

NATURE Portrait and Budget Proposal Gyan Jyoti School
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NATURE

National Association Targeting Upliftment and Rehabilitation through Education [NATURE] was established in the year 2004 with the aim to introduce innovative teaching and learning strategies at the elementary level for underprivileged children from the slums who have never been exposed to any form of education. NATURE aims to make the unprivileged section of the society, aware of their rights and pave way for their social economic empowerment through education. The profiles of the founding member of this NGO are the following:

Name	Post held in NATURE	Job Profile	Qualification
Manjula Rath	Chairperson	Lecturer in Political Science in Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi	B.Ed., M.A and M. Phil in Political Science
Kajal Sinha	Vice-Chairperson	Program Manager, ICICI Bank	B.Ed, MBA
Amita	Secretary-General	Teacher of Political Science in Senior Secondary School	B.Ed., M.Ed. M.Phil
Ratnabali/ Ratna Jha	Joint - Secretary	Assistant Professor in Law, Faculty of Law, University of Delhi	B.Sc, LL.B, LL.M
Manisha	Treasurer	Teacher of Social Science in Higher Secondary School	B.Ed and M.Ed

Besides education, NATURE organizes seminars and health related projects on issues relating to reproductive health, Aids awareness, asthma, drug abuse, seasonal diseases such as Dengue, health and hygiene, girl child education awareness, and child labor laws. During 2007-2008, the following projects have been organized:

- January 4, 2007 and 2008: On the occasion Louis Braille's birth anniversary an eye check-up camp was organized for the residents of the slum area of Raghubir Nagar at the office of NATURE.
- April 7, 2007 and 2008: Seminar to spread awareness about Dengue.
- October 2, 2007: Free General Health check-up for students.
- December 1, 2007: Seminar to spread awareness about AIDS.
- July 11, 2008: Seminar on Family Planning.

Because of lack of infrastructure, NATURE utilizes the classrooms of Gyan Jyoti School on holidays to conduct seminars and health check-ups. The speakers of the seminars and doctors of the health camps give charitable services and are not paid for the events. The financial and material resources came from personal contribution.

However, these services to community are not the main focus of NATURE. About 70% of the work of this NGO goes to Gyan Jyoti School.

GYAN JYOTI

Gyan Jyoti School was established by NATURE in the year 2005 to empower children from the slum areas with knowledge and basic skills so that they can become part of the mainstream society. The school was started under a tree with no proper establishment and funds. The first year was a difficult period, as illiterate parents had to be convinced to send their children to school on a regular basis. NATURE also had to persuade the children to attend school on a regular basis. The lack of funds and other incentives also made this an arduous task. In spite of these initial hurdles the school was started with fifteen students and one teacher which rose to fifty students and two teachers in the year 2007.

The children are living with their families in slum clusters of Raghubir Nagar, mostly below poverty line. The parents often are illiterate and so their children are first generation learners. NATURE knows most of them since it is not unusual that the parents ask NATURE for help of their problems. NATURE also involves parents in seminars and lectures meant for raising awareness, in organizing different activities such as annual function, plays, health camps, and cultural activities.

Currently, the school is housed in two rented rooms at Rughubir Nagar. In each room, students are grouped on the basis of grades. Whenever possible, the teachers alternate them for outdoor and indoor activities so that the room is left to 1-2 groups of students at a time. The outdoor activities (nearby Public Park) include learning of nursery rhymes in group, gardening and nature walk in addition to sports and team activities. The students are taught at two different levels according to their competence. Level 1 comprises of students who know basic reading and writing and are comfortable with books up to class fourth. Level 2 comprises of students who cannot read nor write. Currently 70 children between the age of 5 and 14 are enrolled with Gyan Jyoti.

NATURE would like to employ teachers who have professional degree; however with the minimal salary compromises on their qualification have to be accepted. However NATURE tries to make up the teacher's lack of professional qualification by giving them initial 15 days training before they start teaching by NATURE members. Currently there are 3 teachers and 1 volunteer working for Gyan Jyoti, in particular:

Name	Age	Educational qualification	Professional degree	Post held in NATURE	Salary per month
Ms. Bhagwati	19	Under-graduate	None	Teacher	Rs. 2000
Ms. Reena	21	Under-graduate	None	Teacher	Rs. 2000
Ms. Neeta	20	Under-graduate	None	Teacher	Rs. 2000
Ms. Pinky	23	10+2	None	Volunteer	

The members and teachers of Gyan Jyoti study the curriculums of the main schools and then modify them to suit the method of teaching as well as the needs of children at Gyan Jyoti, thereby preparing the children for their absorption in the main school. Furthermore NATURE makes the children visit the main schools to expose them to the various modern facilities provided there so that they are familiar with them when they join the main school. It also motivates them to work harder in order to get admitted themselves in those schools.

NATURE plays the role akin to a guardian with respect to their children for admitting them to the main school after they pass-out from our Gyan Jyoti by convincing the school authorities personally about the various talent and potential of our children. NATURE also prepares their parents for their higher education, especially in the case of girl child to continue with their education in the main school. In 2008, 10 children could be mainstreamed.

Apart from the main subjects extra curricular activities are provided in the form of art and craft, clay modeling and music. Gyan Jyoti also takes the children for visits in planetariums, national science centre and other educative places enroll them for summer workshops so that they get adequate knowledge.

In addition to education, Gyan Jyoti provides mid-day meals, uniforms, books, stationeries, socks, shoes, tooth brush, tooth paste, comb, and handkerchiefs to the children free of cost. Most of this material is sponsored by private companies or supported by non-regular (not fixed person) individual donors. In case of scarcity of donation or non-availability of sponsorship, personal contribution of the founder members runs the organization's activities. Wearing uniform instills in the students a sense of equality and of being a school-going child as well. The parents also feel proud to see their children dress up in uniforms like other kids who belong to the higher economic strata.

COOPERATION WITH NOON

The following are Gyan Jyoti's expansion plans for the future which of course is dependent upon the availability of resources:

- Upgradation of the school
- Employment of professionally trained teachers to improve the quality of education
- Provision of proper infrastructure equipped with modern facilities such as building / classrooms, library, laboratory, computer room, playground, etc.
- Provision of vocational training to help the children in improving their employment opportunities
- Conduction of social and educational research

