



Aiding Needy Children's Education Ms. Mamta Chauhan



Innovation Brief : Here is an example of a government official who goes beyond accomplishing her official responsibilities to improve the level of education and create more accessibility to education.

Innovation Details : Mamtaben is working as Education Inspector. She not only carries out her duties with honesty and sincerely but also undertakes several charitable activities to help in better access to children's education and its development. Some of her exemplary efforts are:

- * Mobilising funds for treatment of a girl student who had sustained burn injuries
- * funding children's education through several activities since 3 years
- * Vallabhi Raja Slate Project: Providing good quality slates in schools
- * Reconstructing a Branch school by mobilising funds by donors
- * Creating a cloth bank for needy children who cannot afford neat and tidy clothing.

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Mobilising funds for treatment of a girl student

This is the tale of a girl named Shruti whom Mamtaben helped. This girl is student of grade 6 of the Jalalpur Primary School. She had suffered burn injuries and Mamtaben mobilized funds to pay

for her treatment and also help her parents to cope with the financial burdens during the treatment.

Shruti had suffered burn injuries during November 2015. She had suffered 40% burn injuries. Her parents had already spent Rs 35000 for the girl's treatment. They were reluctant for more treatment due to financial limitations as the family's income is from daily wages. They hence started treating her at home using "*raal*". Mamtaben thought about it and paid him Rs 17500 from her own income. She assured him of arranging for rest of the funds and somehow persuaded them to bring her to Ahmedabad for further treatment. A pertinent question later occurred to Mamtaben that if the parents are in Ahmedabad for a month, who would take care of the family back home?

Finally on 25th January, Shruti's parents brought her to a hospital in Ahmedabad. Shruti was admitted to the burns ward at LJ hospital of Ahmedabad as she was told that her case was serious and had worsened due to home remedies.

Mamtaben decided to take the opportunity during the Republic Day celebrations on the next day, to help this family. Mamtaben decided to appeal to the people present at the celebration to help Shruti. To Mamtaben's surprise, a total of Rs 33000 was collected and another Rs 12500 were collected at Patana village for Shruti's treatment. Today Shruti is

being treated Ahmedabad and she was operated for her burns in February 2016.

Activities being conducted since 3 years for progress in children's education

Since three years, Mamtaben has arranged for a total amount of Rs 70,000 for education of several needy children. This includes buying a cycle for someone or even clothes. She has arranged for total or partial fees for further education of children belonging to weaker sections or educationally backward communities specially Devipujak community. Mamtaben says, "If at least one child from one Devipujak family is educated, the entire family has potential to prosper."

Examples of some students who have been supported are:

- 100% fees hostel and educational fees of Ravi Ugrejiya of Lakkhanka studying in class 10 at Ambardi Institute of Jasadan taluka.
- Another girl from the Devi pujak community was given total support towards hostel fees, educational fees and other such needs. The girl is presently studying in class 11 at Umralla High School.
- Sunita, a girl living with her 5 other siblings was also supported for her studies. She was living

in a temporary house. Mamtaben arranged for a pucca house through donation and provided Sunita a battery so that she can read in absence of electricity too.

- Total fees have also been arranged for Disha Goswami from Sihor, studying in first year B.Com at Swaminarayan Women's College.
- Kajal, student of class 9 from Navagam belonging to Devipujak community, is also supported for her education in a private school
- Lalji Veerjibhai, a partially blind boy of the Devipujak community from Vallabhipur was supported in his motor rewinding course at Bhavnagar's Blind School after completing his grade 12. His education has been supported since grade 8.
- Support has also been arranged for partial fees of a girl from the Barot community from Vallabhipur who is now studying at Bhavnagar Gurukul.

Mamtaben says, "By God's grace, I receive a good salary and my family is not in any particular need of my salary, hence I can afford to help the children."

Vallabhi Raja Slate Project

Mamataben has been working at Vallabhipur taluka since 2008. During her surprise and annual inspections, she noticed slates used by children were of inferior quality. She came across Anandpur Primary School of the taluka where all children were using good quality

slates of the Raja company. The principal informed that a donor had contributed for the slates for children of grade 1 to 7.

Later she made efforts and in the Haliyad and Navagam villages of this taluka they could arrange for donors to provide slates to children from grade 1 to 4. She thought of approaching a few donors and arrange for 5000 slates but could not succeed.

During a visit to Kendravati School in Pachegam, she was informed that at Patana village a man regularly donates for a meal for the children in memory of his mother. She called this person to urge him to donate slates instead of feeding the children. He agreed to donate at two schools.

