

## Building little bridges

Neev uses non-formal education techniques to bring out the best among the less privileged



Proud parents with their wards make one happy 'Sahas' family

### GUNJAN PANDE

There's a common thread that binds Tagore International School (New Delhi), NIET, UNICEF, Apollo Hospital and Bharat Electronics. All these institutions, in their own little way, are active supporters of SAHAS — a crusade for human solidarity focused on dissolving social differences.

Rooted in the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, SAHAS took the first step towards bridging the gap between the haves and have-nots by laying the foundation of NEEV, novel efforts in educational ventures, at the Sarita Vihar Janata Colony. "A project that uses non-formal educational techniques to fight the 'Juggli to Juggli' concept, NEEV enables children from the less privileged groups to have academic privileges on a par with any of their well-off counterparts by endowing them with quality inputs," explains Sunita Palita, who started the movement in the early 1990s with other like-minded professionals.

The steady rise at which NEEV passouts get admission into elite Delhi schools speaks volumes of the effort. Four-year-old Pallavi from the Madanpur Khadar village on Mathura Road is a NEEV success story.

A student of the prestigious Tagore International School, she couldn't, in her wildest dreams, hope to even hold a book, let alone attend a school, considering that her mother was a housewife and her father was forever between jobs. Then NEEV happened. Pallavi's life has never been the same again.

A brilliant student, she has today earned her place in the mainstream through sheer merit and has in fact emerged head and shoulders above her classmates, thanks to her NEEV grounding.

"Our children do not, and I repeat, do not need charity or pity. Just give them an opportunity to prove themselves, and see how they emerge worthy of every privilege that is bestowed on them by the supporters of the cause. The war against disparity needs to be fought at the grassroots level and the inculcation of self-esteem plays a major part in laying sturdy foundations for a bright future," asserts Sunita, a firm believer of "consciously applying individual skills for the larger good." At a recent functionary at NIET, the cultural programme presented by NEEV kids won the audience in raptures "and they couldn't stop clapping," she reminisces fondly.

Sunita's sole mission now is to establish a "kind bank" for her NEEV kids to fulfil their material needs though she is very clear that the bank would not be a "storehouse of leftovers." Among the other prestigious organisations actively involved with the mission are Birla Vidyya Niketan, School for Planning and Architecture, Span India Express, Institute of Hotel Management, Luxor, Modern Bazar, and Rainbow.

A choice at the red light selling newspapers, a reward with a freedom... if images like these shake your conscience, it's time you got in touch with NEEV and asked for Sunita or Rajesh at 011-3236981 and 323-6982, or clicked on to [neev\\_sahas@hotmail.com](mailto:neev_sahas@hotmail.com).