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VISION DOCUMENT - GANGA VALLEY EDUCATIONAL  
TRUST, DUNDA, UTTARKASHI

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APRIL 16, 2023

GANGA VALLEY EDUCATIONAL TRUST

## Intentions of Ganga Valley Educational Trust

Ganga Valley Educational Trust operates in one of the remotest and most underserved parts of the country. Even basic amenities - like good roads, electricity and clean water are reaching people only now. Obviously, education opportunities for children in these villages are limited, a problem which necessitates that children travel to nearby towns or sometimes, that families relocate – to enable good education for the children.

GVET exists so that every child, even in these remote villages – can have access to good quality education, irrespective of their social or economic distinction. That every child truly enjoys, the Right to (a good) Education, is our responsibility. This vision document defines the meaning and purpose of our life in GVET, believing, “We too can make a difference. And we must.”

## The Purpose of Education



### Learning To Be Self-Aware

J Krishnamurthy writes that education in the true sense, is the **understanding of oneself** – for it is within each one of us that the whole existence is gathered. “Yatha Drishti Tatha Shrishti” is an ancient Indian belief. At the highest level therefore, education must enable us with the vision to create a happy and harmonious world for ourselves and those around us.

### Learning To Persevere

Education must definitely not, only be a matter of accumulating information and knowledge from books. It should equip us with means to face the challenges of life and come out victorious, not simply with knowledge and skills that prepare us to score marks. Like a soaring eagle that rises on the winds that bring the storm, the right education must help us rise above the storms of life.

### Learning To Be Fearless

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds, must obviously cultivate techniques that give them economic and psychological safety. But they must also be educated to be free from fear, because fear dulls our mind, cripples our thinking, makes for darkness, and literally prevents us from creating a new world. Only freedom from fear can help them to be mature and be free, to flower in love and goodness, just like their more privileged counterparts.

## Vision Statement

Our vision is to:

***“Enable children to become well rounded, confident and responsible citizens through access to high-quality education”***



The vision statement lays emphasis on the following operating words:

- “Well rounded, confident and responsible citizens”

‘Well rounded’ implies balance and poise that comes from self-awareness, ‘confident’ means one with courage and strength of character and ‘responsible citizens’ implies people who treat their rights and duties the same.

- “Access To”

Accessibility derives its meaning from the context. Our success will come from ensuring what we offer is always affordable, especially to those from rural, underprivileged sections of the society.

- “High quality education”

By high quality, we mean education that integrates all aspects of a child’s development - physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual.

## Our Mission

Mission is a strongly felt aim, ambition or calling that cannot wait. A mission only comes to life when we are **aware** and we **care** – because that allows us to **dare**, and do things.

Ambitious missions will almost always encounter roadblocks. It calls for consistently challenging the circumstances and finding innovative solutions to problems along the way. It presupposes active engagement, not passive observance by stakeholders, treating each day lost – as an opportunity lost.

At GVET, we will persevere in our mission and strive to enable every child, with:



- **Anna (Food)**

Good, wholesome nutrition that sustains the body and keeps the mind ignited

- **Akshar (Knowledge)**

Holistic education that infuses dignity, courage and confidence

- **Arogya (Health)**

Habits for sound physical, mental and emotional health

- **Anukampa (Compassion)**

Basing their actions on the virtue of compassion and awakening the same in others

- **Adhyatma (Spiritual Wisdom)**

Self-awareness, by staying rooted in and celebrating the Indian value-systems and heritage

- **Aranya (Afforestation)**

Connectedness with nature & environment, while adopting traditional, sustainable living

## Our Philosophy

Philosophy, a set of fundamental theories or rules that guide our everyday behavior - are the pillars around which the edifice is built, as we go about realizing our mission. These subtle rules act as guiding stars and help us apply our discriminative wisdom, whenever situations demand.



Our existence at GVET centers around the presence of **'fearless, happy children'** in our midst. Everything we do, should only further nourish them. Therefore, we will always abide by the following rules:

- **Learning through enquiry and reflection**

Encouraging children to develop the habit of asking questions – of others and of self

- **Discouraging needless regimentation and competition**

Cherishing the individuality of every child, believing conformity only leads to mediocrity

- **No-punishment No-reward policy**

Creating an environment free of comparison, envy, or fear & that treats every child as equal

- **Ensuring children are happy to come to school**

Measuring our success by how joyfully children come to school and the energy they exhibit

- **Encouraging open interactions, with the adults and in peer groups**

Encouraging open dialogs as the most preferred means of resolving day to day issues

- **Enabling necessary support for children at home**

Ensuring parents align with the objectives of the school, without the pressure to emulate

