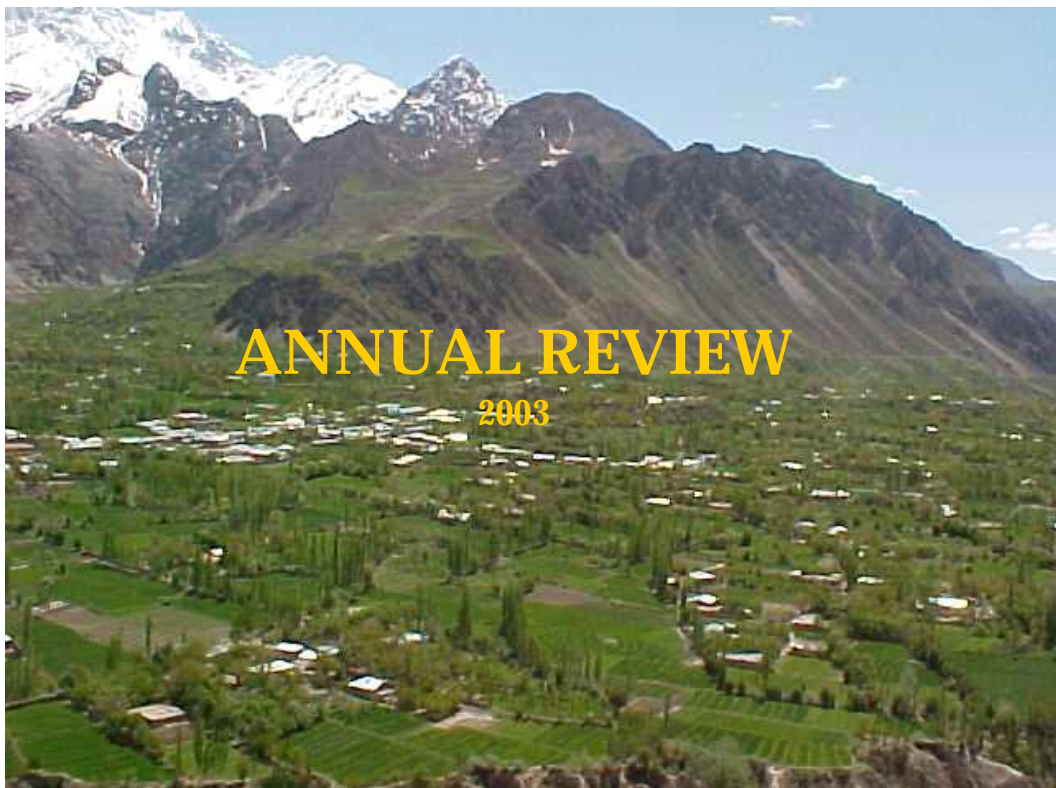


STAR'S LAND GRAMMAR SCHOOL, BOONI, CHITRAL



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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Star's Land Grammar School is a privately owned registered school aimed at providing modern quality education to the young generation of upper Chitral in general and of village Booni in particular. The school is registered with the Government of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and is located at village Booni- the headquarter of upper Chitral.

Chitral is one of the remotest districts of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan, located in the isolated mountainous region of Hindukush bordering with Afghanistan. The district is unique in today's world in terms of accessibility as it remains disconnected from the rest of the world for five to six months in winter every year when heavy snowfall blocks to the two gateways (10,500 feet high Lawari Pass in the south and 12,205 feet high Shandur Pass in the north) to Chitral. Because of its remoteness and isolation from the rest of Pakistan, Chitral has always been disadvantaged in all respects. The local communities mostly make their livelihoods from below subsistence level farming activities on negligibly small holdings of cultivable land¹. The estimated population of Chitral is over 350,000 with an annual growth rate of 2.5%.

Having said that, the local communities have been looking for diversifying their livelihood strategies off the farm, in from of public and private sector employment, village and household level commercial activities, retail businesses and seasonal migration to the down country for casual labour works. Among all these off-farm sectors economic alternatives, people prefer regular employment in government or private sector organizations to avoid the risk of breakdown in the income stream to the family otherwise the whole family suffers in this traditional society where joint family system prevails. But high rewarding job opportunities in any sector demand an individual to have high quality qualifications in today's world. And Chitralis face extreme difficulties in job market only because of poor quality education in their early age schooling. Therefore, in order to ensure economic stability in future through high earning family members, each and everyone in Chitral is always ready to pay but to access the best educational institution to provide quality education to their children. In the present socio-economic scenario of this remote mountainous region, there are only a few families who can afford to bear the high fee for their children education in good schools in the down country. The rest of the poor majority Chitrali's have been depending upon the government schools, which, because of their low quality and inefficiency, can only produce clerks, police constables or a soldiers or class four employees. In addition, there are negligible numbers of government schools for girls in the whole district resulting in depriving the female community from being educated.

