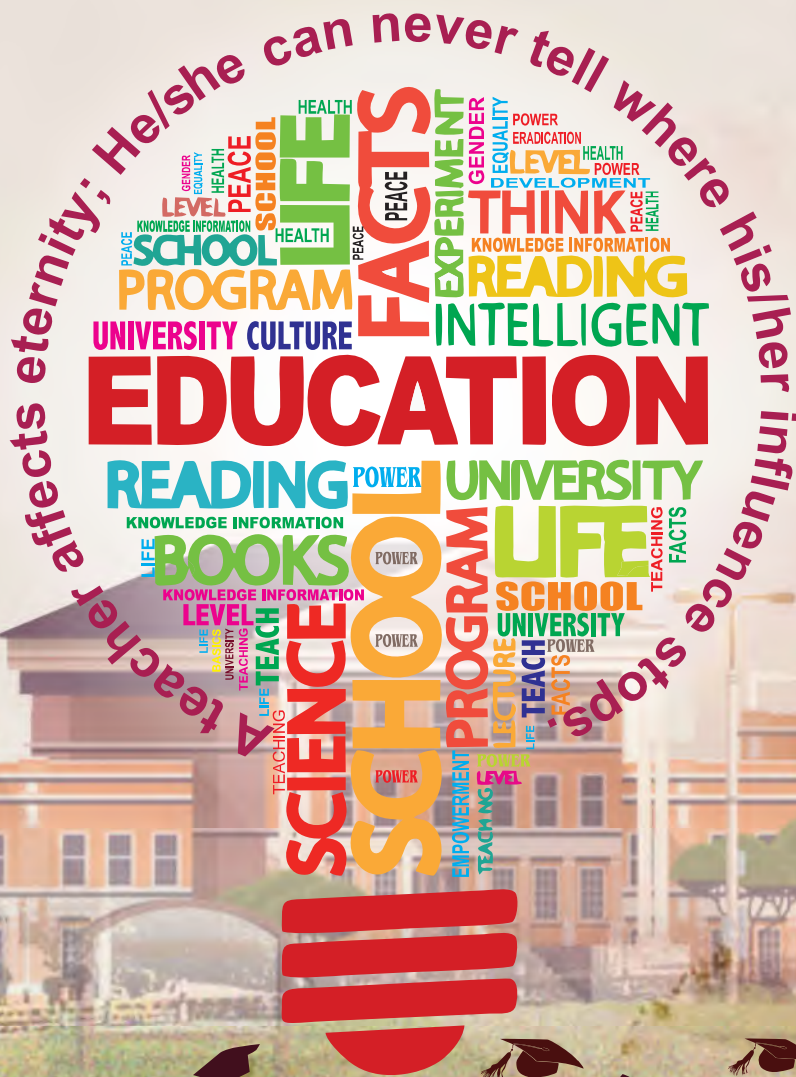




PRESENTS

# EDUCATIONAL ALCHEMISTS

*Transforming Bihar's Districts*





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## *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.

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

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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



*Mithlesh Kumar Singh*

# Building a Sustainable, Secure, Superior Future



It is said that changemakers dare to dream of a world positively different from the one they are living in. The GS Residential School, Sasaram, is a living example of bringing that dream to reality

**H**aving a dream to see people around you grow with you is quite common. In fact, this is a dream that every noble soul would love to nurture. You may find a person espousing such wishes next door. Now, imagine a scenario where someone actually sacrifices his glorious career with the incessant opportunity of scaling new heights to realise this dream... Sounds alien? Must be. If not, you might feel as if this was a situation lifted from a Bollywood movie where the protagonist does all kinds of unbelievable acts to entertain the audience.

The larger-than-life image portrayed by a hero on the silver screen gives people hope that someone will also come to them and will do everything possible to transform their lives. The possibility of witnessing something like this in real life is so remote that even if you come across something similar happening in your neighbourhood, you don't believe it at once.

A visit to the GS Residential School, Sasaram, a historical town in Bihar, will make you believe that dedicated efforts of an individual can actually bring significant changes to people's lives as this small town school is transforming children into global citizens ready to carve a niche for themselves.

Late Lalan Prasad Singh, a prominent member of the society, had a dream of setting up a school to give good quality education through new technology with a view to bring about a balanced and harmonious development of the future citizens of the country.

