and opportunities confronting Bihar are unique and worthy of discussion by academics, businesses and governments.

—IMRAN MOJIB

FOREWORD

**“Education is not merely the imparting of knowledge;
it is the key to unlocking the vast potential within every individual!”**



Ashit Kukian
CEO, Radio City

As we delve into the pages of 'Educational Alchemists Transforming Bihar's Districts,' we embark on a journey through the educational landscape of Bihar, a state committed to the transformative power of learning.

Over the past decade, Bihar has witnessed a remarkable shift in its approach to education. The rise of private schools has played a pivotal role in shaping the educational narrative, offering not just classrooms but vibrant spaces where young minds can thrive and evolve. In this Coffee Table Book, we celebrate these institutions that have become beacons of quality education, providing a platform for holistic development.

Each school featured in these pages represents more than just an institution; it symbolises a commitment to nurturing young talents, fostering a globally-inclusive community, and providing endless extracurricular opportunities for character development. These educational alchemists are moulding the future of Bihar, one student at a time.

However, we must acknowledge the challenges that persist. Disparities in infrastructure, varying student-teacher ratios, and the quest for quality education create concerns for parents seeking the best for their children. This book serves not only as a tribute to the achievements of these schools but also as a guide for parents navigating the important decision of choosing the right educational path for their wards.

Our Radio City team has embarked on an initiative to showcase a visual and editorial journey through the rich history and legacy of these schools. This book is our effort to honour and showcase the dedication and passion of educators who play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Bihar.

May this compilation serve as a source of inspiration and information, igniting conversations that transcend words. Let us collectively strive towards a future where every child in Bihar has access to quality education, unlocking their limitless potential.

— **Ashit Kukian**
CEO, Radio City



Sanjay Singh

Unlocking The Power of Experiential Learning



Hellens School, Sitamarhi, perceives each of its students as free men and women of the pluralistic society, who contribute towards a more integrated, rational, egalitarian and caring society

The Hellens School, Sitamarhi, has earned a name for itself by promoting academic excellence through critical thinking and active learning in the classrooms aided by a well-trained faculty. Advancing a thriving intellectual environment in the school and promoting wellness to develop leadership and fellowship have been its hallmark that has made it an indigenous brand producing students ready to compete anywhere, anyone.

Chairman of the school Sanjay Singh said, "At Hellens School, Sitamarhi, we provide each child with a simulative learning environment and superlative teaching to maximise and challenge his

or her individual learning and development potential. Our school has established a reputation for excellence in academic, sport and cultural pursuits. The school has a student body that excels in academic and extracurricular activities, a staff committed to excellence and a supportive parent community."

"At the school, we offer a diversity of academic facilities. We have introduced computer science and music as part of the curriculum. The programme of studies is in accordance with the syllabus laid down by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi. While the medium of instruction is English, we lay special emphasis on teaching three languages English, Hindi and Sanskrit."



Chanda Sinha





Holistic Development

The school also runs dedicated periods for games, music and library. Being a sports enthusiast himself, the chairman promotes different kinds of sports in his school in a big way. Starting from Cricket to different sports, the students are being provided proper training and they have excelled at district as well as at the state-level in multiple sports. The school cricket team won the prestigious Sukhdeo Narain Memorial Inter School Cricket tournament a few years ago. The school has been consistently winning district level cricket tournament for the last three years.

Today's Hellens School is a dream accomplishment of a young engineer who hailed from a business family but wanted to leave a mark on the society. Soon after completing his higher studies he decided to return home to nurture a young generation with humane values to become catalysts of social transformation and universal fraternity by facilitating learning in a progressive and inclusive ambience. The family supported him to realise his dream of building a society by creating an enlightened generation with competence, integrity, creativity and sensitivity.

In 1994, the Hellens School was established with the aim to be selective and foster academic excellence through comprehensive curricula, rigorous standards, and challenging assessments focussed on following the 21st Century 4Cs competencies and skills: Communication, Collaboration, Critical thinking and Creativity.

