

INDIAN COMMUNITY

Transforming India through educating girls

Vikas Khanna

Indian girls are no longer a liability for families. Several schemes launched by the government have not only transformed their lives but have also brought about a change in the mindset of the society

As India celebrates the National Girl Child Day on Jan. 24, which is aimed at reducing female feticide, improving the skewed sex ratio and educating girls, it is a matter of grave concern that discrimination, violence and lack of equal opportunities continue to haunt them.

Concerned over the diminishing number of girls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (Save the Daughter, Teach the Daughter) campaign last year.

The idea was to improve child sex ratio – the number of girls born for every 1,000 boys – and gender equality through access to education. Despite successive governments' efforts, the child sex ratio dropped from 964 in 1971 to a low of 918 in 2011.

A United Nations survey presented a grim scenario when it observed the decline was reported in more than two-thirds of

districts in the country between 2001 and 2011. What is reprehensible is that the problem is worse in urban areas. For example, Delhi recorded one of the lowest child sex ratios of any state, with 871 girls born for every 1,000 boys in 2011.

Condemning the selective abortion despite its ban, PM Modi said: "Girls are commonly killed in their mothers' wombs and we don't feel the pain. We don't have a right to kill our daughters."

At a time when social indicators like maternal mortality have improved due to the efforts of the government, the increasing number of female feticide cases poses severe challenges.

A 2011 study published in a British medical journal found that as many as 12 million Indian girls may have been selectively aborted between 1980 and 2010.

In fact, the objective behind celebrating the National Girl Child Day was to create social awareness about the importance of girl child in society and to create better opportunities for her welfare.

It is in this context that several girl child specific schemes were launched by the Government of India to end the discrimination they face.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao has been designed to focus on 100 gender critical districts where the child sex ratio is particularly low by enforcing existing laws that criminalize pre-birth gender selection and by improving girls' school attendance, among other measures. The main thrust of the campaign is that there should be 1,000 girl child births for every 1,000 male child births.

Sukanya Samridhi Scheme, launched last year, is aimed at encouraging people to save for education and marriage of girl child.

Under the scheme, the accounts can be opened in the name of two girl children up to 10 years of age in post offices or scheduled commercial banks. With a minimum investment of Rs. 1,000 a year, the scheme offers 9.1 percent annual interest. Though the money can be withdrawn only after the girl attains the age of 21, premature withdrawal of 50 percent of the amount at the end of the previous financial year is allowed for the purpose of the girl's higher education or marriage after she turns 18. The idea is to encourage financial inclusion and increase domestic savings.

The *Balika Samridhi Yojana*, which was started in 1997, was aimed at changing the negative attitude of families and communities toward the girl child by increasing enrolment and retention of girls in schools; raise the marriage age of girls and creating income opportunities and activities.

The scheme involved a gift of Rs. 500 to the mother on the delivery of a baby girl and an annual scholarship for education till Class X.

The amount of scholarship increased with the girl moving up in



Courtesy of India Perspectives

classes. It was noticed that early and forced marriage stood in the way of girls' progress.

Girls, who are child brides, miss out on education and are more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence, and bear children before they are physically or emotionally prepared.

The cycle of violence that begins in girlhood carries over into womanhood and across generations. The idea behind the scheme was to address their needs and unlock their potential.

Similarly, the Women and Child Development Ministry came out with a scheme called *Dhanalaksmi* to make cash transfer to the girl child family to ensure immunization, school enrolment and maintenance up to the Class VIII.

Under the Right to Education Act, free and necessary education to the girl child has been made available. Then there are self-help groups in order to make better the livelihood of girls in rural areas.

The success of these schemes can be gauged from the fact that more and more girls are today creating a niche for themselves



Courtesy of India Perspectives

and bringing laurels to the country. However, there is an urgent need to adopt and implement laws and policies to end early and forced marriage.

The government's efforts can succeed if communities are also

mobilized against the practice. Until we create awareness about the benefits of women education, these programs will not bring about the desired result.

COURTESY OF INDIA PERSPECTIVES

Advertorial



Politeknik Enjinerung Indorama: Producing Tomorrow's Engineers

A vocational campus with a global vision



Politeknik Enjinerung Indorama (PEI) is a corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative by PT. Indo-Rama Synthetics Tbk. through its foundation Yayasan Pendidikan Indorama that has been established to answer Indonesia's growing industrial need for skillful and competent engineers.

Launched on Sept. 23, 2013, Politeknik Enjinerung Indorama is strategically located next to the vast PT Indo-Rama Synthetics Tbk. industrial complex in Purwakarta, West Java.

"Proximity to a big manufacturing complex provides PEI limitless access to industrial concepts and best industrial practices," the Polytechnic Dean says.

Offering D-3 DIKTI-approved courses in mechanical, electrical and mechatronics and with 300 students already enlisted, the PEI is now

poised to expand its educational syllabi to include D-3 courses in IT and textiles in the near future.

