

Then and Now

Eighty years ago when the entire nation was reeling under the colonial rule and a large section of people was fighting hard for the freedom, some of the people with ever-widening thought and creative endeavour set fresh parameters by organising a 'sabha' with a view of imparting education and all possible help to the middle-class and under-privileged younger generation. It was the time when illiteracy, superstition, prejudice and narrow-thinking reigned the society. Education was not available to all. Following the Jain philosophy of 'Right knowledge', Right path, Right character, some of the energetic and enthusiast people with right attitude came forward and broke new ground. Those people truly believed in the words and spirit of selfless service to mankind as preached by Jain religion. So, they started the benevolent works through 'S. S. Jain Sabha' not to make news, nor to gain popularity or to obtain political mileage but such men silently made a positive impact on the society. Eighty years is, undoubtedly, a long time and to carry on the spirit of benevolence, compassion and service is really a Himalayan task but the Sabha has successfully accomplished this task. For this, the credit must go to those who stood out in the crowd. They were people who established new trends, opened stable minds by activating the latent imagination of the people. They were the real leaders, the harbringers of change and growth. Their very first step was to set up 'Shree Jain Vidyalaya' in the heart of the megacity, Calcutta. From the very beginning, 'Shree Jain Vidyalaya, Kolkata' has been providing quality education to the pupils of all classes, castes and religions without causing unnecessary burden to the guardians. The school is popularly known not only for its outstanding teaching but for maintaining discipline and for the all-round development of the pupils also. A good number of alumni, very successful and famous in their respective fields in India and abroad, are the first-hand examples to substantiate the extra-ordinary achievement of the school. Today, the indiscriminate use of mediocre methods in the realm of excellence has lowered the level of education and the process of building of characters. Yet, Shree Jain Vidyalaya under the able guidance of S.S. Jain Sabha has earned very good name and fame and is still setting a benchmark for another generation of creative minds.

Over the last eight decades, there was been a deterioration in morality, ethics, judgement, assessment of what is right or wrong, good and bad and fine and ordinary. The chaos we see around us, the object lack of respect for integrity, the mockery of excellence – each has plunged our society into an abysmal state in which negatives dominate. In such adverse circumstances, the generous deeds of S.S. Jain Sabha need to be admired and appreciated.

Encouraged by the success of Shree Jain Vidyalaya, Brabourne Road, Calcutta, the Sabha set up another school at Howrah, separately for boys and girls in the same building and in very short span of time, the school became a huge success and is still doing a fantastic job. Similar is the fact with Shree Jain Hospital and Research Centre, Howrah. In a very brief period, this hospital, equipped with the latest facilities and techniques, has become the only hope for the poor patients. The hospital has been regularly organising camps for providing artificial limbs, eye-operation and plastic surgery. An another school upto secondary level has been started at Jagatdal. Two years ago, the Sabha entered the vast world of higher education and technical education by founding Tara Devi Harakh Chand Kankaria Jain College at Cossipore. Two streams, Microbiology and Computer Science (B.Sc.-Hons) affiliated under Calcutta University are attracting good numbers of students.

Besides these, the Society has been actively involved in various activities concerning the rural developments in the state of West Bengal.

As the Jain religion teaches all the human beings to go on and not to be stale (charaveti), the Jain Sabha is following this noble teaching and is still pursuing the charitable works. The Sabhs has various future plans for the promising talents. One Dental College with Hostel facility, Nursing School/College with Hospital facilities, Degree College of Commerce alongwith technical and vocational courses and an English Medium School with Hospital facilities are some of projects in pipeline. Observing the determination and devotion of the officials of the Sabha, these projects are sure to blossom into successful institutions in the near future.

So, Shree S. S. Jain Sabha deserves all the praise from every hook and corner for its indomitable spirit, incredible achievement and unparalleled attitude for the upliftment of the have-nots of the society. I hope and believe that the Sabha will prove to be a torch-bearer for spreading education among the masses of the society. The Sabha's never-ending efforts for the welfare of the general mankind must be a continuous process. Hats off to the Sabha and its bonafide officials for doing outstanding deeds.

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