

Prabhat's Advocacy Efforts

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While it is well known that The Prabhat Education Foundation caters to meeting the learning requirements of those with special needs, they are also massively involved in the efforts to procure more resources for people with learning disabilities. This involvement takes place at three main levels: throughout the local community, educational platforms such as mainstream schools, and throughout society using their social media, blogs, and Centre Model.

Within the community, Prabhat has made a name for itself through workshops conducted over the past 15 years, the earliest of which took place in 2006 and was



called the Jeevan Taleem Workshop. It took place prior to the opening of their Centre and was a way for Prabhat to bring attention to the limited educational opportunities available to those with special needs. Educators, volunteers, parents, and even schools were involved in the workshop, helping children achieve their potential and pushing through their learning barriers. The response to this effort was so positive due to the progress made with the children that it sparked the idea of establishing a physical space where parents and children could educate their children in

ways that would benefit them the most. This came to include their physiotherapy, learn-through-play, tutoring, and various other programs. Adults were able to participate as well since Prabhat had employment experts willing to aid potential employees create a strong resume and learn interviewing skills. Hundreds, if not thousands of people, have obtained a rich education from Prabhat and gone to show that each student has potential; it must only be nurtured.

Schools and other educational institutions have played a critical role in promoting and advocating for the learning rights of those with special needs. Since often people with educational disabilities are unable to adjust to mainstream education, Prabhat fills a much-needed role in regards to making students real-world ready. A partnership with the Riverside Education helped Prabhat establish programs similar to mainstream schools. These included a simple dress code, excursions, and outdoor opportunities for learning and play. Things such as these reinforced a mentality in the students that they

were attending a “real” school, strengthening their will to participate in activities and to increase their learning ability. Partnerships with schools in Ahmedabad allowed Prabhat to educate teachers on how to address special needs and nurture the growth of students. This program of helping teachers advance their skills began as part of the *Prabhat for Teachers* initiative. Many students who graduate from Prabhat to enter mainstream schools are still given apt support due to the efforts taken by Prabhat to have the system cater to all levels of learning.

Due to Prabhat’s success in bringing to light the issues revolving around education for special students, even the Government of Gujarat has endorsed their efforts. In August of 2007, they were visited by the head of the Social Defense Department. Another indication of their growing progress was the attraction of the local Rotary Club to aid with funding and providing any resources they could offer.

Children from Prabhat were also involved in the process of advocacy. Some children participated in the SWMR drawing competition, bringing attention to the fact that those with special needs are fully capable of learning and recognizing their talents. Students also took part in the Sarva



Shiksha Abhiyan camp, another achievement on the children’s part that brought forth encouragement to have another workshop. Throughout society, the work of Prabhat and its students has brought attention from around Gujarat, India, and the world; this truly showcases the potential that all these children hold.

Over the nearly 20 years they have been active, Prabhat has made a massive commitment to bring change to the educational system and make it more accessible to all levels of learners. The most impressive factor is that they have followed through with this promise and educated hundreds of students to become their best selves. This advocacy will continue and as they receive more and more recognition for their work, Prabhat will only proceed to grow.