In view of the above situation, certain educated members of the society have been struggling to establish private schools- individual as well as community owned, in Chitral during the last two decades. Currently, such private schools have been opened and are successfully operating in almost all the big villages of Chitral. These individual and community owned private schools, which are usually called public schools in Chitral, established in different villages and run by different individuals or communities, offer English medium modern education with their prime objective of making the young generation successfully compete in the job market in the years ahead. The Star's Land Grammar School is also an outcome of the same process which is owned and run by Mr. Muzaffar Hussain Shah- a local young and zealous educated member of the society from village Booni, Chitral.

¹ According to Socio-Economic Survey of Chitral conducted by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme in 1998, average landholding in Chitral is 9 kanals (approximately 4 chakwarums in local measurement scale)

The motive behind taking the initiative of opening a school was to contribute, though in a minute amount but on regular basis, to socio-economic development of this isolated part of the world through a permanent institution. As a matter of fact, individuals born and die but institutions created for a noble cause always sustain and flourish. The person who starts such institutions may not be alive for a longer period but the vision which is materialized in the shape of an institution never dies. Also, unlike many other activities, institutions can not be created all of a sudden and when they are created they never remain static because they are comprised of various processes. Thus, when the idea of Star's Land School was floated to various friends and relatives in late 1998, there were more discouraging views than encouraging from all corners. There were, of course, good reasons for them to reject the idea at that stage, but in fact, whoever suggested in whatever form, has positively contributed to the establishment of this institution of learning. Finally, after a long series of brain storming and discussions, decision of starting the school was taken in early 1999. The school was formally initiated on March 6th, 1999 in rented building situated in the center of village Booni. The management of Star's Land School acknowledges the invaluable contributions of Mr. Magnus Marsden, an English friend from Cambridge University, at the initial stage.

Overview

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES DURING 2003

Previously, when there was a monopoly of the government in Educations sector, till late 1980s, the students did not have a friendly environment in the schools as the teaching staff had their own autocratic style of teaching and students did never have independence of expression. In that traditional culture of education, the students were not allowed to ask even a single question in the classroom but they had to pass the examination through memorizing the lessons by heart and there was no room for creativity of the students themselves. With growing education market all over Pakistan in general and in Chitral in particular through the private sector, the young boys and girls of the area have been provided with open options and choices of different schools. The increasing number of private/community owned schools influenced the government policy and the culture of even the government school has now changed from teacher centered education to students centered education system. Thus, it can be rightly said that now there is a perfect competition in the education market in Chitral where quality of a product matters a lot and Star's Land Grammar School has been successful in making its goodwill in terms of quality education, friendly environment to the students and comparatively low cost to the parents for better quality education.



Star's Land's Students in the class room

Like the previous year, during 2003, in addition to the course work, the school organized various co-curricular events for its students as well as other stakeholders of the school, e.g., teachers and parents. These events include, trip of the students and teachers to the famous picnic spots in the area, celebrating various national and international days, holding school level seminars, quiz competitions, parents day etc.

Staff Capacity Building

To enhance the capacities of the teachers and give them further skills in modern teaching techniques, the teaching staff members are given regular trainings by the head teacher in the school. They are also sent to the various schools in the area to learn good practices in teaching and develop creative learning environment for the students. In addition, the Professional Development Center (PDC) of the Aga Kan University has started functioning in Chitral. The PDC Chitral provides training to the teachers of various schools in the district. Star's Land School has also developed linkages with the PDC and there has been an agreement that the PDC will provide professional training to the teaching staff of the school. In this connection, PDC has trained one teacher from the school in English Teaching, during 2003 and will also provide training to the rest of the staff members in other relevant disciplines in the coming years.



Teaching staff in the School's Lawn

Encouraging Students' Creativities

As being a modern English medium private educational institution, Star's Land Grammar School, has provided a highly conducive environment to its students where they are encouraged to demonstrate their hidden potentials and creativities in different ways and means. For, example, the students make portrait of different national heroes, national and international personalities and do different thematic paintings and the products are displayed on the walls of their respective classrooms. The displayed charts are replaced with the new work by some other students after one or two weeks, depending on the availability of the new products.



A student in a classroom answering the teacher

The students are also encouraged to stand up before the whole class and deliver lecture on a give topic or demonstrating how to write something of draw something on the wall board.

The students are also told about their responsibilities as individuals, members of their families and households and more importantly, members of the society at large. They are also provided opportunities to perform on the stage demonstrating various social values, societal responsibilities and parents, teachers and students and many more thematic issues in the society.

The students are taken to the offices of various government departments and NGOs in the area on study tours in order to give them exposure to the dynamics and the society, institutions and systems in place to help the people.

