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Pratibha: Spandana's Sponsor a Student Project

2009-2010

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NOTE: All new additions and modifications are done in this color.

1. Project Background

Poor financial background is the major hindrance for many talented poor students in India to continue their studies. Many students are forced to leave their schools in middle for lack of support or not able to afford their studies. Students in rural villages with poor background cannot afford even a bus pass to travel to their school leave alone buying test papers for passing their exams. Hence, majority of them are struggling to continue their education with almost no resources and support. Most of them complete their education but not with adequate skills and knowledge that is required to compete in today's world. As a result, most of them don't get enough exposure to get a quality job or end up going back to fields or daily labor. Critical link has been missing that helps these students pursue their studies with required resources to be able to gain enough knowledge to grow professionally. Spandana has been striving hard to provide this critical link by helping talented students with poor background.

We have sponsored more than 650 poor talented students covering several districts in the state of Andhra Pradesh during Academic year 2007 - 2008. We sponsored more than 1950 students during the academic year 2008-2009 in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharastra and Karnataka. There was overwhelming response from several quarters including students and teachers. The feedback from sponsored students and school administration is highly encouraging and remains positive. Based on these responses and experiences, Pratibha 2009-2010 project will be carried out to continue the support for existing students and increase the number of participating schools and students under Pratibha project this year. However, the primary objective of Pratibha remains same: helping poor but talented students achieve their academic goals by providing critical learning resources.

2. Introduction

Spandana has unveiled an ambitious plan to help hundreds of students every year as part of *Pratibha* project. Spandana's Pratibha project is exclusively designed to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged students. Spandana developed rigorous selection criteria for choosing students to ensure that only deserving candidates are chosen. Pratibha project is aimed at helping talented poor students by providing critical resources that would help students continue their studies and compete with their counterparts.

3. Objectives

Primary objectives of Pratibha are to:

- ✚ Help talented poor students afford/continue their education in rural areas
- ✚ Provide critical learning resources to facilitate poor students achieve their goals
- ✚ Sharpen knowledge and skills of underprivileged students to compete with others
- ✚ Assist and encourage poor students assimilate knowledge
- ✚ Foster positive attitude and sense of 'equality' among students
- ✚ Make a positive difference in human lives by providing support for higher education

4. Eligibility

Who is Eligible?

- ✓ All students who were sponsored under Pratibha project during 2008-2009. These students will be evaluated by a selection committee to review any changes in their eligibility based on previous year's performance and any other financial factors.
- ✓ Government school students who don't have financial support to continue their higher studies
- ✓ Reasonable past performance track record in academics
- ✓ Physically challenged with poor background
- ✓ Poor economic background
- ✓ Students from 6th class to 10th class

Students from Intermediate to Graduation, including professional degrees like Engineering and Medicine will also be helped under Pratibha project.

Who is not eligible?

- ✘ Students who can afford their studies even though they have very good academic track record.
- ✘ Students studying in private schools/convent schools and any other sponsored schools.

- × Students residing in govt. sponsored hostels or social/tribal welfare hostels.
- × Students who receive any form of assistance//scholarship from any source.

5. Selection Process

Spandana developed detailed selection criteria to choose deserving students.

Selection Criteria

- ✚ Students who are physically challenged or/and orphan will be given utmost preference.
- ✚ Poor economic background.
- ✚ Kid with three or more siblings in the family.
- ✚ Girl student or born as last kid in the family of more than three or higher.
- ✚ Inability to pursue further studies for want of money.
- ✚ Did not get any or sufficient financial assistance from any other source including govt.

Selection Process

Spandana project coordinators will meet principal of each selected school/college in identifying deserving candidates. Coordinators will distribute Pratibha application forms and requested school/college principals to hand it over to selected poor students in their school. Principal is the best person who knows the economic background and the academic status of any student. Hence we are actively coordinating with principals to execute this project. Application form is enclosed as Annexure 'A' to this project document.

All filled-in application forms will be collected and sent to Spandana Data center (details provided in website) for entry into Spandana's database. After entry of all applications, Spandana's selection committee will review, evaluate and select most deserving students of all the applications received.

Spandana is aiming to sponsor as many students as possible. But, the guidelines given under selection criteria are taken as guidepost in evaluating and selecting students for this project. Spandana might give more weightage to one of the points mentioned above based on the case or situation. It is not strictly the sequence in which the points are listed out, the primary objective is to select deserving candidates who are poor but possess talent!

Spandana will announce selected candidates through their website and coordinators. All respective schools will be notified their list of selected students for sponsorship. Meanwhile, coordinators will find out specific requirements of selected students at different locations / levels. A priority list will be prepared with the most critical need at top and would be used as roadmap for helping students.

What does Spandana needs from student to be considered for help?

The following documents are expected from students to be considered for Spandana's sponsorship:

- ✚ *Pratibha application form signed by student and attested by the Head Master /Principal of the school/college*

✚ *Proof of Financial status (Income Certificate from MRO)*

✚ *Passport size photograph*

6. Benefits

Spandana will be sponsoring from the list of following basic needs to students:

- ✚ Bus Pass
- ✚ Cloths - Uniform
- ✚ School bag
- ✚ Textbooks
- ✚ Note books
- ✚ Shoes/Cheppals
- ✚ Transportation
- ✚ Geometry Box
- ✚ Test Papers/Guides
- ✚ School/College Fee
- ✚ Exam fee
- ✚ Medical Needs

Needs may vary from place to place, student to student and school to school. Spandana will be making decisions based on what is most important need in that area/school. This is not final list and students would be provided with any other resource that is important for them based on need and requirement.

