



"As I was watching the children my whole heart went out to those children, 'Is it possible for me to give them these lessons and the training that are being given under your system, to those children?' 'I hope that it will be possible not only for the children of the wealthy and well to do, but also for children of pampers to receive training of this nature."

_Mahatma Gandhi on Montessori System of Education

Big or small, each of us have a dream. Thus, it was the dream of Smt.Padmini Gopalan, a kind-hearted individual endowed with social consciousness, to enable the children from underprivileged sections of the society to have access to 'quality' education, which would help them in their personality development; a dream that she had cherished and nourished over the years. As a result, Sri Ramacharan Charitable Trust came into being in 1999. It was the brain child of Smt.Padmini Gopalan. She wanted to help the economically backward people around her by providing interest free micro loans. True, when we make an unselfish resolve, help comes from somewhere. She tried to receive donations for the cause, at the rate of \$100 per person from her NRI nephews and their friends. B.Sridhar , her nephew , was involved with an organization called Child Vikas International. So,Child Vikas International came forward to provide the initial capital to start the scheme. The scheme proved was a great boon for poor people having school going children. Most people repaid the loans while some did not. Those who failed to repay loans were not necessarily the poorest. Ms. Padmini does not say much about the defaulters, but she is all admiration for those who did pay back in spite of adverse circumstances.

She remembers vividly one such. It was a poor woman who had borrowed Rs.5,000/- for her son's school fees. It was a two year old unpaid loan so they wrote it off. Then one day this poor women turned up and insisted on returning the money. Ms.Padmini told her it was not necessary as the loan was already written off. This woman said, "I took the money to pay my son's education. He has been blessed by goddess Saraswathi and he is earning well. I must pay it back as a token of gratitude at least. Ms.Padmini was not satisfied with just giving loans for education. She wanted to see to it that the children were studying well. For this she started giving tuitions in her own house., Children were encouraged to come by promise of snacks and tiffin after school hours. The success of this venture gave her the encouragement to expand further and give tuitions in Corporation schools so that more children would benefit. She approached a corporation school in Mylapore and was given permission provided she would pay the teachers and also give the children something to eat as they would be hungry at that time. Teachers were paid by the Sri Ram Charan Trust, Tiffin for children was also managed from the same source. This was in 2001.

Exemplary Educational Service by Sri Ram Charan Charitable Trust

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