The school has been providing their students with opportunities of competition with the students of other schools in sports, peaches and story/essay writings held by different development organizations working in the area.



Students performing in a stage show held in the school

Recreational Activities for the Students

Star's Land School does not only provide better modern educational facilities to its students but also organize different types trips and events for recreation and entertainment of the students. One



A view of village Booni and the picnic spot "Shipishun"

of such activities is the spring picnic of the students to the nearby hilly areas of village Booni. Like previous year, this year also, the students were taken to the famous picnic spot of Booni called "Shipishun". During this, the students had an opportunity to play various games, sing songs, perform dances and most importantly, to look at the diversity of Natural Resources in the area.

The students of Star's Land school have also been participating in different sports activities and cultural events organized by different organizations in the area.

Moreover, Polo is the traditional game of Chitral and there is a big polo ground in the village Booni, where polo is being played by the local players every alternative day. As part of the recreational activities, the students of the school are taken to the polo ground to watch the polo match once in a week.

Community Participation

As participation of all the key stakeholders in any project or program is fundamental to ensure proper implementation, smooth functioning and sustainability in the long run, Star's Land School



Community members in an Annual Function of the School

has always been giving the due importance to the community involvement at all stages of the School. There has always been close collaboration and proper communication between the School and the local community, with special focus on the parents of the students. Regular meetings of Parents-Teachers Association of the School are being held and the parents and other members of the local community are invited to different seminars and celebration of national and international days organized by the school. The parents are also contacted through progress reports of the students, to inform the parents about the performance of their children

in the school and feedbacks from the parents are incorporated in the relevant policies and systems of the School for better results and quality improvement.

By parents or community members the School does not mean only the male members of the society rather the women community is also equally important for the school or any other activity in the development process. Thus Star's Land School Thus Star's Land has always been involving the local women community in different activities and events organized by the School. Consequently, both men and women of the society have a feeling of ownership in the school as a community.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

As mentioned in the Annual Review of the last year, Stars' Land School has started providing its students with the facility of computer literacy and an introduction to the Information Technology. In this regard, initially, a good friend of the School, Mr. Magnus Marsden of Cambridge University, UK provided generous financial support and then during the year 2003, the British Council Pakistan, helped the school in purchasing a latest computer with all the accessories.



Students of SLGL in the Computer Laboratory

The students of the SLGL are now familiar with the basics of computers and using Internet. After the School has got Internet facility in the campus, the teaching staff have also been benefiting from the information about educational institutions, systems, policies and research work conducted, available through Internet from around the world.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

Since its establishment in 1999, the school has been successful in developing organizational linkages and working in partnership with various civil society organizations, Government and Non-government Organizations working in the district, in down country Pakistan and abroad. Some of the important of these linkages are as under:

THANKS TO BRITISH COUNCIL

Stars land school is fortunate enough to develop linkages with the British Council, Pakistan at Islamabad. This linkage has been very effective and beneficial to the school in terms of getting information about various resources for educational development available around the world. The British Council has also provided the School with a latest computer set along with all the accessories. This linkage with the British Council, Pakistan will remain continue in the long run and the School will be benefiting from the possible information and other resources available with the British Council.

PARTNERSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The first and the most important partnership with government education department is the registration of the School with the Government of NWFP Education Department, under the supervision District Education Officer, District Chitral. This is a long term partnership with the government making the government recognize the school as viable and self-sustaining educational institution. The registration of the school is renewed every year through the district education office, Chitral of the Government of NWFP, Pakistan.

Secondly, the government education department, district Chitral provides the school with teaching aids, stationery and other relevant materials from time to time. The district education officer also visits the school for quality control and facilitates the management in smoothly running the school.

AGA KHAN EDUCATION SERVICES, PAKISTAN, CHITRAL

The Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan (AKES,P), Chitral is a part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) working in Chitral since early 1980s. Being a model organization in the field of education, AKES has always been assisting the school in terms of improvement in the quality of education through teachers training and providing the school with other professional and technical guidance. By now, AKES has trained one of the teachers of the school in modern teaching methods during this year, and two other teachers of the school are going to have one month training January 2004 under the professional staff of AKES. The AKES professional staff usually visit the school to provide guidance to the teaching staff of the school.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER (PDC) CHITRAL

The PDC, Chitral is a part of Aga Khan University, Karachi and has recently started functioning in Chitral. The objective of PDC is professional training to the teaching staff of various educational institutions in the area, developing curriculum, providing teaching materials and providing management guidance to the schools in the district. Star's Land school was one of the first private educational institutions in the district that develop linkages with the PDC. The relevant professional staff members of the PDC have been frequently visiting the school during the current year. During these visits, the PDC representatives have been conducting need assessment of the school and from next year, PDC will be providing extensive support to the school in terms of capacity building of the school staff and providing teaching materials, including books.

