



PRESENTS

# EDUCATIONAL ALCHEMISTS

*Transforming Bihar's Districts*

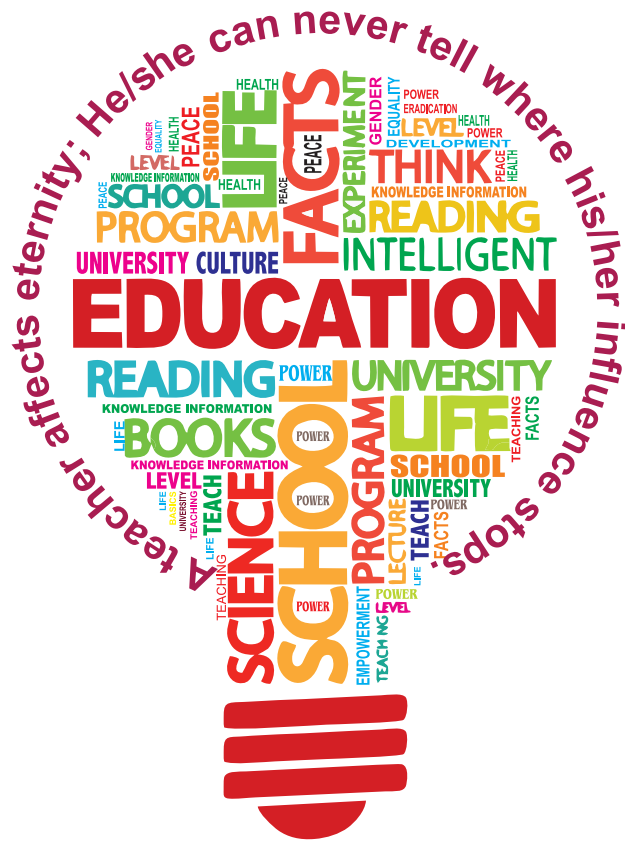




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This inspirational book is a biographical narrative that reveals the unique thought process, grand vision, untiring efforts and enthralling anecdotes of top achievers in the field of private education in Bihar.

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## PREFACE

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**T**oday, 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!”**

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**Ashit Kukian**  
CEO, Radio City

**A**s 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



*Suresh Kumar Gupta*

# Celebrating the Legacy of a Visionary Educator



Let's celebrate the lifetime achievements of Suresh Kumar Gupta, who founded Vidya Niketan, the first private school in Daudnagar in 1979, with firm belief that poverty should not sentence children to a life of failure

**I**magine the situation of a remote area of Bihar in 1970s... no electricity... no roads... households without regular income... Life in Daudnagar, a small town in Aurangabad district of Bihar, was not much different five decades ago. At a time when people face multiple crises like these, many of them would feel anxious, uncertain, lost in darkness. Can one imagine setting up a private school in such poverty-stricken conditions?

Perhaps yes.

In the face of hopelessness and discontent, a young visionary came forward in Daudnagar and decided to light a candle to guide children in his

neighbourhood through that darkness to a safe and sane future. He believed that after every dark night, there is a bright morning. Nothing is permanent. Nothing lasts forever. Not even darkness.

The youth was none other than Suresh Kumar Gupta, one of the most respected educationists in Bihar and Chairman of the Vidya Niketan Group of Schools, Daudnagar.

Despite facing all kinds of adversities, he truly believed that the light of knowledge illuminates the ways of mankind and brings peace, prosperity and felicity for all. His heart must be full of light that would have given him a ray of hope that everything will be fine.



**“ Whether students decide to make a career in medicine, engineering, space sciences or the financial world, they must get a solid foundation at the school to have a successful career later in life. We are leaving no stone unturned to achieve it.**

**—Anand Prakash**



“To find hope in the darkness, there is no better way than to light a candle, one would suggest. But one's ability to light a candle in darkness hinges on his belief that he can build the future bright. We must find reasons to turn darkness into light,” said Suresh Gupta.

It was this strong conviction that gave him strength to start a school, Vidya Niketan, Daudnagar, in 1979.

“I had firm belief that poverty may hinder the educational process, but it cannot sentence children to a life of failure. I still believe that. This belief came from my own life experience,” he said. “There were eleven members in my family and my father was the only earning member. I started giving tuition while I was a student of Class 8 in the village's government school to fund my studies. This practice continued even during my higher studies.”

He recalled, “By the time I completed my higher studies, I realised that every child is entitled to quality basic education. But a look at the government schools revealed that this goal was out of reach for many poor children. School attendance, especially for girls, was far from satisfactory, and many children used to drop out of school even before completing their primary education. Even those who attended school received an inadequate education. Thus I decided to give them an alternative.”

“Though, the school I established was not an ideal one in the beginning, I was confident that a solution to the problem of lack of education will come through this.”

