Akshar Foundation: Pioneering Sustainable Education in Assam, India

Monday 14 October, 2024

At Akshar Foundation, we have created a groundbreaking model for sustainable education in Assam, India, which has gained global recognition. Our flagship initiative, *Akshar Forum*, is a school for underprivileged children where students "pay" their school fees by bringing in plastic waste. This innovative approach has earned accolades from the Prime Minister of India, the World Economic Forum, and the United Nations Environment Program, and received awards from the Earth Day Network and the University of Oxford.

Rooted in Mahatma Gandhi's Nai Talim philosophy, which emphasizes hands-on learning, Akshar Forum addresses the complex challenges faced by many of our students. Prior to joining, many of these children, some as young as 10, were working as child laborers in hazardous conditions, such as mines, quarries, and factories, often forced to skip school. To combat this, we introduced the "Learning and Earning" initiative, where students work within the school to earn money by tutoring younger children, creating learning materials, building school infrastructure, growing food, recycling plastic, and providing first-aid to both peers and animals.

Akshar's model has proven effective in reducing dropouts, child labour & child marriages, while increasing literacy and employability.

This model has dramatically reduced school dropouts, child labor, and early marriages, while improving literacy rates and employability prospects for our students.

Akshar Foundation is now working to expand this model to 55 government schools across three states, with a goal of reaching 100 schools by next year. These schools will be equipped with solar-powered classrooms, tablet-based learning, plastic recycling workshops, organic farming programs, and vocational training in areas like nursing, carpentry, and electronics repair. Older students will also provide daily free tutoring to younger students.

With your support, we can continue this mission and transform government schools into hubs of sustainable development, positively impacting the lives of millions of children across India.

We are currently working to implement our model in 55 government schools in 3 states in India — going up to 100 next year — each of which will be equipped with solar powered smart classes and tablet classes, plastic recycling workshop, organic farming, older students offering daily free private lessons to younger students, and vocational training in nursing, carpentry, electronics repair, and more.

With your support, we can one day impact the lives of millions of children and transform all government schools into community centers for sustainable development.

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