Once his sons, Brajesh Kumar Singh and Mithlesh Kumar Singh, completed their studies and started earning laurels in their chosen fields, he started exploring ways to realise the dream to offer modern education to other children in the neighbourhood as well.





He got support from his friend and a renowned educationist SN Sharma, who promised to guide him in setting up the basic infrastructure and develop a strong academic programme to nurture the students' personality on progressive lines.

Soon, support started pouring in from other quarters as well.

But he had bigger plans. To achieve it, he wanted to rope in his youngest son Mithlesh Kumar Singh, who was then working in a senior managerial position with a prominent multinational company, and was posted in New Delhi. Perhaps, Lalan Prasad Singh wanted to use Mithlesh's expertise and the exposure he had got while working with the multinational workforce to prepare the next generation of Sasaram for their future and empower social transformation through them.

Soon, he selected a plot spread over 12 acres of land in a prominent location to construct the school building, fixed the date for the foundation stone laying ceremony, informed Mithlesh about his decision and asked him to be present on the occasion.

Recalling, Mithlesh said, "I was surprised by this sudden decision, but this was his style of working. Once he had made the decision and asked me to join him in this dream project, I had no option but to say ... yes."

"I was then working as a Deputy Manager with the UHG (UnitedHealth Group), a US-based MNC, which was a Fortune 7 company. I was associated with an important project, for which I was scheduled to travel to the US for six months. I requested him to

allow me complete the project or to give me some time so that I could apply for leave and hand over the project to my colleagues. But he didn't agree to postpone the ceremony."

The foundation stone of the school was laid on the fixed date. Naturally, Mithlesh could not attend the ceremony.

As soon as his leave was approved, he left for home. But destiny had other plans.

"It was a night-long train journey from New Delhi to Sasaram. It was past midnight, when I got a call from home... my father had passed away..." said Mithlesh.

He had a lump in his throat as he talked more about the sudden demise of his father. In fact, he was so overcome with emotion that he stopped speaking. But his silence was enough to express how desperate he was.

"That was the turning point in my life," he said.

Now the sole aim of Mithlesh's life was to realise the dream nurtured by his father late Lalan Prasad Singh. His brother Brajesh Kumar Singh extended full support.

Mithlesh Kumar Singh returned to New Delhi only to submit his resignation. When he shared his decision, his bosses, colleagues remained stunned in disbelief. Even bigger shock came when he revealed that he was resigning not just from that eminent organisation but saying goodbye to professional life forever.



have imagined even in his dream to leave such a glorious job at the peak of his career. I was working with a Fortune 7 company in a senior position. I was selected for the annual performance award, the 'Service Hero', just a few months ago. I was scheduled to go to Texas the next month and had the option to settle down in the US," said Mithlesh.

"But, it was all meaningless to me. Now, I had a dream, nothing could have taken it away. I returned home after about a month to realise that dream," he added.

### ***The Changemaker***

As it is said, 'Changemakers dare to dream of a world positively different than the one they are living in', Mithlesh was determined to change the world around him.

Soon, both the brothers sat together to plan the project from scratch. Brajesh, who is also an artist, designed the building. They sold some ancestral property to raise funds for the school building. Soon construction started keeping in mind all the facilities of a modern school that also meet the criteria set by the CBSE, New Delhi. Initially, two floors of the building were constructed. Soon, it was equipped with all the facilities needed.

Registration opened for admission in various classes – Nursery to Grade 8 in December 2014. Academic activities started from the session 2015-2016 with a significant number of 250 students.

Chairman of the school Brajesh Kumar Singh and Mithlesh Kumar Singh, who now serves as Director of the school, were elated by the overwhelming response from the society.

never a business project for us. It was a medium to bring changes to the lives of our students. We kept that in mind at every stage," said Mithlesh.

"My father always maintained that rich kids may go to any corner of the world to study, not the son of a peasant. Thus our school should serve modern education at a modest fee that remains affordable to one and all. It doesn't mean that it is a charitable service. We charge only the mandatory fees like tuition fee, transport fee and the hostel fee. If you have a look at our fee structure, you won't find any hidden charges," he added.

### ***The Challenges***

The challenging phase began when they decided to recruit teachers. After initial search in Sasaram and the neighbouring districts, they realised the need of travelling to other states to hire talented teachers who are professionally committed too.