## LAURELS

**Suresh Kumar Gupta's struggle to spread the light of education through the Vidya Niketan Group of Schools has been duly recognised by the society at various local, national and international forums. Some of the key achievements are:**

- 2009 :** International Excellence in Education Award presented by former Union Minister for HRD Murali Manohar Joshi.
- 2010 :** Indian education Excellence Award presented by Union Minister Harish Rawat.
- 2015 :** Honoured with the Bihar Keshari Education Award.
- 2016 :** State Bank of India honoured on the occasion of Teachers Day.
- 2019 :** Received the Indian Forum Education Award.
- 2023 :** Honoured with the Daudnagar Ratna Samman.

In his efforts to make Vidya Niketan distinct from government schools, he set an objective to impart knowledge and inculcate cultural values too. He charged only Rs7 per month as tuition fee, but spent a significant portion back on students in the form of snacks during lunch and stationary to needy



*From Left Anand Prakash, Suresh Kumar Gupta Vidya Sagar and Vinay Prakash.*



## MILESTONES

- 1979 : Vidya Niketan, first private school was established in Daudnagar.
- 1982 : Vidya Niketan students won an award from the then Governor of Bihar AR Kidwai.
- 1982 : The school witnessed revolt from the teachers, all of them resigned altogether. It shook the foundation of the school, not the confidence of its founder.
- 1982 : Suresh Kumar Gupta used this adversity as an opportunity to rebuild the school... bigger and better. He recruited a new set of teachers who gave the school a distinct identity.
- 1992 : Vidya Niketan got upgraded to a high school.
- 1994 : First batch of students appeared for the matriculation exam conducted by the Bihar School Examination Board, Patna.
- 2007 : Kidz World, a play school was established for kids. It was expanded up to Grade 7 in subsequent years.
- 2013 : Sanskar Vidya, an English medium high school affiliated to the CBSE, New Delhi, was founded.
- 2015 : Sanskar Vidya got CBSE affiliation up to Grade 10.
- 2017 : CBSE awarded affiliation up to +2 level to Sanskar Vidya.
- 2020 : The group hosted the International Children's Film Festival from Feb.7-9, 2020, screening 35 movies.
- 2022 : Kidz World established to serve kids in Nursery to KG classes.

students. He adopted various innovative ways to win parents' confidence as well. One of the important practices was visiting students home to meet parents and learn their response towards the child's performance. Consequently, the school strength grew from five students on day 1 to 150 within three months.

### *The Turning Point*

In his quest to add a new dimension to teaching, he started attending various teacher training camps and conferences. During one such meeting of school heads held in Jaipur in 1982, he had a chance meeting with renowned child psychologist and education trainer Sushila Datteya. She shared some important tips to make learning interesting. Once implemented, it proved very useful.

In 1982, Vidya Niketan's students participated in an inter-school cultural meet called Shishu Sangam held in Patna. They staged a play 'Mir Kallu Ki Gawaahi' for which they won third prize. They received the prize from the then Governor of Bihar AR Kidwai.

Despite all kinds of adversities, the school was going strong every day. Although the school was still in its infancy, this achievement made the school popular with the masses. Its students' stage performance and the award from the Governor of Bihar gave Vidya Niketan a new identity.

But success never comes alone. One's success makes many others feel uncomfortable. This came true in the success of Vidya Niketan as well when a disciplinary action against a teacher made all the teachers uncomfortable. They got so annoyed that all of them resigned altogether and established another school. Many in the society even considered it a conspiracy against the school's rising stature.



Recalling, Suresh Gupta said, "It was painful to see them leaving the school instead of becoming a part of its success story. It posed a great challenge as a school cannot run without teachers. I invited parents for an urgent meeting, explained the situation to them and requested them to support me in this challenging time and promised that they won't regret having confidence in me. I am thankful they agreed."

To make an immediate arrangement, he met the principal of the teachers' training college in Daudnagar and requested him to send his students to teach at the school for some time. He agreed. This arrangement provided temporary solace.

### ***Opportunity in Adversity***

It is said that every challenge brings an opportunity. Suresh Kumar Gupta too decided to rise from the rubble and rebuild the school... bigger and better. The years of experience and hard work had made him aware of the needs of students and the high expectations of parents and the society.

To meet their expectations, he decided to recruit professionally trained teachers. He visited Sasaram and hosted a walk-in interview for teachers. He offered them a good salary, accommodation and other facilities. The arrival of a new lot of teachers marked another milestone and gave the school a new identity. It proved to be a turning point in the history of the school and opened the gates of success.

As Vidya Niketan's popularity grew by leaps and bounds, people from neighbouring areas started requesting to expand the transport facilities so that their wards also get a chance to study at the school. In

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**“ To find hope in the darkness, there is no better way than to light a candle. But one's ability to light a candle in darkness hinges on his belief that he can build the future bright. We must find reasons to turn darkness into light.**

– Suresh Kumar Gupta.

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1985, the school got its first bus which increased the school strength manifold.

For the next few years, Suresh Gupta remained focused on strengthening the school with latest facilities and teaching aids besides training the teachers to deliver best results. At the same time, he continued visiting students' homes that built his relations even stronger.