Value for Money: Spandana is a nonprofit organization. Hence, meticulous care will be taken in the utilization of every penny spent. We have had negotiations with the wholesalers to get cheapest rates in market for school supplies. Planning is also done to ensure that supplies are bought at best rates and transported to different locations to achieve economies of scale. Spandana is also designing innovative strategies to make the most of the money spent based on the locational needs. For example, Spandana is planning to give few test papers in one school rather than giving test papers to each student. This way, students who are not beneficiaries will also be benefited. Idea is to maximize benefit with minimum cost.

After having several discussions with students and teachers on what is most important need, Spandana sponsored the following items during *2008-09 academic year for majority of students*:

- ✚ *Uniform (2 pairs) with stitching expenses.*
- ✚ *Note books*
- ✚ *School Bag*

- ✚ *Geometry Box*
- ✚ *All-in-one test papers to X class students*
- ✚ *Chappals*

Salient Features of Pratibha 2009-10 project:

Based on feedback and lessons learned from previous year's Pratibha Project execution, we have identified and incorporated the following points as salient features of this year's project:

- ✚ As we sponsored 2 pairs of uniform to the beneficiaries last year, it may not require sponsoring uniform this year.
- ✚ This year, we will provide uniforms to all those new students enrolled in Pratibha project. We will also mandate that existing students return their test papers through school administration so that we can re-use them by distributing them to new students.
- ✚ The feed back from teachers and students is that test papers are more useful for them to prepare well for the exams. Hence, we will be continuing providing test papers to the students.
- ✚ As there is no public exam for students in high schools other than for 10th class, we may also limit the help to providing uniform, notebooks to all students except 10th class students. This way, we will be able to cover more students and cater to what is important for them.
- ✚ Pratibha USA volunteer either need to spend time in Spandana activities or need to raise half of the funds to the schools that he/she is working with.

Key Statistics:

- ✚ *Identify a school/college at your village in India*
- ✚ *Decide number of students you would like to sponsor in that school*
- ✚ *Fill in the Pratibha annual drive form in website with school details*
- ✚ *Contribute \$15 per student per annum or Donate 30 hours of volunteer time*

7. Timelines

The deadline for the project execution and completion is end of June 2009.

8. Sponsorship

You can make a difference! We need support from individuals like you. There is no membership fee to join Spandana. But, we encourage voluntary donations from people who want to make a BIG difference in poor lives with their contributions. You may donate any amount for Spandana's Pratibha project. It can be as low as \$10. You can also choose monthly donation so that Spandana can spend the remaining amount from its "Emergency Fund". You can sponsor one or many number of student(s) from the short

listed students to extend your helping hand. If you would like to have direct interaction with the students that you decide to sponsor, you can always do that! We will send you regular updates on the progress of your sponsored student(s). We strongly believe that we can collectively make a difference to our country by helping the needy and talented students.

9. Feedback & Review

As school/college authorities are part of selection, the progress of students is also monitored with the help of teachers/lecturers and Head Masters /Principals of the school. Spandana has plans to get the progress report thrice a year and will make it available for the donors. If the donors need any specific information, Spandana will try to arrange or facilitate the donors to talk to students or school/College authorities. Spandana has plans to extend the help to same students every year till they can self sustain. The decision on this will be purely on the progress of the student and the feed back from the school/college authorities.

10. Way Forward

Project coordinator at each project location monitors the progress of children, provide guidance and closely work with the children to ensure that quality of support is optimum utilized. A comprehensive review will be undertaken taken to evaluate the effectiveness of Pratibha project to discuss and understand the usefulness and impact of the project. Lessons learned will be documented and discussed with Spandana community to develop future actions plans based on this project experience and success. Feedback would be requested from each project coordinator including students how this project can be improved and to ascertain the impact of the project. Feedback from coordinators, principals, students and all stakeholders would be used as an input to develop future action plans.

11. Leadership

Govedhan Galpalli is coordinating the Pratibha project both in India and USA. **Maruthi Kumar Madala, Ravi Jamdyala, Ashish Murali, Rohit Tiple** are core Pratibha team members for 2009-2010. Spandana is looking for active volunteers both in India and USA to complete this project successfully.

Do you want to make a difference? Are you interested to join Pratibha team? Would you like to sponsor some students from your town/village through Pratibha? Please send a mail to one of the contacts. <http://www.spandana.org/contact-list.html>

"Let us together make a positive difference"

About Spandana

Spandana is a non-profit charity organization deeply involved in helping poor and needy people of Andhra Pradesh to make a positive difference in their lives.

All of us have the ability to make a difference in someone's lives back home. Spandana has been started with this sole purpose two years ago as charitable trust and is striving hard to make a difference in education, health care and better living of poor and needy. Spandana has made significant impact in these areas for the past two years. Spandana helped lot of poor students to pursue

higher studies, supported expensive surgeries for people with poor economic background and organized health camps in rural areas. This year, the trust had developed ambitious action plans to adopt government schools (Vidyalaya), adopt poor students (Pratibha), help the homeless (Aashraya) and support poor people financially for health care (Cheyutha) there by making a difference in others lives.