When Mamtaben calculated the cost of providing the best quality Raja slates to children of grade 1 to 3, it totalled to Rs 3 lakh and 66 thousand. Determined to do something, she directly approached the owner of Raja slate company at their factory. The owner of the company agreed to give the slates at a discounted price of Rs 44 instead of Rs 69 per slate. He also agreed to give the slates for free in schools where we are unable to find the donor. In 43 schools the efforts were done by principals as well as B.R.C and C.R.C. Mamtaben had to personally co-ordinate with just 18 schools to find donors. At some schools, the

teachers themselves arranged for the money. All in all, they could arrange for donors for a total of 5046 slates costing Rs 2,22,024. Of this, 4811 were given for grade 1 to 3 and 235 were given for grade 5, 6 and 7. All in all 5046 slates costing Rs 2,22,024 were donated. In this way, after efforts of 2 and a half months all the children of lower classes could get the slates.



Alongwith her co-workers Mamtaben, later brainstormed on how to improve this slate. Some shapes were inculcated on two sides of the slate for grade 1 and 2 that helped them recognize alphabets. In the centre, the boxes were created to write words and basic alphabets to save time. On the other side of the slate, 100 boxes were made for maths. The slates for grade 3 were also similarly modified as per curriculum requirements. For grade 5,6,7 the four line design was inculcated for English writing.

Reconstructing a Branch school by mobilising funds by donors

At Vallabhipur locally there are 8 schools. All buildings except a branch school at Vallabhipur was not in a very good quality. Compared to other schools, the construction of this school was weak and of inferior quality. An enthusiastic collaborator of Mamtaben, Jeevrajbhai Dhanani suggested that if they can find a donor, this dilapidated school located in a remote and backward area can be reconstructed. During March-April, 2015, Jeevrajbhai went to Surat and found 8 donors who agreed to donate Rs 4 lakh each for re-building 8 rooms of the schools. In April, the school's reconstruction work was initiated. However there came a roadblock in this process and construction of 3 rooms was stalled. Moreover due to the Patidar agitation and downfall in the diamond trade, 50% of the donors expressed their inability to donate the decided amount..

Mamtaben immediately set out to accomplish the task of collecting donations for the cement that was the primary requirement for construction so that work is not stalled. Jeevrajbhai informed that one truck of cement meaning 550 bags of cement were required. Mamtaben herself committed to pay Rs

12,500 for 50 cement bags. She urged the teachers of the school to share the responsibility who committed to give 30 bags of cement. In this way 210 additional bags could be arranged. Then Mamtaben contacted her acquaintances who committed to provide from 5 to 20 bags. In this way she arranged for a total 557 bags of cement within 3 days costing Rs 1,39,500. Later in the month of August, a local resident Pinabhai Gujarati committed to pay for the entire first floor of the school.

Subsequently lot of donations poured in ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 15 lakh. They needed to put all the funds in a separate trust which would be a lengthy process. Hence, they decided to pool it with Manas Primary School Trust formed by Shri Ajitsinh Solanki. The donations for the Vallabhipur Branch School were deposited in this trust and receipt were given under “Branch School”.

Now the reconstruction work of the school is near completion. From the new academic session, the children of this school can start studying in the newly constructed school.

Clothes Bank

In 2011, whenever Mamtaben would visit schools, she would notice that some children were not tidy and as

they did not have proper clothes. This would especially affect her thoughts when they would come up to sing a song or say something.

Mamtaben decided to create a clothes bank for such children. The bank would contain used clothes collected from well-off families. The needy children would then be given clothes as per their requirement from time to time.

For collecting the clothes, Mamtaben started with her elder sister. Later she requested her friend in Vallabhipur to collect clothes from people. The friend hesitated at first, however she started getting a favourable response. Many people even started sending messages to come and collect clothes. A very generous gesture by one person was buying clothes worth Rs 50000 from Mumbai for the needy children.

After clothes of all sizes were collected, Mamtaben called all needy children on a Sunday to distribute the clothes according to their size. In this way they gave away almost 500 to 600 clothes in 10 villages.

When this program started Mamtaben and her volunteers would call the children, bathe them, give them new clothes, give them ice-cream and then send them home.

This work has been ongoing for 4 years, however, since 10 months the pace of work has reduced to some extent.

Apart from these projects, Mamtaben has always taken active part and helped school children whenever there has been any natural calamity in various parts of India. Some examples are earthquake in Gujarat, floods in Uttarakhand etc.

Awardee's Background: Forty four year old Mamtaben, has an M.A, B.Ed and M.Ed from Bhavangar University. She joined as Education Inspector in 1998 at Giriyadhar taluka of Bhavnagar district. After that worked for 5 years at Botad , 9 years at Vallabhipur and for one year at Umarala. At present she is working as Taluka Primary School Education Officer. In all, Mamtaben has an experience of 17 years.