Educational and vocational training at PEI also integrates knowledge and technology in relation to the development of the community surrounding the area in outreach programs together with supporting industries.

"Doing so, PEI has been able to put in place its mission to use knowledge and technology for the development of the country," the Dean says.

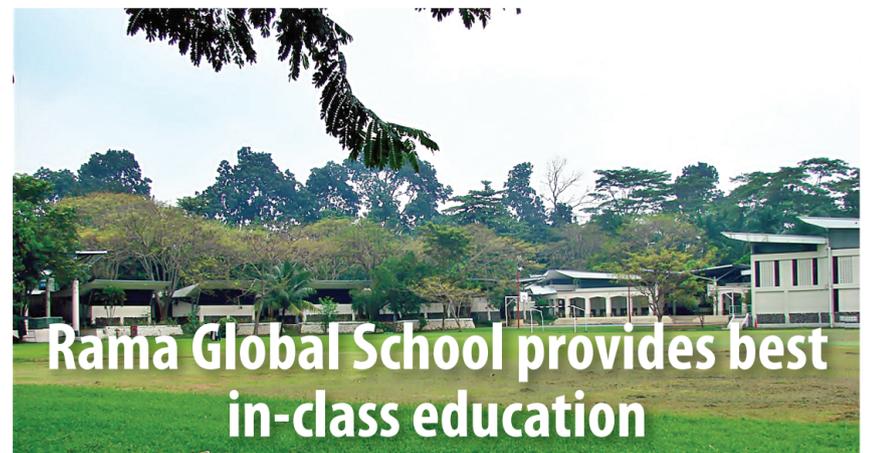
PEI has also been appointed as the official partner in developing smart robotic programs, light control systems and smart bicycles to be used in the pilot villages within the Jatiluhur and Purwakarta municipalities in Purwakarta regency.

The establishment of a strong quality assurance program has

enabled PEI to be named one of the healthiest and most active higher education institutions by DIKTI in 2014 and the best private higher education institution in Purwakarta. PEI has also been fully accredited by BAN-PT in 2016.

Active and well-meaning support from the local government and the industries within Purwakarta regency has now become one of PEI strengths as a CSR campus, with 100 scholarships being awarded by the Purwakarta government and an equal number by various corporations including Indorama.

Successful job placements for the students well before their final graduation, through campus interviews by industries in and around Purwakarta has enabled the Politeknik Enjinerung Indorama to earn a stamp of final approval for its goals and mission.



Rama Global School provides best in-class education

Rama Global School, a coeducational day and residential school affiliated with the internationally approved Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations, provides a well-rounded school education that has been designed to match global standards.

Rama Global School, located near Jatiluhur, Purwakarta, West Java, provides the best in-class education from nursery school to grade 12.

Established by PT. Indo-Rama Synthetics Tbk. in 1997, Rama Global School has carved out a niche for itself by living up to its motto, In Pursuit of Excellence, in both letter and spirit.

Supported by qualified and experienced teachers, the school adopts the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) curriculum. It has been nurturing leaders by providing an education that is imbued with values, skills and sensitivity, besides the wide knowledge to prepare for global citizenship in



the 21st century.

The expansive and picturesque campus provides a conducive environment for learners to pursue their varied interests with the help of a comprehensive educational program that is an eclectic mix of academic, co-curricular and extracurricular activities crafted with a lot of thought and care to give your child a headstart to excel in the global arena. Extracurricular activities include indoor and outdoor activities, dance, art and

Western music.

The school has smart and air-conditioned classrooms with WiFi connectivity and modern amenities and a canteen. It also ensures safe and secure academic activities as it offers pick-up and drop-off, healthy nutritious meals and 24-hour security.

For more information, contact:
Rizka Agustina (Admin)
Mobile: 0857 9824 7294
Ph.: +62 264 207052
Fax.: +62 264 204691

Indorama conducts cataract elimination drive

Following a very successful cataract elimination campaign under their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative in Purwakarta, West Java, in October 2015, when more than 500 eye operations were conducted, Indorama continued the campaign in the Bandung Barat regency in 2016. The campaign took place in Cililin Hospital.

After six months of intense

liaisons with the administrations in the two regencies, Purwakarta and Bandung Barat, followed by publicity in various villages, extensive preparations at the hospital, 1,023 patients from Purwakarta, Bandung Barat and Cimahi were pre-screened.

"Finally 463 were confirmed cataract patients and 653 eyes were operated on smoothly and successfully. It was held from Oct. 15, 2016 to the final post

operations on Nov. 19, 2016," the company said.

It said that this most exemplary effort was accomplished by a team of five doctors, 15 support medics and 85 volunteers from Indorama.

This initiative by Indorama, spearheaded by Aarti Lohia, was commended by local administrations and most of all by the patients and their families, according to the company.