GOVERNMENT SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

The School has also developed linkages with the Social Welfare Department of Government of Pakistan through the Community Development Project, Booni, Chitral. The Social Welfare Officer of the project visited the school and provided sports equipments to the school. This project has also been celebrating various events in the project area and the students of the school have been participating in those events.

INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The school is privileged and fortunate enough to have contacts with Trinity College of Cambridge University UK, the students and fellows of which provide advice to the school. With the generous support of Mr. Magnus Marsden of Cambridge University, UK, the school has been successful in providing computer literacy and Internet facility to its students. There are five computers and a printer in the school at present.

The school has also developed linkages with the University of Glasgow of Scotland through Professor Dr. Peter and Azra Meadows. They have been visiting the school since the establishment of the school. They have also been providing some financial support to the school from time to time.

As mentioned earlier that developing linkages of the school with other local, national and international educational institutions is one of the objectives of the school. Such linkages are important to expose the students to the wider world and to make them learn working in partnership with other institutions and organizations. As a part of this process, during the year 2000, with the help of Mr. Giles of Scotland, UK, Star's Land Grammar School was twined with a school in Scotland named Gartamour School.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES

In addition, the School Management has also formed an association of parents and teachers called Parents-Teachers Organization (PTO) The purpose of this body is community involvement in the whole process of the education through curricular and co-curricular activities in the school and to make the community own the school in terms of social and political support. Through this forum, all the parents are invited to the school on quarterly basis and on the occasion of national and international days' celebrations.

OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

SCHOLARSHIPS

As reported in the last year's progress review, the School offers a welfare package to the students who are unable to get admission in the School only because of financial difficulties. Under this welfare package the all the school fees are waived for the deserving students in the area so that the poor and disadvantaged members of the society are not deprived of better educational facilities. Currently, there are around 15 students who have availed this Scholarship facility of the School where, on average, Rs.6,000 per student per annum is being paid by the school itself. Moreover, in the beginning of the year 2003, the School introduced another welfare package through which one brilliant but poor student will be selected after competition among the deserving students from different government schools in the area each year. Though the scholarship is available for only one student among many competitors but in the first year, just to encourage the local community, two students were provided with this facility and it is planned that during the next two years also, more than one student will benefit from this package. The students competing for this scholarship are admitted in class 5th and will get free education till Matriculation from the Star's land School.

FEE STRUCTURE

FEE STRUCTURE

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Admission fee: | Rs.200 /- per annum |
| Tuition fee (KG class): | Rs.150/- per |
| Class 1 st : | Rs.200/per month |
| Class 2 nd and above: | Rs.250/-per month |

Detail of Students' enrollment at SLGS

| Class | Boys (#) | Girls (#) | Total (#) |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| KG | 13 | 7 | 20 |
| 1st | 22 | 10 | 32 |
| 2nd | 23 | 5 | 28 |
| 3rd | 22 | 2 | 24 |
| 4th | 23 | 6 | 29 |
| 5th | 13 | 13 | 34 |
| Total | 116 | 43 | 167 |

DONORS

1. Mr. Magnus Marsden, Cambridge University, UK
2. Professor Dr. Peter and Azra Meadows, University of Glasgow, UK
3. Mr. Giles Waley and June Waley, Scotland, UK
4. Schawallate, UK
5. British Council, Islamabad, Pakistan

FRIENDS

1. Mr. Magnus Marsden, Cambridge University, UK
2. Professor Dr. Peter and Azra Meadows, University of Glasgow, UK
3. Mr. Giles Waley and June Waley, Scotland, UK
4. Mr. Charles and Lucila Marsden, UK.
5. Schawallate, UK
6. Mr. Indrieas and Socalo Wado, Austria.
7. Mr. Danial , UK.
8. Mis. Zehra, Headmistress, Government Girls High School, Booni
9. Mr. Sahiburakhman, Headmaster, Government Boys High School Booni
10. Mis. Gulsmbar, DEO female education District chitral .
11. Mr. Shamsurehman, Tehsil Nazim, Mastuj
12. Mr. Sardar Hussain, Nazim, UC, Charun, Booni
13. Mr. Douglas, Scotland
14. Mr. Wellium, UK.
15. Mrs. Margrate Miller (Gatamour School)
16. Mr. Ehsanul Haq, Manager M&E, AKRSP, Chitral
17. Mr. Annemik, Holland
18. Mr. Salamat Khan (Convener AKSWB Chitral)
19. Mr. Sherzad Ali Khan, AKRSP, Chitral

TEACHING STAFF

1. Muzaffar, MA B.Ed
2. Jamila Begum, BA
3. Shahila Bibi, BA
4. Didar Ali, BA
5. Bahader Khan, BSc
6. Shams, FSc
7. Javed Iqbal, FSc
8. Fida Ali, BA