

ACTIVITY REPORT

**ANANT CHARITABLE TRUST
KURUKSHETRA**

Activity Report – Anant Charitable Trust

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1 About the organization

Anant charitable trust was founded by a retired Physics Professor, Mr. B S Nehra in the year 2002 with the objective to uplift the condition of rural women in the field of education namely basic education, technical education, and higher education. Almost immediately after its inception in May 2002, Anant started Kanya Gurukul, a residential school for girls in village Bachgaon Gamri (Kurukshetra, India) with 28 girls from nearby villages. Since that time the school has grown significantly providing quality education to 550 girls, from Pre-Nursery to 10+2 grades, coming from different states of India.

Anant Charitable Trust's beau ideal emphasizes on building highly personalized, high-quality schools that provide an alternative to the failing municipal/Govt. school system and address the lacunae that exist in the current social norms towards educating the girl child. Our schools seek to provide a choice to families and communities that would otherwise not have access to high quality education, particularly in communities where more than 75% of the families have low-income which makes them eligible for free, subsidized or reduced-price education.

Anant plans to grow to 100 schools, in strategic geographies distributed across the nation. This approach of concentrated growth is designed to lead to both the direct and indirect impact that Anant seeks.

Anant believes that impact will require scale, and that at 100 schools, it will be:

1. Big enough to be relevant in India, and
2. Big enough to reach financially sustainability, but
3. Small enough to preserve flexibility, its culture, and values

2 Origin

In the year 2002 a retired physics professor from Engineering College, Kurukshetra dreamed of bringing back to school those girls who were forced to drop out of school for various socio-economic reasons. With this objective in mind Mr. Balwant Singh Nehra founded Anant Charitable Trust in April 2002.

Kanya Gurukul (Name changed to Amatir Kanya Gurukul in year 2016) came into existence within a month of the registration of the Anant Charitable Trust. This gurukul was started in Mr. Nehra's ancestral house at village Bachgaon Gamri with the aim to provide basic education to girls in Gamri and neighboring villages. Initially 28 girls of 6th to 8th grade were admitted in the school. Out of those, 8 girls stayed-in at the hostel/ancestral house. The gurukul received tremendous response from the local communities and soon word about its good work spread to neighboring states resulting into continuous increase in the admissions at the gurukul. To meet this increasing demand, the gurukul moved from ancestral house first to modified animal shelter converted into classroom, then to a modified farm house converted into classrooms and finally into its new school building in Sept 2004. Today 550 girls from various states of India are getting education at Kanya Gurukul with its campus spread over in more than 15 acres, having an academic building and a hostel building with all modern amenities to accommodate 250 girls.

3 Challenges

The Girl Child Education Challenges in India

The Right to Education makes education a fundamental right for every Indian but still India has the highest illiteracy rate of any country in the world. 37% of the world's illiterate are Indians. 58% of Indian children don't complete primary school. 90% of children do not complete all levels of schooling. Almost 11.5% of Indian Govt. budget is earmarked for education but still states per pupil spending is one of lowest in the world. The Indian school's curriculum is one of the most progressive in the world still the fact that 50% of the children in grade V can't read a paragraph correctly, even in their mother tongue, speaks volumes of the Quality of education provided to children, which is much below what a country like India aspires for.

All these shocking statistics point to an education crisis and question the future of India.

The state of educating the girl child is even worse; girls are one of the most marginalized groups, with more than half being excluded from education for various reasons. The challenge is not only to give girls the opportunity for schooling, but also to address the factors to improve their retention in school. And better understanding the nature of barriers that lead to their exclusion in various countries, is the first step.

Social and economic barriers: Social exclusion of women in India is deep rooted, mainly seen in the villages and male dominated societies, where the role of the female is restricted to serving the men and the families. Many rural as well as impoverished migrant families in cities prefer educating boys over girls, given better labor market opportunities for boys and the fact that girls are married away early, no longer providing any benefits for their own families.