The Journey

Recalling the initial days, Sanjay Singh said that he was impressed with the St Hellens Girls School in Darjeeling, which is more than a century old school. Inspired by the school's contribution in shaping up the lives of hundreds of girls, he also decided to have a girls' school in Sitamarhi. Thus he established another St Hellens Girls School in Sitamarhi.

But, running a girls-only school in Sitamarhi three decades ago was not easy. Soon he started feeling the pinch for financial losses and realised that social welfare and business should gel well. Thus, after running the school for two years, he decided to change it into a co-ed school.

“It was a challenge to transform it suddenly into a co-ed school. But I took a chance and converted the primary classes -- from nursery to Grade five – into co-ed. Not many people reacted negatively. Thus the co-ed facilities went on gradually 5th to 6th, 6th to 7th and onwards,” he said.

In 2001, he applied for an NOC from the Government of Bihar. Followed by an application for affiliation from the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi, which was granted in 2004.

“It was not so easy. We had no one to guide. It was our own trial and error. We were learning and practicing. As for affiliation, we had just heard the school should have a certain amount of land, not that the school building should also be on that plot. Our application for affiliation was rejected because our



school was being run somewhere else where the land area was not enough. And the plot of land we had mentioned was not the same where the school building was located," he recalled.

He decided to construct the school building anew. Got support from the family, and chipped in whatever he had saved from the school income. Once the building was ready he came to know about other requirements, especially dedicated labs for science subjects. Thus he contacted the principal of another school, who advised him to meet someone in Patna.

"Once I met him, I realised that he was well aware of all the requirements. And, truly he was very helpful. He helped me set up the lab in a day and guided me

LAURELS

- Won the Leading School of the Year (Bihar) Award at the Indian Brands of the Year 2019 award ceremony.
- Won The Most Promising School of the Year Award by World Signature Awards 2019.
- Srijan Kumar received the President Award in 2015 from the then President of India, Pranab Mukherjee.
- Nikita received the Rashtrapati Scout and Guide Award presented by the President of India.
- The school cricket team won the prestigious Sukhdeo Narain Memorial Inter School Cricket tournament.
- Winner of the 11th Inter School U-16 Cricket Tournament organised by Northern Sahodaya Schools Complex
- The school has been consistently winning district level cricket tournament for the last three years.
- Hellens School got the 5th position in the first Bihar State Yoga Championship.
- Raju is training for the 100-meter dash at the state-level. Getting trained by the state authorities.
- Vaibhav Mishra and Priyanshu are getting training by SGFI (State Games Federation of India).
- Many of the students have successfully participated in various cultural events within and outside the district.
- Satyam, son of a junk dealer (Kabadiwala), participated in the Rajgir Mahotsav and got laurels for Tabla playing. He has completed 12th from the school.

further to have other facilities in place well before the inspection," he said.

Sanjay Singh said that setting up the library was not a challenge, as he is an avid reader and collection of books is his hobby. "Wherever I go, I buy a few books related to that place besides various fiction and literary publications. Like, when I went to Udaypur, I bought the history of Udaypur in two volumes. Similarly, Jim Corbett is my favourite author, I have all the books authored by him. Similarly, the famous Hindi poet Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's full collection I had in my library."

A proud alumni of the Kendriya Vidyalaya, Sanjay considers it a complete school. That's why he tried to





apply every good practice of Kendriya Vidyalaya at his school. Thus, sports and extracurricular activities remained an integral part of the school activities from the beginning.

“At the Kendriya Vidyalay, the last few periods on every Saturday are dedicated for CCA (co-curricular activities). I applied for it in my school, just changed the name to ECA (extra-curricular activities). We have got good ground, so we have ample facilities for cricket, volleyball, badminton, table tennis, athletics, archery and other games, taught by professionals,” he said.

After streamlining the facilities, he applied again to the CBSE, New Delhi, for affiliation. This time, the inspection and the process remained quite smooth. The board granted it affiliation upto Grade 10th in 2004.

The school got affiliation upto Grade 12th in 2010. The six years gap was a deliberate attempt from the school management as they wanted to strengthen facilities at the school before further expanding it.

