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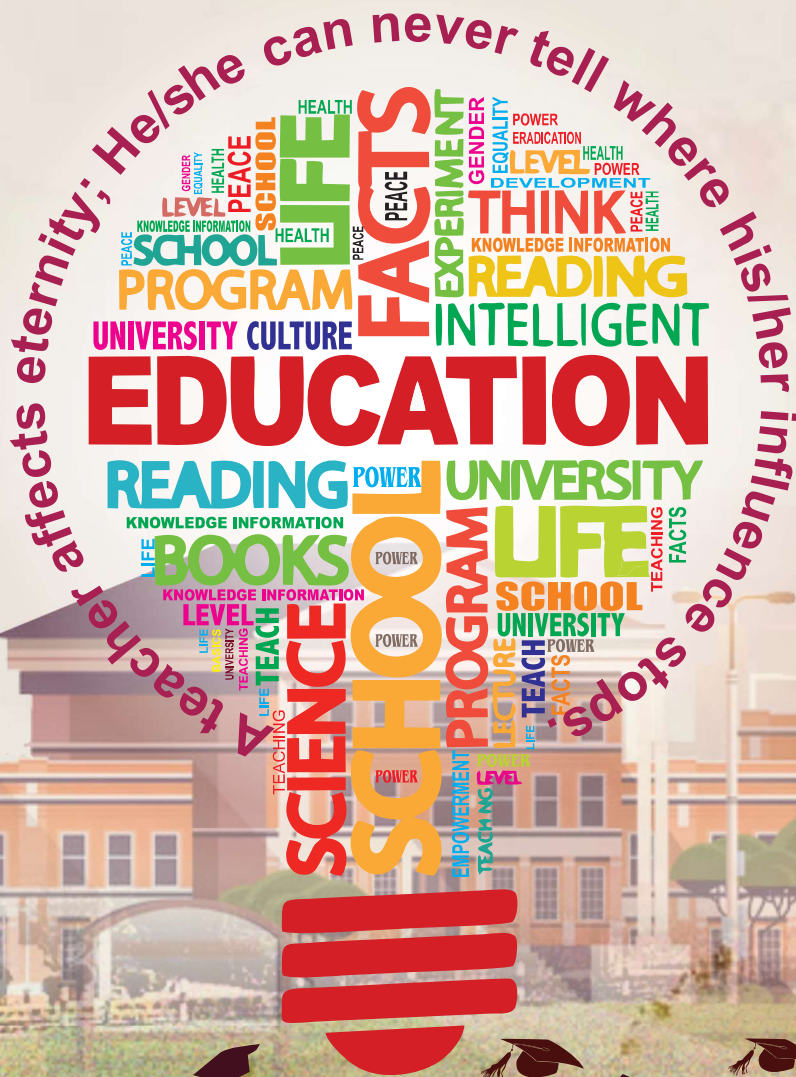
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Radio City

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

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



Raising Future Leaders with Value-Centric Education



St. Joseph Public School, Begusarai, has earned a name for itself as a value-based educational institution that places an emphasis on morals, integrity, character, spirituality and much more. It imparts the qualities of humility as well as strength to help students develop their personalities to effectively carry out their social, moral, and democratic responsibilities

Values education is inherent in the Indian civilisation, culture and traditions spanning over centuries. However, in the current social milieu, it is losing fast to the so-called modern culture. Thus it has become imperative for schools to inculcate in their students not just skills, but also values and attitudes that will help them live in harmony with themselves, with others and with nature.

It is sad to note that there are only a few institutions where values education is viewed as a core component of quality education, and the school heads make a conscious effort to provide such holistic education. They create sensitivity towards

an environment of mutual trust and respect. They are intensely involved with upholding values of democracy, secularism, justice, equality and freedom.

St. Joseph Public School, Begusarai, is one of those few schools that were established with the vision to inculcate a sense of responsibility towards values and purity of thought in students. Since its inception in 2002, it has been encouraging community-feeling among students to develop a sense of justice and quality of tolerance as well as infusing the spirit of nationalism and love for the motherland in students through strong character-building.



Anita Talwar



Along with value-based education, the school has been providing the widest possible scope for academic and educational achievement to students. It has won accolades for nurturing and fostering the intellectual abilities of students and developing scientific and rational thinking in students.

These exceptional efforts have made the school a proud alma mater to many bureaucrats, technocrats, medicos, top executives and administrators, who have carved a niche for themselves during the past two decades.

Inspiration

School Chairman Abhishek Kumar Singh said that he observed an incessant deterioration of real education, teacher's dedication and parent's commitment towards their children during his college days. After completing his school education from Begusarai, he moved to Patna for higher studies in 1993. He earned a post-graduation degree in Chemistry from the prestigious Patna University in 2000.

