

Powering Schools

To improve teaching and learning environments

The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, recently promised that by 2022 “every family will have a *pukka*¹ house with a water connection, toilet facilities and 24-7 electricity supply”.²

Of India’s 1.27 billion population, almost 400 million people in 75 million households lack reliable access to electricity. Out of the 600,000 villages in India, about 26,000 have no electricity at all. Thousands of other villages have a connection that is unreliable or provides light for just an hour or two each day. This is mirrored in the districts of Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh and Sambalpur in Odisha³, the focus districts for the work of the Kusuma Trust.

As part of the Kusuma Schools Partnership Initiative (KSPI), the Trust works with 25 secondary schools in Hardoi and 25 in Sambalpur to improve school facilities, the quality of teaching and student attainment. The Trust facilitates and supports schools to obtain electricity connections and generators to power classrooms, laboratories and libraries.

Twelve of the 25 schools in Hardoi have successfully obtained new power connections and nine schools have acquired generators. In Sambalpur, 23 schools have new power connections. The power connections and

generators have enabled the use of ceiling lights and overhead fans in classrooms, thereby creating a more conducive environment for teaching and learning. The reliable supply of power has enabled students to use computers during scheduled classes instead of the short periods when electricity is available. Teachers are now consistently using audio-visual materials during their lessons.

The Government Girls’ Inter College in Todarpur did not have any electricity connection and were unable to hold computer classes. Fans could not be operated in classrooms. The Trust facilitated a meeting between the Principal, the School Management and Development Committee (SMDC), the district electricity department and the District Inspectors of Schools. This resulted in the installation of an electricity connection for the school. With fans, lights and computers now powered, computer classes have started in the school.

“Due to the absence of electricity and fans not running in classrooms, summer was unbearable in the school for students. This problem has been resolved with the installation of an electricity connection in the new building through the joint efforts of Kusuma and the school.”

Satakshi Mishra, Principal,
Government Girls Inter College, Todarpur



A classroom at the Government Girls’ Inter College in Todarpur
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

The Trust, in partnership with the Kusuma Foundation in India, works closely with schools to ensure access to safe drinking water, functioning toilets and electricity. The support also includes improvements to school buildings and facilities such as boundary walls, new classrooms, blackboards, desks and chairs. Details of what has been accomplished in each school is available in the Kusuma Yearbook.⁴

¹ Pukka is a Hindi word meaning solid or permanent.

² <http://tinyurl.com/pub6cf3>

³ <http://censusindia.gov.in>

⁴ <http://www.kusumatrust.org/about-us/publications/>

Improving concentration in class

Subrata Bhoi is a class 9 student who attends the Government Upgraded High School Mahulapali, in Sambalpur. With the support of the Trust, the school recently obtained an electricity connection. Subrata clearly articulated how this has benefited students like her:

“Our school did not have an electricity supply for a long time. Because of this we were facing many difficulties. We found it very uncomfortable in the school hall without any working fans during the summer due to the high heat and humidity.

During the rains, classrooms were not well lit making it hard to read or write properly. We also found it difficult to follow our teachers’ work and lessons on the blackboard.

This year, our school was given connection to an electricity supply. With working fans and energy saving lights, we are much more comfortable sitting in classrooms and able to see the notes written on the blackboard.

Thanks to the support of Kusuma, my fellow students and I can concentrate better on our studies. We thank Kusuma for the efforts they have made in our school.”



Subrata Bhoi with her classmates.
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

Blackboards improve teaching and learning

The Upgraded Government Higher Secondary School in Rahula had no blackboards in the classrooms to teach Class 9 and 10 students. This severely impaired the quality and style of teaching and learning. As part of the KSPI programme, the Trust provided two portable blackboards to the school. Teachers and students are using these blackboards regularly inside and outside classrooms. Blackboards are an important minimum standard for all schools.

Mr Mahesh Chandra Srivastava, Principal at the Upgraded Government Higher Secondary School said:

“Students are very excited to participate in lessons now. Incentives and advancements such as these are important in improving teaching and learning in the classroom.”



A student drawing a flower on the blackboard as part of a Science lesson
Photo: Sam Strickland

Boundary wall built with Forest Department

The Government Inter College Tandiyawan is a government school with more than 1500 students. Two sides of the school did not have a secure boundary wall, thereby allowing ready access to school grounds. The safety and security of students and school assets were a concern for the school. The school wrote several letters to the State education department and other government departments requesting funding to build the much needed boundary wall but without success.

With the support of the Trust, the SMDC organised a meeting with the local forest department which owns the adjoining land. The Forest Department agreed to provide the required funding to build the boundary wall on condition that the school establishes a plantation within the school premises. This helped the school to improve the safety of students as well as creating a green space within its premises.

Sambhu Dayal Verma, SMDC member at the Government Inter College, Tandiyawan said:

“For the last 5 years, the school has been trying to secure funds for a boundary wall for the school, but the funds we received were not adequate to complete the work. With the help of Kusuma, we managed to liaise with the District Forest Department. The Department supported the school to build the boundary by planting trees and shrubs and supplying the required building materials. This was a huge support to the school from a safety perspective and the school now looks so much greener!”