Lack of safety in rural and semi urban Communities: Most of India's poor live in rural and semi urban areas. The more the distance to the schools the lesser the school attendance and more the security risk to the girl child walking to school. Incidents of eve teasing, abduction and rapes have become a big deterrent factor in school participation. Any bad name tarnishing the girls' character is considered a block towards the marriage of the girl. If going to school can be a cause for such incidents, then parents prefer to keep the girl at home.

Poor Quality of Schools: In our country sending girls to school can be viewed as not worth the effort when the quality of schools for poor people is abysmal. Education in public schools for rural girls and women is largely limited to acquiring literacy and numeracy. The excessive emphasis on meeting quantitative targets through free and compulsory primary education schemes is referred to as dichotomization of educational provision into 'access first' vs. 'quality later'

Deprived children mostly girls are offered this quality compromised free education through what is known as "transitional schools". These schools merely exist on paper with almost no infrastructure or teachers. Teachers are rarely qualified for the job and often less likely to come to work, fewer hours of instruction are offered, teaching methods emphasize rote learning more than investigation, textbooks and instructional materials are less likely to arrive on time, and the physical infrastructure of the school is

more likely to lack electricity, water, sanitary facilities and other basic features. The quality of school affects the learning, progress and completion of school by the girls.

Given that family of the girl in all likelihood views her as a burden and with the availability of such poor-quality schools, the chances that the parents would rather have their girl child work as a menial laborer in households and farms is very high as she is perceived as at least being productive.

4 Our Approach

Illiteracy is one of the main obstacles in women empowerment in India. Socio-economic development efforts to combat poverty can only succeed if women are part of the solution. Doing so yields a double dividend. When women are educated and economically empowered, they raise healthier, better-educated families. Their countries are more economically prosperous because of it, too. We want to empower women as economic agents and better their ability to access markets on competitive and equitable terms.

Education, knowledge and skills remove poverty and sustain economic growth and empowerment. Literacy in India means ability to write one's name on a piece of paper. In today's technological age this idea itself is obsolete. We need to redefine what literacy means in today's time.

One powerful way to improve India's education system is to increase the supply of high-quality alternatives to the current public schools. Research has shown that student performance increases when students are educated in environments where they know and are known by their teachers, where their education is not a matter of accident but of conscious effort. When parents have meaningful choices, they can select a school that best meets the needs of their social and economic commitments with respect to educating their girl child. Furthermore, by going through the process of choosing a school, parents get more involved in their child's education. This is a powerful combination that has traditionally only been available to those who can afford to send their students to private schools which in India translate to the choice being awarded to the male child in the family. To reach our goals of educating the girl child at the lowest level and alter the system, real choices must be made available to families at all socio-economic levels.

For that choice to be effective, parents must have:

1. A reliable supply of high-quality alternatives;
2. Reasonable access to those schools, including transportation; and
3. Information to make informed choices about which school will provide the best education for their individual needs keeping in mind all socio-economic factors that will affect their decision making.

Anant is at an important juncture. Even more than at its founding, the organization's work has tremendous potential to catalyze change in educating the girl child nationwide. As a result, Anant has honed its strategy to reflect its refined views on what is needed to create change in this area and what the organization's role will be in that change.

Theory of Action and Theory of Change

Our ultimate goal is to improve the achievement of all students in our schools – as measured by academic performance and increased college matriculation, graduation rates and employment rates. There are two steps to achieving that vision:

Theory of Action: What the organization must do to create direct impact

Theory of Change: What the organization must do and what must happen externally to cause direct and indirect change.

4.1 Theory of Action – Achieving direct impact

Anant's Theory of Action focuses on creating a critical mass of high-performing schools in strategic geographies. Geographies will be selected for their demonstrated need, fit with Anant's strategy, and Anant's ability to open schools there.

In each of these geographies, Anant must:

1. Cultivate a positive environment for starting Anant schools by building relationships with local districts, improving the legislative environment for our charter schools, and working with others to solve systemic obstacles to charter growth.
2. Create community demand for Anant's schools, by educating and informing parents, students, and community leaders about the school, the power of choice, and Anant Charitable Trust.
3. Deliver consistently superior results in those schools, by attracting and developing talented educators, ensuring that the education design is effective, and using data well.
4. Provide appropriate support for schools from the home office, by providing administrative and operational support, creating physical environments conducive to learning and ensuring a strong funding base.

