

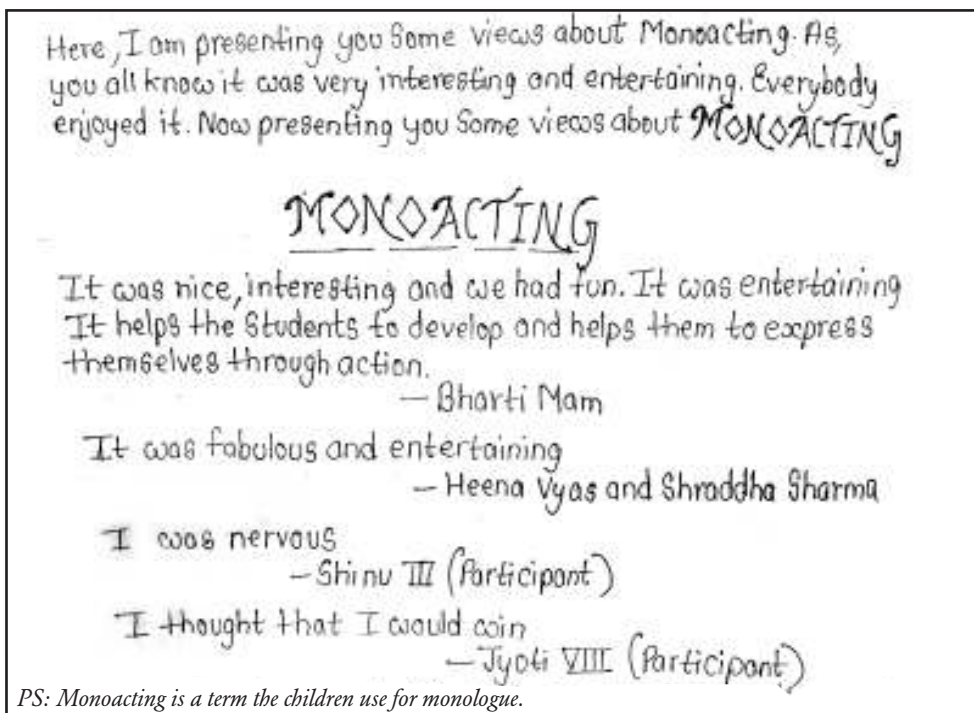
had understand that illiteracy is affecting girls very much, if by chance the husband of the women dies and nobody in to handle their family then women can do nothing because they are illiterate and here if they are educated then girls women can do any job and fulfil their needs. So I remain proud to my country that in today time women are running had to hand with mens.

– *Khusbendra Singh, male, Age 15*

India a progressive country is a good example for women in each field or in history also. When I was not in this school I was totally trained that don't speak with boys and don't sit with boys but when I came here and

after studying one year in this school I was more active and more smart in each work. The wrong thinking about boys was removed from my mind. I was from a village. In my village the girls are going in school but they are forced to read their time in house hold work. In my village's home there is a child who is servant. His is having four-five sisters. The are not going to school because the sanctity of money their mother said. But whenever i think about his sisters I always have one idea that I should give them my old books and copies to study. In studying in this school I learned that men are not always support for success but women also. If we think positive we always progress.

– *Priyanka Rathore, female, Age 15*



From the school newsletter



Students at the clay shed

The Fabindia School was established by William and John Bissell who saw the need for a model school to empower young people in rural Rajasthan where literacy rates are extremely low, especially among women. From the beginning the school has been committed to encouraging education for girls in a region where most parents who can afford an English medium school would send only their sons. To attract girls the school subsidizes their tuition. Starting in 1992 with 11 pupils, the school now has over 250. The John Bissell Scholars Fund was established in 2000 in memory of John Bissell. Its purpose is to support scholarships for female students.

For comments or further information about the fund, contact **Katherine Allen** at k.allen@fabindia.com or write to the following address:

THE JOHN BISSELL SCHOLARS FUND
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THE FABINDIA SCHOOL

newsletter

PUBLISHED BY THE FABINDIA SCHOOL FOR THE JOHN BISSELL SCHOLARS FUND
FABINDIA, P.O. BOX 118, NEW HARTFORD, CT 06057, USA ☎ FALL 2005

Dear Friends,

I bring you greetings from the Fabindia School, in Rajasthan, India.

This newsletter comes to you with special thanks for all those of you who have generously supported our cause for the promotion of girl-child education in rural India. With your support we were able to raise approximately \$30,000 in annual scholarships and an equal amount for the endowment.

