

Pune Times

THE TIMES OF INDIA | SATURDAY, AUGUST 28, 2010 WSP

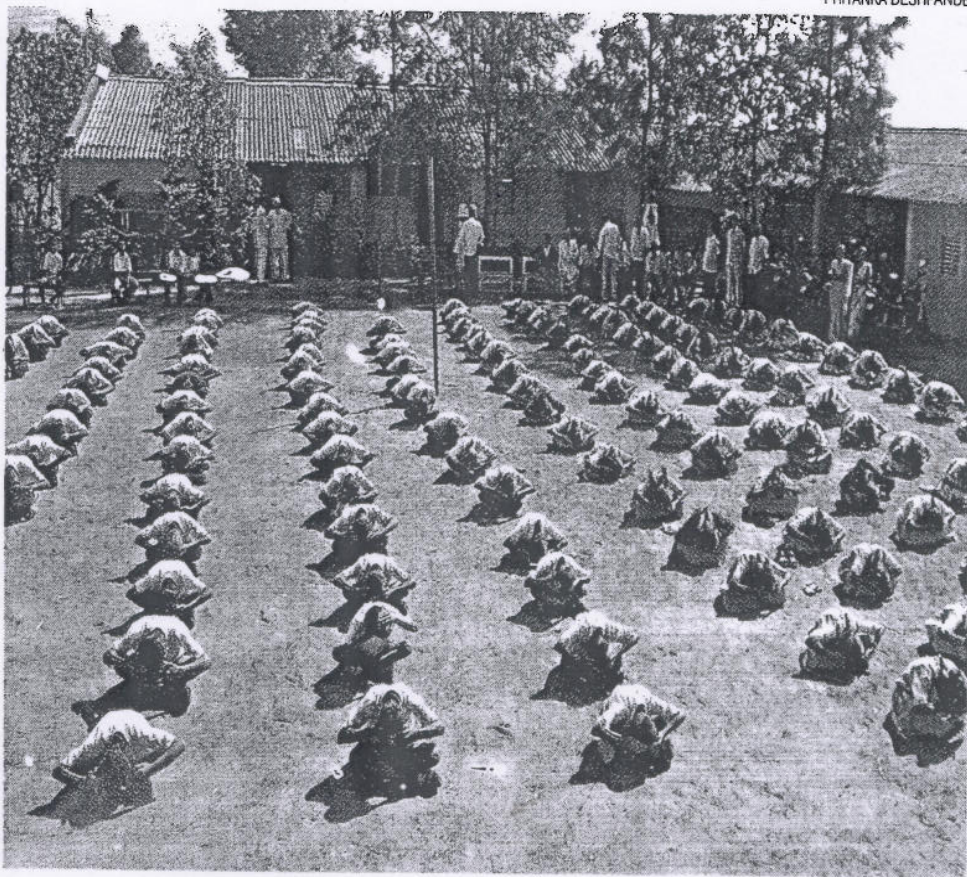
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Power of education

PRIYANKA DESHPANDE

Sarwangin Gram Vikas Sanstha was formed at Mulshi with a view to empowering rural folks and raising their standard of living. It set up a school at Asde to provide quality education to children from nearby villages. Today, many of its students are self-employed and some of them have gone abroad for higher studies



Priyanka Deshpande KOTHRUD

This school, which was like a sapling 15 years ago with only 36 students, now resembles a full-grown tree with 238 students. Anil Vyas and his team had seen a dream to set up a school for tribal students at Mulshi. It has realised. And how!

In 1995, a group of 15 people from Kothrud formed Sarwangin Gram Vikas Sanstha (SGVS) at Mulshi with an aim to empower rural folks and raise their standard of living. "Our foremost task was to locate small villages in Mulshi tehsil that lack educational facilities," said Anil Vyas, one of the founder mem-

bers of SGVS.

"Accordingly, we chose six villages of Asde, Khubawadi, Shileshwar, Gawdewadi, Bhadas and Rawde. Students here had to cross a river for reaching their school, which was quite dangerous. Therefore, a school was established at Asde village for class V to X. We chose Asde as it was convenient for students from all other five villages," added Vyas.

Since most students belong to lower strata of the society, the school has arranged facilities like medical check-up, mid-day meal, cultural training centre, competitive exam study centre and a sports facility to provide maximum expo-

sure. Vyas said, "We organize science exhibition, painting competitions and sports events like kho-kho and kabaddi. We give more importance to vocational training, which includes agriculture, energy, engineering skills, veterinary, medical and cookery education. This helps students get self-employment in their village itself."

This kind of training has helped many students to set up their own small-scale businesses like sheep and cattle rearing, dairy production, welding workshops and so on. Many students are even going abroad for further education. "This year, two of our girl students are going to US for graduation," said

Vyas.

Recently, the institution was given the 'Indian Innovation Award' for the best use of media in education. Similarly, the school has also received support from Mahindra United World College. This institution also runs various hostels for male and female students. Vyas said that citizens of Warje are helping us a lot by collecting grains, which we use for cooking meal for hostel students. Though the institution is now getting state government grant, Vyas expects more and more people to come forward to help them in running the hostel, which is completely free of cost for rural students.