During his seven-year stay in Patna, Abhishek had a close look at the growing commercialisation of the education system which ultimately affected respect for the teachers. In his words, he witnessed the age-old 'guru-shishya' parampara collapsing. Saddened by this trend, he decided to dedicate his life to resurrect the values-based education as it was envisioned by his forefathers.

"After completing my university degree, I returned home and decided to start a school. I wanted to

prevent this deterioration further. I realised that there should be a close partnership between the trinity of the learning process—the child, the teacher and the parent," he said.

He said that parents must realise that admission of a child in the school is not the end of the parent's responsibility towards his/her ward. The child is at the school for about six hours only on school days. Thus parents must see what he does during the remaining hours of the day and during the holidays. Without their cooperation, the school may not ensure good education and proper development of the child.

Abhishek said, "I ensure that every teacher and parent realise that grooming a child is the biggest responsibility for all of us. We must realise that the child is the centre of our universe. There should be a perfect synergy between the crucial stakeholders – the parent must realise that he/she is a teacher at home as the teacher is a parent at the school."

Challenges

The school was founded on Jan.20, 2002, from Nursery to Grade 5, with one student. The journey from one student in 2002-2003 to more than 4000 students in 2023-24 was not a cake walk. From a paltry beginning to a well-established school affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi, up to +2 levels and accredited by the British Council – the glorious journey was the result of Abhishek's sincere efforts, lots of sacrifice and hard work.



“I was a single child of my parents. With an M.Sc. (Chemistry) degree from a prestigious university, I could have gone for research or joined some college as a faculty member. In fact, my parents and other members of the family were expecting the same. So, when I dropped the idea of establishing a school in Begusarai, it was outrightly rejected.”

“It was quite a natural reaction as I belonged to a zamindar (landlord) family. I was supposed to do something big. I was suggested to go abroad to pursue higher studies and join some research programme just like my maternal grandfather did. He studied at the University of California and earned a PhD as well. When I remained steadfast in my decision to establish a school, I was suggested to go back to Patna and do the same on a bigger scale.”

“When I refused to change my decision, I got support from my mother, but I was left to fend for myself. Perhaps, they might have thought that I will not be able to sustain for long, because of the hard work it needs, or to check my conviction and dedication towards the cause,” he recalled.

With firm conviction and dedication towards the cause, he started the school in a small building with one student. It took around two years to convince his parents as well as parents of the school-going children in the neighbourhood to get their wards admitted to this school. Consequently, the strength reached 300 students in 2004 which further grew to 500 in 2005.

“Encouraged by the increasing number of students and growing trust of parents, he applied to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi, for affiliation. The CBSE, New Delhi, granted affiliation up to Grade 10 in 2007 and extended it further up to Grade 12 in 2009.

- School Chairman Abhishek Kumar Singh and four children met the President of India Pranab Mukherjee on the occasion of Children's Day 2016. The students also participated in Children's Day programmes at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.
- The Confederation of Education Excellence Award 2016 presented to St Joseph School, Begusarai, for Innovative School Wide Programme. The award was given away by Manish Sisodiya, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi.
- The school received the Performance Excellence Award for Overall Performance in Silverzone Olympiads 2015-2016, by the Silverzone Foundation, New Delhi.
- The Leadership Award for Excellence was presented to Abhishek Kumar Singh on April 22, 2017, at the “Education 2025: Students First” Education Conclave and Excellence Awards 2017, held in New Delhi, by the Confederation of Education Excellence.
- School Chairman Abhishek Kumar Singh was honoured by the Silverzone Foundation, New Delhi, for playing a vital role in every respect to enhance the competitive spirit of the students to perform well in the Silverzone Olympiads 2017-2018.

Abhishek said that at his school values education is viewed as a core component of quality education. Thus teachers are constantly motivated to explore new methods and techniques in the classrooms and to make full use of resources and technology to reinforce the learning process.

“The school is dedicated to prepare conscious, disciplined and responsible citizens with a sense of integrity and honesty. The school believes in the worth and uniqueness of the individual and aims at fostering each individual's potentialities and therefore provides varied opportunities for successful learning and growth. This journey begins in classrooms and goes much beyond its boundaries into the real world,” he added.

Facilities

The school has well-equipped Physics, Chemistry, Bio and Math labs. Respective subject demonstrators demonstrate experiments to students and make them do it. The school has a systematic offline library with more than ten thousand academic as well as reference books in it accessible to all students. Any student can take a book for seven days.



Principal Anita Talwar said that education is an ongoing process but the foundation of what one learns is laid down during his/her schooling. School shapes a child in the best form s/he can grow up into. Apart from the three Rs—the three basic skills taught in schools: reading, writing and arithmetic (the Rs refer to Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic)—a child learns academic and civic sense from school. It's truly a nurturing period which should never be taken lightly by any stakeholders.