## Our Approach to Education

We will adopt an educational framework that integrates all essential aspects of a child's development. There are many schools and institutions that have well defined and time-tested frameworks that can be readily be adopted (for instance, the Chinmaya Vision Programme). The school must ensure that no aspect of the child's personality remains unfulfilled because a lopsided development can lead to many personal and professional problems. The pillars of an integrated development framework are:

- **Physical Development** - Right food, clothing and shelter address the primal physical needs. Similarly, the need for grooming, work, rest, and exercise are essential to avoid weakness and diseases.
- **Emotional Development** - Emotionally, we need to give and receive love, form healthy relationships without which we suffer from insecurities, fear, loneliness, and clinging attachments.
- **Intellectual Development** - The intellect needs positive and stimulating thoughts, without which it becomes dull, frustrated, and stagnant.
- **Spiritual Development** - Spiritually, we need inspiring goals, noble ideals, and virtuous deeds. That make life purposeful.

Our attempt will be to achieve the overall unfoldment and gentle blossoming of the students, at all levels of the personality, so that they become physically fit and well groomed, emotionally balanced, intellectually alert, creative and spiritually awakened.

Adapted from the Chinmaya Vision Programme, Annexure A enumerates how the 4 listed aspects of development shall broadly be implemented in our school.

## Role of Teachers in Realizing Our Vision

*"A good teacher costs a lot. A bad teacher however, costs a lot more – so much, that not just the school, but even the society cannot afford one."*

Teachers have the most crucial responsibility in shaping the children into who we want them to be. We will always be deeply invested in our teachers, doing our best to attract the most talented and dedicated ones. While we will always ensure that the basic needs are met, we will value our teachers not just in terms of money. Teachers will be selected, trained, nurtured, and promoted based on their **commitment** to our cause, **passion** which they demonstrate in delivering their assignments and the **compassion** they exhibit in dealing with children. The management, students and parents will always be expected to maintain a relationship of trust and utmost respect towards them.

In turn, every teacher will be expected to constantly enquire and reflect upon the following questions:

- **Am I being a Learning Facilitator?**

A teacher is more like a gardener, who creates the right environment for learning and growth to happen. Their role is to inspire learners to 'choose to learn' and 'turn within and know'. Children learn not just by way of information – which a teacher may share, but also through perception, understanding and wisdom – which a teacher may encourage in the learning process. While what is taught may ultimately be forgotten, what is learnt stays forever. So, we must remember each day, to become learning facilitators and not just teaching teachers.

- **Am I being teachers both by *karma* and *guna*?**

As per our scriptures, one's *karma* (profession, in this context) must be in line with one's *guna* (inner qualities, character, or nature). Being so, allows us to express our inherent skills and talents and be efficient, successful and satisfied within. Teachers must acquire the *guna* of brilliance, love for knowledge, patience and enthusiasm in teaching. Only then will we be respected and honored by the society.

- **Am I being a Role Model?**

A teacher's life, teaching and conduct must be a lifelong inspiration for the student. Our job is not just to teach and facilitate learning – but to shape the student's character, develop his/her inherent potential, and to empower him/her to face life. To become model educators, teachers must be open to retraining, unlearning (the old ways), relearning (the new ways) and recreating different methods of teaching.

- **Do students find learning and bonding with me, fun?**

Indicators of 'fun' are when children love to come to school and there are happy faces, open conversations, high positive energy, participative classrooms, and a complete absence of fear in a teacher's presence. Interactions with students continue beyond the classroom or the sports field, and there are teachers with whom students like to be in touch – way beyond the school years, as alumni and professionals.

- **Are we working together as a team?**

It is said that "It takes a village to raise a child." Every teacher therefore, should see himself / herself as part of a larger team of stakeholders who always work together. The team here means,

- Management – Who provide a vision, create a firm foundation, and enable the school with resources and futuristic plans.
- Principal – Who brings a lofty vision and inspires others and leads the school to greater heights. He/she must always be respected and supported in this endeavor.
- Parents – Who must participate with the school and align with its vision by providing encouragement and a conducive environment to the children at home.