Anant believes that these four tasks, well executed, will lead to its Intended Direct Impact of demonstrating superior achievement and providing choice in the communities where Anant operates.

4.2 Theory of Change – Achieving broader impact

With its network of high-performing schools, Anant seeks to have broader impact using three levers.

1. Anant seeks to create district change within its selected geographies, by influencing, modeling or pressuring change. District change is the primary focus of Anant's work.
2. Anant seeks to build capacity among other educators, and charters, which collectively will create a nationwide network of high performing schools.
3. Anant will advocate for changes in educational policies, practices and institutions in India. Together, these three activities will create the changes necessary for improved achievement for all our students that in turn result in broad sweeping changes nationwide.

5 Our Program

AMATIR KANYA GURUKUL

Kanya Gurukul (Name changed to Amatir Kanya Gurukul in year 2016) was started in May 2002 at village Bachgaon Gamri Kurukshetra, Haryana. From being a dream of a single man to provide basic education to girls from his and neighboring villages, it has now transformed into a vision to provide very high-quality modern education to thousands of girls from under-served rural and semi-urban communities.

Kanya Gurukul presents a unique environment for its students where age-old Indian traditions of education work in unison with modern pedagogy. Here we endeavor to combine classroom pedagogy with digital and online media. Where learning is not just limited to academic activities in classrooms but extends well beyond in playground, activity zones, community kitchen etc.

Most of the girls in the Gurukul are first generation learners and we provide them special support in learning English, mathematics, and science. Apart from in school core education we have developed an environment of creative learning and our students engage in sports, art and craft, dance and theatre and other such exciting extra-curricular activities.

6 Major Activities

6.1 FY 2012-13

Kanya Gurukul has emerged as a high-quality alternative for the parents of the girls from lower and middle-income families from not only Kurukshetra and Haryana state but also from other states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, etc.

Anant Charitable Trust continued to invest in infrastructure to meet the ever-growing demand, as more and more parents were reposing faith in Kanya Gurukul and its model of teaching for their girls' education and all-round development of mind and body.

- **New Hostel Building:** Hostel plays a very important role in Kanya Gurukul model of education. A girl who stays in hostel gets undivided attention of teachers even after school hours that contributes in her accelerated development and growth of mind. A girl gets to study more, play more and learn more in a hostel's environment. So far, our resident students were staying in a modified old building, which was converted into hostel. A new hostel building with all modern facilities and good infrastructure was under construction for last one year. In this year first floor of the new hostel building, providing accommodation to 150 girls, was inaugurated.

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- **New Computer Lab for Primary Students:** Technology plays an important role in education delivery and absorption not only for senior students but is equally effective and useful for young girls. New computer lab at primary division was started with 10 machines.
- **Addressing of Power Outage Issue:** Grid supply in the region where Kanya Gurukul is located is very erratic. To address this issue
 - 5.5 KVA battery inverter was installed in the secondary school to provide uninterrupted power supply to the classrooms.
 - 20 KVA diesel generator set was installed in the hostel building giving much awaited reprieve to the girls and other staff
- **Yog Bhawan:** Yoga is an important constituent of teachings at Kanya Gurukul. To create and fan the interests of girls in this ancient science and to practice the same with in the hostel premises a Yog Bhawan building was constructed.

6.2 FY 2013-14

- **Digital Classes:** Recognizing the importance of new teaching methodologies and innovation of technical aids, Anant Charitable Trust decided to adopt and implement digital classes at Kanya Gurukul. First smart class, digi-class of HCL, was installed in senior division of the school. Later on, in the same year four more classes – 2 HCL and 2 from Extramarks brand, were added.
- **Augmentation in the Hostel Capacity:** Girl residents' admission in the school were continuously increasing. To meet this increasing demand construction of the Hostel's second floor was started in the year 2013-14. The First half of the Hostel's second floor was commissioned in the same year providing accommodation to another 50 girls.
- **Installation of Solar Water Heating System:** Recognizing the fact that hot water requirement for bathing and washing is no more a luxury and also taking advantage of subsidies offered by the government, Anant Charitable Trust installed Solar Water Heaters at the hostel that are providing hot water not only for the students in the hostel but also in the kitchen for food preparation and cleaning of utensils.
- **Increase in internal power generation and storage capacity:** As Kanya Gurukul strength and infrastructure was increasing its need for electricity was also on the rise. Government grid's supply for only two hours during the day further complicates this matter. To address this problem Anant Charitable Trust increased the battery inverter and diesel generator capacity.
 - A separate 5.5 KVA battery inverter was installed in the primary school to provide uninterrupted power supply for students in the classrooms