“The overall development of a child depends on how she is groomed during schooling and what roles different stakeholders—parents, teachers, peers, families, community members and school play in nurturing the child,” she said.

She pointed out that the new National Education Policy (NEP) emphasises on mutual understanding and cooperation among all stakeholders for the best output and the school works in tune with the NEP guidelines to impart better education. It has opened new ground for students to train themselves in a variety of skills/techniques and learning which are beneficial from an individual's professional as well as research point of view.

“The school focuses on imparting multi-disciplinary education to the students so that a holistic approach and output of learning can be realised. We teach children numeracy, literacy, everyday science and social studies through play-way methods and story-telling. We are committed to improve the quality and credibility of education and address the gaps without any 'if' or 'but',” said the principal.

“Academic, vocational and extra-curricular activities have been given equal footing with quality education. We have started Coding and Artificial Intelligence from std. VI onwards so that students can equip themselves with the challenges of the changing times, national and global demands, creative trends and values.”

“We try to mould every student into a consistent learner, good listener and understanding individual capable of leading in his/ her own respective field. To achieve this goal, we believe parenting should go hand in hand with the teaching and learning process which attracts much emphasis and difference in schooling,” she added.

Holistic Development

The school aims at holistic development of students. To ignite this spirit, the institution organises an array of extracurricular activities and encourages each student to participate. It helps nurture the students as well-balanced individuals having an impressive academic record and impeccable personality.

Abhishek Kumar Singh said, “We aim at nurturing saplings which could be fruitful to the society and nation. We conduct yoga and dhyaan practices under the supervision of a well-trained yoga teacher so that students can learn how to concentrate and realise the oneness of body, mind, spirit and universe.”

He pointed out that enough importance is given to sports activities as sports stimulate the physical and mental growth of a child. “A student who regularly plays sports develops better body strength and coordination with people around. It strengthens

MILESTONES	
2002	: The school was established on Jan.20.
2007	: The CBSE, New Delhi, granted affiliation up to Grade 10.
2009	: The CBSE affiliation was extended further up to Grade 12.
2010	: Started St. Joseph Secondary School, Balia, Begusarai.
2012	: Another school was set up in Teghda called St. Joseph Academy.



team spirit and offers opportunities to work with different sorts of people from different spheres of life, society and nationality. Our students play games and get the stamina to overcome obstacles and pave their way ahead under the guidance of capable sports teachers. They show their strength and skills on the field," he added.

"Today's education system is not just confined to academics but we also focus on imparting skills to students' personality development, confidence building, communication skills and etiquettes. Cultural activities come into play in strengthening these aspects of personality," he added.

Encouraging students to participate in cultural activities is one of the most effective ways to inculcate personality-related skills. These include activities like dancing, singing, sports, etc. It is firmly boosting up confidence, energising oneself and utilising time for proper recreation. The school offers abundant cultural enrichment activities such as Annual function, Inter-House Music & Dance Competition, Essay writing & Inter-House Debate Competition, Diya and Rangoli making Competition and Painting Competitions.

Future Plans

The distinct identity of St. Joseph Public School, Begusarai, made it popular with the masses. It was quite natural that parents from neighboring areas also requested Abhishek Kumar Singh to set up such quality schools in other areas as well.

Thus, in 2010, he set up the St. Joseph Secondary School in Balia, Begusarai, offering facilities to students from Nursery to Class X. Affiliation is under-process.

Another school was set up in Teghda in 2012, called St. Joseph Academy. This school is already affiliated till Grade 12.

"We have also applied to the DPS Society to grant us a franchise to set up a world-class institution like the Delhi Public School in Begusarai as well. There are only four DPS in Bihar and there is ample scope for such an institution in this part of the world," he said.

He is also planning to establish a university in Begusarai. Apart from the regular graduate and post-graduate degree classes in various streams including science, arts and commerce, the university will also have teachers training college, nursing college, polytechnic college. Engineering and medical colleges will be added at a later stage.

"We have already applied in 2017 to the Bihar government for permission. Once the permission is granted, we will make all efforts to make it operational as soon as possible. Although ours will be a private university, it will serve students in this region well who have been demanding the government to establish a university in Begusarai," he added.

A high-profile committee formed by the government has already submitted its report to the government. We are waiting for the government to issue the Letter of Intent (LoI) as soon as possible. After the issuance of LoI, we may start academic activities in temporary premises, for which we have already made the allocation. Within two years, we will have to construct a proper campus. The government might give a two years extension to complete it.

"We are confident to start the university by 2025," concluded Abhishek.

