

# BHANSALI TRUST

(BOMBAY PUBLIC TRUST REGISTRATION NO. E 3995)

## **NEW MUSHAR PROJECT**

We have taken up a new project for the Mushar community in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Mushar is one of the most backward communities in the country and falls under “maha dalit” category.

We have been involved with the Mushar community projects for the last 4-5 years. My wife Shital and I have so far visited 40 – 50 Mushar villages in Bihar and UP to understand their living conditions and problems. We were shocked at their abject poverty, sufferings, lack of education, superstitious beliefs, extremely unhygienic living conditions etc. Most unfortunately, they live a life that could be termed sub-human. Being poor and illiterate, they have been severely exploited by the other communities. To give an example, they normally pay more than 10% interest per month against borrowings.

From 2012 we have been working in 30 Mushar villages in Champaran Dist (North Bihar, bordering Nepal). Being part of India Philanthropic Initiative (IPI) I get opportunity to meet Mr. & Mrs. Bill Gates. During his speech once he mentioned Mushar community. It was a pleasant surprise for me to know that Mr. Gates was very much aware of this community, their problems and was really concerned about them. On the other side our subsequent Governments have done practically nothing for them in last 6 – 7 decades. After this I gathered some more information about Mushars’ and came to know that their total population in Bihar and UP is approx. 5 million, scattered over 10,000 villages, much bigger than what I initially thought. It is not easy to work with this community but still we decided to do whatever we can.

Since Jan 2015, we have been working in Mushar villages in Gaya District (Bihar), we have selected an area surrounding Bodhgaya. So far we have reached 250 villages and plan to expand our work to cover 300 villages by December 2018. What we could achieve in three years is quite encouraging and we are very hopeful that in a year’s time we can bring about some positive change in their living conditions, level of education etc.

We have taken up 2 other projects in Bihar for Mushar community (1) Kishanganj - 60 villages (2) Champaran - 55 villages.

## **SCHOOLS & HOSTELS FOR MUSHAR COMMUNITY**

1. A school for Mushar and other poor communities at Bodhgaya (Bihar): It is a free school with good education standards for 750 students. Though the students are from the most poor and backward communities, last years’ result for SSC exams was 100% and many of the students scored above 60% and 70% marks.
2. From June 1, 2018 we will start another school for 300 students in a very remote part of Gaya Dist. It will be a free school for Std. I to V with hostel facility for both boys and girls.

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3. We recently constructed a new hostel building in Bodhgaya for 100 students. This will be for the high school students.

4. In Champaran Dist., (Bihar) we run 4 schools with hostels through a local NGO.

All the above projects are for Mushar, Chamar, Ravidas and other mahadalit communities. Students from very poor families of other communities are also given admission.