In 1992, on parents' demand, he decided to add classes 8-10. Thus Vidya Niketan got upgraded to a high school. The first batch of students appeared for the matriculation (Grade 10) exam conducted by the Bihar School Examination Board, Patna, in 1994. Excellent results in the board examinations gave further boost to the school.

### ***New Schools***

**Kidz World:** After almost three decades of the foundation of Vidya Niketan, Suresh Gupta decided to make another initiative. He started a playschool for kids in 2007, aptly named it Kidz World. However, on parents' demand and well wishers' advice he turned it into an English medium primary



school open to admit students of Nursery to Grade 5. Later, he extended the teaching facilities up to Grade 7.

**Sanskar Vidya:** Overwhelming response to Kidz World made the school management realise the need and scope of a full-fledged English medium high school affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi. The new school was established in 2013 and named Sanskar Vidya. The CBSE awarded affiliation in 2015 for Grade 10 and for Grade 12 in 2017.

**Kidz World (playschool):** Suresh Gupta has the unique ability to change every adversity into an opportunity. This was proved right once again when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the education sector very hard. However, he saw this calamity as an opportunity to make another initiative – to start another playschool which will remain open for three hours only. The new school was also named Kidz World. This unique initiative was also welcomed by the residents of Daudnagar. The school continues to serve kids in Nursery to KG classes.

### *Gen Next*

The participation of the young generation has added a new dimension to the schools and the way education is imparted to children there. Suresh Kumar Gupta's eldest son Anand Prakash joined as CEO of the Vidya Niketan Group of Schools, while his second son Vidya Sagar became the Deputy CEO.

Together they have been making efforts to make education more significant for the future. "Whether a student decides to make a career in medicine, engineering, space sciences or the financial world, he must get a solid foundation at the school to have a successful career later in life. We are leaving no stone unturned to achieve it," said Anand Prakash.


He pointed out that the group has not neglected its social responsibilities. In line with CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), he has started ESR (Education Social Responsibility). As part of this initiative, more

than 250 poor students are enrolled in various schools of the group and receive all facilities like other students for free. On special occasions like Children's Day, students are taken to the less fortunate people and distribute books and stationary. They keep organising cleanup campaigns and plantation drives as well.

Together, they have also developed the Vision 2035, which is focused at stopping migration from Daudnagar – be it for higher studies or for employment.

"To stop migration from Daudnagar, we are planning to develop it as an education hub offering KG to PG (Kindergarten to Post-Graduation) in this town. Establishing a deemed university in Daudnagar is also part of it. We are also planning to convince people to set up industries here so that youngsters do not need to migrate to earn a decent livelihood," said Anand Prakash.

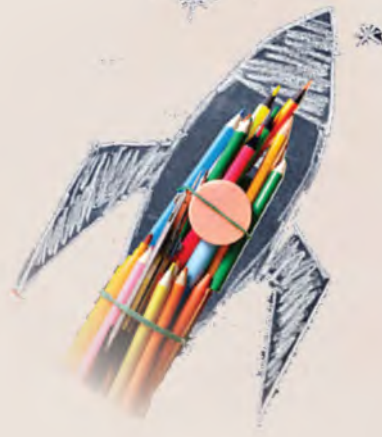
Suresh Kumar Gupta's youngest son, Vinay Prakash, has earned an M.Tech degree from the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Patna. But returned to Daudnagar and founded a start-up company in healthcare, Zonett Healthcare Private Limited. It offers online consultation to residents in this Tier 3 city to specialist doctors based in metro cities at a fraction of the actual cost borne by the patient if contacted directly.

"This company offers specialised medical facilities at minimum fees. To avail, one needs to get annual membership for Rs1,999 which entitles the person three free consultations per month, 36 consultations in a year, with a medical practitioner available in Daudnagar. According to the patient's condition, that doctor will fix an appointment with a specialist doctor for online consultation. In addition, the members will also get discount coupons for medicines and other medical tests," said Anand Prakash, adding that such startups will certainly create new job opportunities for the local youths. 

*From left: Vidya Sagar, Vinay Prakash, Suresh Kumar Gupta and Anand Prakash.*



**and  
the journey  
continues ...**

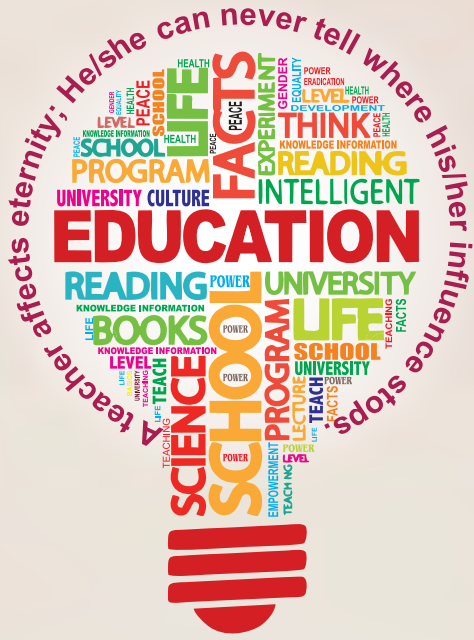




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