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- 20 KVA diesel generator set was installed to augment power back up in the secondary school

6.3 ***FY 2014-15***

- **Further Augmentation in the Hostel Capacity:** Girl residents' admission in the school were continuously increasing even this year. To meet this increasing demand construction of the Hostel's second floor was started in the year 2013-14. The second half of the Hostel's second floor was commissioned this year providing accommodation to another 80 girls.
- **Up-gradation of the Computer Lab at Secondary School:** Though a computer lab at the Kanya Gurukul secondary division was functional for a long time but due to the rapid changes in the technology it had become obsolete. Hence Computer lab at the senior division was upgraded to latest 25 machines, which effectively took student to computer ratio in the class to 1:1.
- **Further Increase in internal power generation and storage capacity:** To keep up with the increasing demand of electricity for the Kanya Gurukul, Anant Charitable Trust further increased the battery inverter and diesel generator capacity at school's complex.
 - 8 KVA battery inverter was installed in main building to augment the power back up.
 - 3 KW solar panels were also installed to boost charging of batteries, as there wasn't enough supply from grid to enable full charging of batteries.
- **Construction of New Administrative block:** As planned expansion of the Kanya Gurukul's infrastructure, a separate administrative block was planned. Construction for which was started this year with target to complete it within a one-year duration. School's canteen, accounts & administrative department, Manager's office and examination department will be shifted to the new administrative block once it is completed next year.

6.4 ***FY 2015-16***

- **New Administrative Block:** New Administrative block was commissioned on schedule. It will help in giving better services to the parents with minimum interference in academic conduct at the Gurukul
- **Internet leased line:** A tower has been erected for 10 mbps connection at the Gurukul's premises with the service agreement with ENet. LAN has been laid out

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in entire school premises and Gurukul's main building has been connected to Hostel & Primary wing with optic fiber cable.

- **ISA:** Kanya Gurukul is taking part in International School Award organized by British Council. Under this program students of Gurukul will perform various activities in collaboration with students from other countries to bring in international and global dimension in the curriculum.
- **IIT & PMT Preparation:** Kanya Gurukul in collaboration with Avanti organization started an integrated center within the Gurukul premises to help students prepare for JEE and PMT examinations. The teachers from Avanti are staying in the hostel itself along with students. All the teachers themselves are engineering graduates from reputed colleges in India. Anant Charitable Trust is providing this coaching at highly subsidized rate to all the girls.
- **Change of Name from Kanya Gurukul to Amatir Kanya Gurukul:** Name of the gurukul was changed to Amatir Kanya Gurukul to create brand identity and also to distinguish Amatir Kanya Gurukul from other gurukuls run by Arya Samaj affiliated organizations. Amatir word comes from Sanskrit language and it means 'Knowledge'.

6.5 FY 2016-17

- **Solar Power Plant:** Amatir Kanya Gurukul used to receive electricity from grid for only two hours during the day which seriously hampered delivery of education in the school as well caused huge discomfort to the students and staff. A solar power plant of 50 KWp capacity has been planned to be installed at the rooftop of the girls' hostel building. In this project state govt. will be providing subsidy up to 30% for which an approval has already been received. The plant will get commissioned by mid of FY 2017.
- **Teachers' Residence:** From the very beginning Amatir lacked proper residential facilities for its teaching staff. Teachers including Principal have been living in the hostel in the rooms similar to the one given to students. It was decided to construct separate residences for the teachers within the school campus. In phase I of the project a separate house was constructed for the Principal and also a column structure was erected for Teachers' apartment. This apartment building once completed will be able to house 32 single teachers.
- **Digital classrooms:** Eight projectors were installed in classrooms of grade XI & XII and two Audio-Visual rooms and three laptops were bought for the teachers. Teachers are using these projectors to project curated multimedia content to the students in the classroom which is resulting into increased learning outcomes.

