

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Practices of Merino Group

Green Campus of SVAV in Surya Vihar, Hapur, Uttar Pradesh



“Empowering minds, empowering the society.”

Swami Vivekananda Arunoday Vidyalay (SVAV)

“Raise them slowly up, raise them to equality”. Spoken way back in 1897 by Swami Vivekananda during an interview, these words resonate with relevance even today. As new India gets ready to take on the world, education and education alone can bring about equal opportunity for its citizens. Embarking on a journey to make education accessible to even the poorest households of the society, Merino through its Sri Hara Kasturi Memorial Trust laid the foundation of Swami Vivekananda Arunoday Vidyalaya (SVAV) at Hapur, Uttar Pradesh.

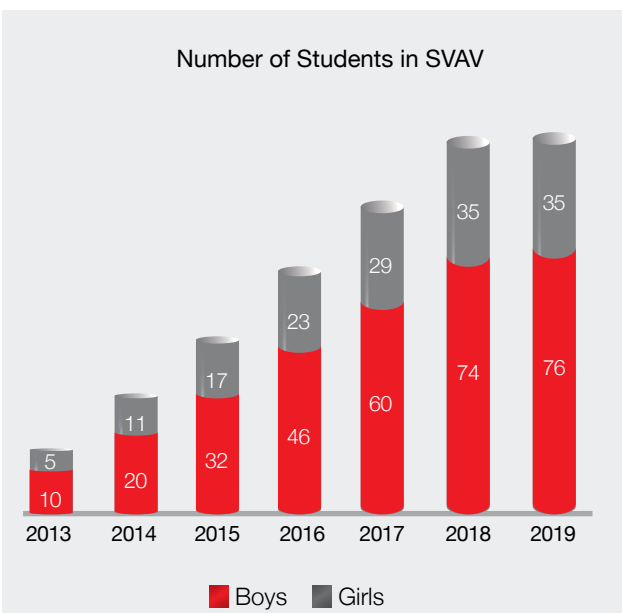
Established in 2013 predominantly for girl students, this co-educational school opened new avenues of learning for the children of underprivileged and economically deprived families living in the vicinity of Merino establishments.

Started with just 15 students in its maiden year, the school now enrolls students upto class VI and has a current strength of 111 students. The school provides an impressive teacher to student ratio of around 1:8 with its team of 15 teachers and 12 non teaching staff.

The table beside explains the ratio of boy and girl students at SVAV since it inception

Education here, is not just about books but offers a holistic learning experience through an all inclusive development curriculum. Spacious classrooms equipped with smart teaching aids, activity-rooms for all round development, a music room

Number of Students in SVAV



and a computer centre ensure students get access to updated modern education. The school campus also has infrastructure to support various kinds of games and sports facilities. The school takes a step beyond just education with provision of nutritious meals and good clothing for all its students.



SVAV students with teachers

Students at SVAV are introduced to habits of cleanliness and hygiene at a very young age. All students actively take part in regular cleanliness drives organised on a regular basis at the school, nearby areas and their homes. Focused efforts of the teaching and non teaching staff ensure that all the students inculcate the value and importance of sanitation, plantation and management of waste.

Merino's focus on environment first is reflected at the SVAV campus too. The school is steadily moving towards its goal of becoming a green school. The use of Solar panels for energy efficiency, water conservation and reuse of waste water facilities and minimising waste generation are a few constructive steps towards realising this. To provide a first hand experience, students take part in daily activities to monitor the consumption of resources like water, electricity and waste generation. The



SVAV classroom

students also take part in plantation of trees and take care of plants to learn about environmental care practices and their benefits at a very young age.

Vedic knowledge is the foundation of modern Indian education. At SVAV, we introduce our students to Vedic culture and its practice at a very young age. Students at SVAV get an opportunity to explore the rich cultural heritage of our nation, visit places of cultural and historical importance through various study tours organised by the school.

Laying the foundation of quality education, SVAV strives to provide holistic knowledge to all its students through methodical teaching techniques that focus on the importance of training and instructions so that once the student completes his/her school, he/she is ready to compete at any professional or academic institution for higher education or skill development.

The school has plans to provide help and assistance to students for secondary and higher secondary education (up to class XII). Depending upon their aptitude and proficiency, necessary counselling and guidance may be provided in future for the selection of stream (post class XII education).

Re-emphasising on our belief of providing equal opportunity through education, SVAV nurtures its students to develop a strong character through intellectual development and self-sufficiency. The schooling system focuses on skill development so that the students can support and effectively uplift their families, the society, and ultimately the nation.

Free and quality education was a distant dream for many economically deprived families in the prevalent social conditions of Hapur. Further with the provision of other facilities like good food and clothing for the children, SVAV has managed to achieve a positive impact in the region. The foremost beneficiaries are the students of SVAV and their families who have immensely benefited from this project. Access to free education and the savings from this have empowered families to educate another child also. This has a multiplier effect to bring more children under the umbrella of education and support the poor households.