## Board Affiliation, Scale & Size

- We will create a single section school from Prep to Cl 12, with a total of 15 sections following NEP 2000 (5+3+3+4 i.e. Foundation, Prep, Middle and Secondary). The school will have CBSE affiliation and will follow the guidelines and bye-laws laid down by them.

| Level                  | Students per section | No of Sections |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Foundation (Prep-Cl 2) | 30                   | 5              |
| Preparatory (Cl 3-5)   | 30                   | 3              |
| Middle (Cl 6-8)        | 40                   | 3              |
| Secondary (Cl 9-12)    | 40                   | 4              |

- The school will be operationalized in 2 phases:
  - **Phase 1** - will include all construction of academic and administrative buildings up to class 12 level consisting of a total of 15 sections. The school is planned with adequate number of play / activity rooms, laboratories for all subjects, library, multi-purpose hall, and recreation area in addition to the classrooms. Residences are planned on campus, for outstation teachers. However, in this phase the school will operate only up to Cl 10.
  - **Phase 2** - will include construction of boarding and dining area for 30 boys and 15 girls. The school will begin to operate up to Cl 12 in Y3/Y4.
- Important planning parameters for the two phases are as shown below:

| Parameter                                 | Ph 1 (Y1 - Y2) | Ph 2 (Y3-Y4) |
|---|----------------|--------------|
| School Grades                             | Prep to X      | XI – XII     |
| No of students (Peak)                     | 440            | +80          |
| Students per Section (Foundation & Prep)  | 30             |              |
| Students per Section (Middle & Secondary) | 40             |              |
| No of teachers                            | 17             | +4           |
| No of Non-academic staff                  | 7              | +1           |
| Overall Teacher to Student Ratio          | 26             | 25           |



## The Larger Context of UN Sustainable Development Goals / Environment, Social & Governance / Corporate Social Responsibility

At the broadest level, we exist to realize the Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations for the world. By creating a responsible school that teaches children to be responsible citizens, we will do our small part - to alleviate poverty, ensure health and nutrition, provide quality education, encourage gender equality, promote sustainable communities and living habits.



One of our primary sources of funds to develop the school, is intended to be through the gathering momentum of the ESG / CSR movement among businesses in the country / world. Therefore, we want to be environmentally and socially driven in every aspect, including not just our ethos, but also our design and operations. We want to be seen as a school that helps businesses meet their ESG / CSR commitments.

On ground, we would like the idea of respecting our planet, our environment and our fellow human beings – to be central to our architecture, design and subsequent operations. We will always be sensitive to the local communities and cultures, the land around us and the natural habitat we live in. We will advocate and promote preservation of forests, protection of our wildlife and the conservation of our heritage. We will teach our children to be environmentally aware and responsible, so they feel inspired to take charge of the conditions they will spend their lives in.

## Architecture and Design



Our ethos of happiness will reflect in the design and architecture of the school. We will create an ambience where children are happy to come to school. The architecture and design will ensure the school feels like home, or makes up for what may sometimes be lacking at home.

The place will emanate peace and harmony. As far as possible, we will use the spaces in a way that keeps the village alive and not lend it an overly urban character.

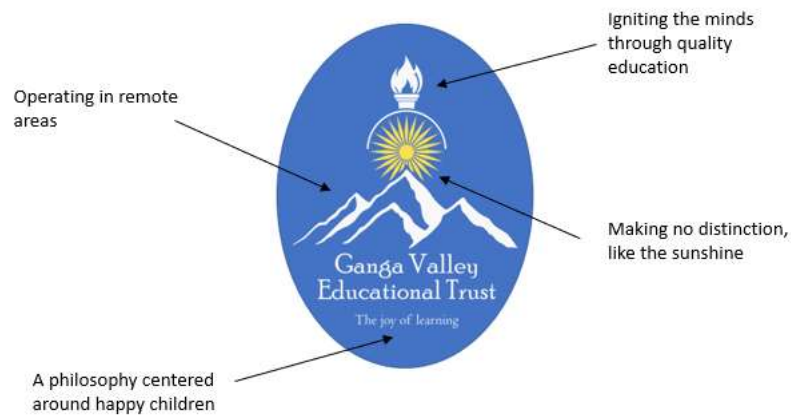
The school buildings will be designed to gel with the surroundings, with extensive and well-planned plantation. The building should ideally be surrounded by trees in a way that the school looks very green and the most imposing aspect of the surroundings should be the plantation and not the building structures. We will be sensitive to the environment, with features like use of local materials, energy efficiency, rainwater harvesting – engrained into our design.

The spaces will be very well-lit and by natural daylight. We will use corridors and courtyards extensively, allowing for an interplay of light, open air, and vegetation. Classrooms will be simple but spacious and airy with large windows, designed to allow maximum flow of natural winds.

We will vie to maintain lots of variety in the atmosphere and in the spatial mood of the campus and buildings. As far as possible, everyone in the campus, will have an opportunity to be in touch with all the elements – earth, water, fire (sun), open air and sky - in good measure and balance.

## Identity of GVET

Our educational philosophy, approach to learning and the role of teachers in ensuring the same are centered around happy children. The process of nurturing them as well as learning should be joyful both for the teachers and the children. This joy that must always reflect in our internal and external identity.