“I wanted to meet the parameters so that we do not face similar problems. Once we were ready, we applied for an affiliation. The process went smoothly and the board granted us the affiliation. Today, our principal is in higher committees of the CBSE. Now, our principal goes for inspections of other schools,” he added.

Challenges

Slow response from the community and availability of good teachers were the two challenges the school faced initially, however, they soon overcame it by making extra efforts to meet the parents' expectations.

Recalling the initial days, he said that it was a bit difficult to earn parents' confidence because not many serious people were active in the business. Several people had started private schools as they had nothing else to do. They had a lack of passion, thus they were not able to give encouraging results.

“Parents were not ready to immediately welcome us. With the passage of time, people became interested in our school. Once they saw the results, it further strengthened our position in the society as a serious educational institution committed for educational upliftment of education in the society,” he said.

Similarly, finding competent teachers was a challenge initially. Parents also used to ask about teachers. He travelled places and hired teachers from other states. But soon he realised that selection of good teachers locally was a better option.

Once they joined the Hellens School, Sanjay realised that they were underutilised, they couldn't get proper atmosphere to use their abilities and were not

satisfied with the treatment they were getting. He also realised their earnest desire to share whatever knowledge they had acquired. Accordingly, he gave them free hand, full respect, and welcomed their ideas. Consequently, the school produced hundreds of medicos, engineers, doctors, administrative services officers, army officers, as well as top notch executives in the corporate sectors, who are equally proud of their alma mater and keep visiting the schools. Their visits also inspire the young students.

“What makes us different is our attitude. We do not compete with other schools, but adopt their best practices to improve ourselves. Rising together is the tagline of Sahodaya group of CBSE-affiliated schools. But we literally practice it. That has made us popular with one and all,” he added.

CSR

The school fully adheres to the RTE norm of admitting 25 per cent students from the weaker sections. In fact, these students have emerged as the change agent as far as motivating their community members towards education is concerned.

Apart from the students under the RTE norms, more than 200 students of the poor families (mainly wards of the school's bus drivers, conductors, peons and other staff) are getting free education.

There was a singer whom Sanjay met at the Sitamarhi festival. She also studied at the school for free. He even bought her a harmonium. The family got so close to her that his wife kept buying gift for her.

What makes us different is our attitude. We do not compete with other schools, but adopt their best practices to improve ourselves. Rising together is the tagline of Sahodaya group of CBSE-affiliated schools. But we literally practice it. That has made us popular with one and all.

– Sanjay Singh

“My son is a doctor. I have told him to open a hospital in Sitamarhi with full facilities and keep a section open for the needy, like we have done it at the school. I have also asked him to dedicate one day every week for free consultation. You may call it CSR or whatever, we keep doing such activities without thinking of any return from it,” he said.

School At Doorstep

Doorstep schools are in demand today. We have also started an initiative called School At Your Doorstep. As part of this initiative, we are trying to open nursery schools at various corners of Sitamarhi. We have named it Hellens School Blossom and offer facilities from Nursery to Std.2 at these centres.

“We prepare students in such a manner that they will get admission in any good school. Currently, two branches are operational. Our only plan is to increase the presence of Hellens School Blossom all over the town and open seven to eight new branches,” he said.



**and
the journey
continues ...**

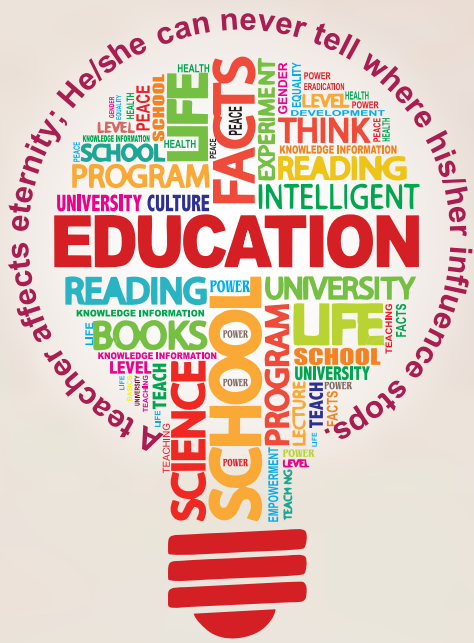




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