"With some good reference, our first stop was Darjeeling, where we got the principal and vice-principal for the school. Together, we decided to recruit teachers from other states as well. A major part of our academic faculty is composed of people from West Bengal, North East states and Nepal," said Mithlesh.

Impressed by the excellent infrastructure and academic facilities of the school, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi, awarded affiliation in 2016.

Despite soaring demand, the school is open to admit only about 250-300 new students every year, to ensure that the existing students receive all the facilities. Admission in Grade 1-9 is granted on the





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*– Mithlesh Kumar Singh*

basis of performance in written tests, while oral interviews are conducted for admission in Nursery and KG classes.

“We are happy with the limited number of students, but serious parents,” he said.

“Though children are very talented, not many parents are committed towards the educational performance of their wards. It is quite challenging to convince parents to focus on their children's talent,” he lamented.

Explaining, Mithlesh said that maintaining students' academic performance is a challenge due to lack of interest from parents. They want their children to study at a reputed CBSE-affiliated school with good academic and extra-curricular facilities, but they don't take interest in providing them with a proper atmosphere at home.

Parents' support is crucial for the constant success of a child. Unfortunately, the majority of them are not serious about fulfilling their responsibilities, which is not just limited to paying the school fee on time. They need to spend quality time with children, take interest in their academic and co-curricular activities and inspire them to perform well in sports too.

“We have been trying hard to convince them. Changes are seen, but it will take time to bring noticeable changes,” he said.

### ***The Edge***

The GS Residential School recognises that schooling is about each individual child and not about the system. Therefore, it has designed various learning activities to ensure that the children are absorbed in the subjects and are excited about their schooling experience.



learning is what sets them apart. "Our primary goal is to develop the students to face the highs and lows of life ahead while retaining the values and ideals that they grow with. We prepare the students for a brighter tomorrow in terms of education, intellect as well as personal growth."

"We also understand that education is more than mere learning from the textbook. It is about the holistic development of the children – mind, body and spirit. Thus the school runs a plethora of activities organised by various clubs including Health & Wellness Club, Eco Club and Heritage Club," he said.

The school also has a proper cricket academy and professional Karate trainer. The management is planning to add Scouts & Guides, NCC, shooting range, horse riding and swimming pool soon.

### ***Real World Engagement***

The school follows an innovative teaching design that guides children towards engaging in the real world, exploring and figuring out for oneself, thus learning through themes, projects, apprenticeships - - rather than rote learning from textbooks.

The school has also adopted a tailor-made curriculum that is aligned with the CBSE guidelines and incorporates traditional subjects, life-skills, adventure, sports and arts -- both fine arts & performing arts -- to support the all-around development of the child.

Another important aspect is the school's 'student appreciation system' that allows teachers to understand and assess each child's strengths, interpreting children's portfolios through periodic observations and concept specific rubrics instead of relying on traditional exams alone.

"Our teachers love to teach children and are capable of inspirational leadership. The school is connected to parents, the local community and the

tune around the world from a very young age," he added.

### ***Vision for the Future***

Mithlesh said that the school focuses on the community leadership system that includes all stakeholders and the environment and connects children to them through parenting workshops, parent-teacher association, Student Parliament and Environment Development projects.

Despite their continuous efforts, they have not achieved much success in convincing parents to give a proper atmosphere at home for the students' overall development. Merely 20 per cent of parents have understood the necessities of their involvement in their wards' development.

Mithlesh said that the kind of development in a student's personality he would like to see can be achieved only if he/she stays at the school and utilises the proper atmosphere 24x7. This may lead towards converting it into a fully residential school.

At present, the hostel has the facilities to accommodate 100 students and it is fully occupied. It has children from various neighbouring areas in the radius of about 100km including Ara, Buxar, Kaimur, Aurangabad in Bihar as well as from Chandauli and Gazipur in UP.

Mithlesh said that he has been receiving overwhelming response from parents for hostel facilities, but unable to cater to them. He has realised that there are parents who wish to send their wards to good residential schools, if available in nearby locations, for their proper grooming, apart from offering curricular, co- curricular, cultural and sports facilities.

"Thus we are planning to convert this facility into a fully residential school which may cater to a limited number of 500-600 students. Proper grooming of every child under our 24x7 guidance will be more satisfying for us as well," he said.



**and  
the journey  
continues ...**





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