The dedicated approach to holistic education and related support system has brought about a transformation in and around the 111 households (student's families). These 111 representatives of change are key influencers in their region, advocating the values of cleanliness, health & sanitation, principles of honesty and strong character.

The education programme through SVAV works as a catalyst in spreading the message of education and empowering the poorest household, thus improving the social habits and conditions of the people. The school has generated employment for 28 persons directly and for many others indirectly.

A healthy mind resides in a healthy body: The Mid-day Meal Programme:

Malnutrition in India is a serious concern. Lack of hygiene, poor nutrition and poverty have made this worse. As a socially responsible organisation, we initiated a project to provide mid-day meals to children of various schools. A kitchen with modern cooking facilities is operational at our SVAV campus at Hapur. Utmost care is taken to maintain optimum level of hygiene standards while the menu is carefully selected to provide high nutrition value to all the children. This food is then delivered to various schools at Hapur.



Image: Pakshala (food preparation house) for students' meal in SVAV campus

The Mid-Day Meal Programme have several key benefits. First, this meal is an important source of nutrition for many children who come from economically deprived families.

Secondly this food aids better psychosomatic development of these children. Thirdly mid day meals ensure regular attendance in the schools where it is served. The above benefits are particularly effective in the case of girl - children.

The SVAV kitchen serves mid-day meals to 503 students every

day with a plan to increase this to 750 students daily at Hapur (UP) and its surrounding areas.



Student enjoying the mid-day meal

The Merino factory located at Rohad provides Mid-day Meals to 76 physically challenged children studying at Savera School, Jhajjar, Haryana, while mid-day meals for 16 children and 12 adults on a daily basis are sent to Bal Garh, Bahadurgah, Haryana.

Supporting the deserving through Educational & Learning Programmes

Our education initiative is not just limited to the SVAV school. Deserving students are provided scholarships by the trust. Additionally, the trust arranges for private tuition at the SVAV campus for students from economically weaker background. During the year under review, 22 such students were imparted coaching. At Rohad village, near the Merino campus, 16 girls are undergoing vocational training and an apparel stitching course through the Silai Centre. The MPPL factory is developing a facility to impart computer training to 20 girl children.

Transforming lives through healthcare programmes

Medical care facilities through 'Shri Prem Chand Lohia Health Centre'

Tuberculosis is one of the most dreaded health worries in India with the Global TB report 2017 giving an estimated incidence figure of 2.8 million* cases of TB in India accounting for about a quarter of the world's TB cases. On finding that tuberculosis is prevalent at Hapur, Merino undertook on a modest effort to address this issue through the Shri Prem Chand Lohia Health Centre. Situated at Hapur, the centre provides general OPD along with complete treatment of TB. This is really beneficial as there is a considerable economic burden associated with TB specially for the economically weaker section who lack access to quality healthcare facilities. In collaboration with the Dept. of Tuberculosis, govt. of India, the health centre provides TB

treatment in about 72 villages in the district of Hapur, Uttar Pradesh.



'Shri Prem Chand Lohia Health Centre'

Presently, the health centre has three units of dispensaries with doctors and supporting medical staffs to provide general OPD for patients and for treatment of TB in particular. These are located around Achheja, Garhmukteshwar and Hapur town respectively and serve the healthcare needs of the underprivileged in nearby localities. **source - India TB report 2018, Revised national TB control programme*

The Trust also provides medical facilities to the needy patients in and around establishments of Merino group at Hapur through mobile vans manned by qualified doctors. During the year under report 286 such trips were undertaken.

In addition to allopathy-based healthcare facilities, the center also provides Ayurveda treatment for patients. A total no. of 20,986 patients availed the facility of allopathic treatment during 2018-19, while 4,267 economically deprived TB patients went through a complete treatment at the 3 centers. 229 out of 236 new patients successfully completed their TB treatment under Merino's TB centers during 2018-19. During the treatment, 30 patients from extremely poor households were provided complete meal along with the medicine facilities for the whole year. Further, 132 patients have been undergoing the treatment of TB as on 31-3-2019. Ayurveda has proved to be a cost-effective mode of healthcare. A total number of 3,473 patients received Ayurvedic treatment during the year under reference.

Holistic Living Programme through yoga trainings and related service

Yoga - India's gift to the world

Continuing the good work in healthcare, the trust also aims at overall wellness through yoga. This is done through training

modules that promote practising yoga and knowledge of Ayurveda for holistic and healthy living. During the year under report, over a dozen yoga camps and classes for training were organised. This initiative is aimed at improving the state of health of the people availing the services of Yoga Instructors.



Yoga



Yoga

In the scenario of rising medical costs, charitable healthcare programmes for disease prevention amongst the economically deprived households is an important step towards building a healthy society. Through our various initiatives, the trust has been instrumental in transforming the lives of over 20,000 patients who were previously deprived of quality healthcare. Conservative estimate of ₹300 per patient translates into healthcare savings of over ₹60,00,000 for these households.

Better health has far reaching effect on long term earning capacity and living conditions of people, thus bringing about a positive impact in the society. And along with vedic practices like yoga, it lays the foundation of a stronger and healthier India.