6.6 FY 2017-18

- **Solar Power Plant:** Solar power plant was commissioned in Nov 2017. This planned is of 50 KWp capacity and has been installed with a 120 cells 800Ah battery bank. Due to its commissioning, now Amatir's residents are receiving uninterrupted power supply for 24 hours 7 days a week
- **Teachers' Apartments:** 4 apartments were finalized and commissioned in the Teachers' apartment building. All the apartments have already been allotted to the new teachers.
- **New Playground:** Students of Amatir Kanya Gurukul hail from various parts of India. These girls come from rustic background and their rough upbringing & lack of resources during their childhood makes them tough and strong willed. In order to channelize energy of her students in sports, Anant Charitable Trust constructed a six acres multi-sports facility at Amatir campus. This complex houses 400m running track, a football ground, two handball grounds, two volleyball grounds and dedicated stations for athletic field events. More than 30 students got selected for State level school games competitions in the first year itself.
- **Digital Classrooms:** Eight projectors were installed in classrooms of grade III to IX and 15 Laptops were bought for the teachers. These projectors are being used to beam multimedia content provided by the book publisher which has been mapped seamlessly to the curriculum. It has made learning fun and engaging for the students.

6.7 FY 2018-19

- **Renovation of Girls' Hostel Phase I:** Renovation and modification of existing hostel building has been planned to fulfill following needs
 - Increase the capacity of the hostel from 250 beds to 300 beds
 - Install safety grills on the 1st and 2nd floor balconies
 - Create dedicated large Infirmary on the ground floor
 - Create dedicated Library for resident students
 - Create separate playroom for primary class resident students
 - Make walls of the hostel vandalization free
 - Reduce long term cost of maintenance of the hostel building
 - Make hostel interiors lively and pleasing for its residents

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Renovation work was started in the month of Dec 2018 and 2nd floor was completed in phase I of the project.

- **Teachers' Apartments:** Another 4 apartments were finalized and commissioned in the Teachers' apartment building. All the apartments have already been allotted to the new teachers.

6.8 FY 2019-20

Planned

- Construction of second floor classrooms in main school's building with floor area of 15000 sq. feet.
- Construction of new rooms for visual and performing arts activities on first floor of the administrative block with floor area of 3500 sq. feet.
- Construction of multipurpose hall on second floor of administrative block with floor area of 4000 sq. feet
- Renovation of Girls' Hostel Phase II in which work on Ground and first floor will be completed.
- Teachers' Apartments: Another 8 apartments will be commissioned.
- Repainting of Entire Gurukul

7 Our Board

Anant Charitable Trust Board consists of 11 full time members that have background in education, consulting, agriculture and industries.

1. Founder Trustee – Balwant Singh Nehra, Retired Physics Professor, NIT Kurukshetra
2. President – Dr. M L Kaushik, Retired Chemistry Professor and Head of Department, NIT Kurukshetra
3. Secretary – Ashish Nehra, Ex-Army Officer, Social Edupreneur
4. Vice President – Gursewak Singh, Lawyer & Farmer
5. Treasurer– Dr. Priti Ojha, Educationist
6. Member – Arun Bhatt, Businessman
7. Member – Umesh Atri, Businessman
8. Member – Surinder Nehra, Social worker
9. Member – Rajesh Kundra, Businessman
10. Member – Aditii Nargolkar, Child Psychologist
11. Member – Prabha Qureshi, Social Worker

8 Our Partners and Supporters

1. British Council – Learning partner for International School Awards and Generation UK Program
2. theGNOSIS – Consulting partner to enhance professional development of teachers and streamline School's policies & processes
3. Enet – Communication partner
4. IL&FS Education – Technology Partner
5. MIIT – Program for Science & Math foundation building
6. Cordova – Academic program for class Grade I to VIII
7. Curio – Academic program for Pre-Primary

9 Contact Us

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