## What We Are Not & Should Never Be?

Even our sincerest intentions can remain hollow words if we do not continuously orient and re-orient ourselves to the vision. In doing so, we must however ensure the DNA of GVET does not alter, as time goes by and people associated with the projects change.

Our actions must stem from a complete belief in the vision. While we have laid out our intentions and the roadmap to realize the vision, it is important to define a few important characteristics that GVET must never acquire.

- Putting earnings before impact
- Ignoring the underprivileged to service the more privileged
- Operating at places other than where we are most needed – the underserved and remote areas

**WAYS TO IMPLEMENT DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS IN A SCHOOL**  
(Based on Chinmaya Vision Programme)

To be treated as illustrations that can be ongoing (and not a check list)

**Physical Development**

| # | Aspect            | पहलू              | Implementation / कार्यरूप                                |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| 1 | Physical Fitness  | शारीरिक योग्यता   | Yoga / Sports Competition / Emergency training           |
| 2 | Nutrition         | आहार-पुष्टि       | Healthy Diet / Vegetarianism / No Junk                   |
| 3 | Hygiene           | स्वच्छता          | Personal Hygiene / Village Sanitation / Garbage disposal |
| 4 | Physical Grooming | शिष्टाचार         | Dressing neatly / Speaking clearly / Mannerisms          |
| 5 | Health Education  | स्वास्थ्य शिक्षा  | Avoiding injuries / Self-Defence / First Aid Knowledge   |
| 6 | Health Assessment | स्वास्थ्य परीक्षण | Medical Checkup  |

**Mental Development**

| # | Aspect                            | पहलू                        | Implementation / कार्यरूप   |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Emotional Expansion               | भावनात्मक विस्तार           | Give Up Something / Give Something / Elders Teach Younger children                    |
| 2 | Handling Emotions                 | भावनाओं को संभालना          | Use of Humor / Thanking Others / Laughter Club  |
| 3 | Handling Gender / Relationships   | स्त्री पुरुष समानता         | Making Family Trees / Importance of Love & Respect / Good Touch – Bad Touch awareness |
| 4 | Mental Assessment and Counselling | मानसिक मूल्यांकन और परामर्श | 1 -1 sessions with Teachers / School Acharya Sessions / Joint Counselling             |

## Intellectual Development

| # | Aspect                               | पहलू                            | Implementation / कार्यरूप   |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Independent Thinking                 | स्वतंत्र सोच                    | School leaders / Role Play  |
| 2 | Kindling the Intellect               | बुद्धि को प्रज्वलित करना        | Applying the curriculum to solve practical day-to-day problems        |
| 3 | Intellectual Assessment and Guidance | बौद्धिक मूल्यांकन और मार्गदर्शन | Comprehensive report cards to be used / Allow for individual aptitude |
| 4 | Aesthetics                           | सौंदर्यात्मक ज्ञान              | Beauty in every action / Welcome Rangoli                              |

## Spiritual Development

| # | Aspect                           | पहलू                            | Implementation / कार्यरूप   |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Age Specific Teaching            | आयु विशिष्ट शिक्षण              | 3-5Y: Tenderness, Concern for Living Beings (कोमलता, जीवों के प्रति संवेदनशीलता)<br>6-9Y: Puranic Stories, Good Vs Evil (पौराणिक कथाएं, बुराई पर अच्छाई की जीत)<br>10-14Y: Create wonderment about the world (दुनिया के बारे में आश्चर्य) |
| 2 | Value Education                  | मूल्य शिक्षा                    | Gratitude Diary (कृतज्ञता अभिलेख / डायरी)   |
| 3 | Spiritual Guidance               | आध्यात्मिक शिक्षा               | Spiritual Diary (record of wrong & right actions) (आध्यात्मिक डायरी)  |
| 4 | Spiritual Techniques             | आध्यात्मिक तकनीक                | Surya namaskar, pranayama, meditation, chanting   |
| 5 | Indian Culture                   | भारतीय संस्कृति                 | Multiple ways   |
| 6 | Cultural Exposure                | सांस्कृतिक अनावरण               | Festivals, Ceremonies, Rituals, Customs, Traditions, Chanting, Symbolism  |
| 7 | Cultural Heritage & Appreciation | सांस्कृतिक विरासत और प्रशंसा    | Multiple ways – Sessions on Ramayana/Mahabharata  |
| 8 | Explaining Cultural Traditions   | सांस्कृतिक परंपराओं की व्याख्या | Multiple ways – Observation / Invite guest speakers from different spheres to school  |
| 9 | Cultural Motivation              | सांस्कृतिक प्रेरणा              | Through - Art / Dance / Music / Drama   |