We have come a long way since the inception of the school. William Bissell's vision and leadership have been an indispensable source of inspiration for us. The school started with just 12 students in 1992 and I am very happy to announce that we have a record enrolment of over 360 students today. This was the result of an intensive enrolment campaign that we had organized through the summer months this year. We purchased two new buses to provide transport for students in villages as far as 30 km away from the school and as of this academic year we provide our students free transport. This is in addition to the 50% tuition fee subsidy we provide for all female students. We plan the continued expansion of the student body in the next few years with additional buses to accommodate transport. As most of you know, the availability of free transport is an additional incentive for our parent community who feel the pinch of the expense incurred on transport. Of course this increases our annual expenditure budget, but as this has resulted in an increase in the student enrolment we are very happy. We are also confident that your continued support will enable us to meet the additional expenditure.

We added two new classrooms to our building earlier this year, one of these was constructed with the funds provided by the Horvitz family from Ohio.

The teaching faculty has 18 permanent teachers and three young European volunteers from the United World College. The volunteers help with teaching remedial English and assist the students and teachers with other school activities.

This summer we hosted the third batch of students from Putney Seed for Progress. Sixteen high school graduates from various parts of the USA spent three weeks working on a variety of projects such as, digging trenches, building roads, painting classrooms and teaching conversational English. In fact, we were able to repair portions of the approach road to the school with their assistance and of course with some support from the local civic authorities.

The academic performance of the students of our 10th grade has been commendable. All students who appeared for the final board exam performed very well. The All India Board Exam results were declared in May and since then all the students who appeared for the exam have moved on for higher studies.

On the sports front: Our cricket team won the zonal and the district championships. Two of them might get an opportunity to play at the national level. We are very proud of our young cricketers.

The only downside has been the absence of the monsoon. This is the fifth consecutive year of the failure of the monsoon in Bali. However, we did have some rain in the second week of September, which has left the school campus looking very green. I hope Mother Nature will look upon us favorably in the coming years as well.

With my very best wishes,

Jayant Biswas
Principal, The Fabindia School
October 2005.

"Katherine Allen, who is US Manager for Fabindia Overseas and lives in Collinsville, CT, is going to handle management of the John Bissell Scholars Fund for me. She has worked with Fabindia for years and I am very pleased to have her help."

–*Marie Prentice*

VOLUNTEER STUDENTS ARTICLE

FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

Karin, Johanna and Rachel. Volunteers from the United World College.

“Namaste! We’re the three new volunteers at Fabindia: Karin, 20, from Sweden; Johanna, 19, from Italy and Rachael, 18, from the UK. Karin is taking a break from her studies at college in the USA; Johanna and Rachael have just finished their studies at the United World College and are taking a gap year before starting university in Britain.

We came to India to learn from first-hand experience what life is like in a very different culture from our own. We also wanted to contribute to a practical development project, but feel that we may return home with more knowledge than we were able to bring.

We’ve only just arrived but here are some of our first experiences:

On our daily bus ride to the school, we have faced a never-ending stream of questions about us and learnt Hindi songs and playground games from the kids. The school environment, with its wide-open spaces and colorfully painted classrooms, is much nicer than we’d expected of Rajasthan. We have been inspired by the school’s mission to improve the prospects of rural Rajasthani girls and to offer all its students as broad an education as possible. However, there is still a lack of resources to inspire the children, such as modern children’s books plus art, music and sports supplies.

While at the school, we are contributing in many ways: assisting the English teachers in grades III, V, VIII and IX; holding remedial classes for individuals or pairs; visiting the children’s accommodation hostel and running creative activities such as a reading club, a school magazine and a choir. We are very excited about being here and hope that these next six months will be rewarding for both, Fabindia and us.

ABOUT HIMANI CHOUHAN:

As told by ... **Karin, Johanna & Rachael**

Himani Chouhan, 14, has clear ideas about her future. “I want to be an astronaut,” she says with calm determination. Fabindia School has encouraged her to challenge the expectations of her fellow villagers.

Himani has studied at Fabindia since



Himani Chouhan

“I want to go to the United States at least once,” she says, adding that she wants to become involved with the space program there.



Karin, Johanna and Rachel.
Volunteers from the United World College

the age of four, despite the disapproval of her own father who is a bus driver and many of her relatives. Himani says her father is more concerned about Himani’s brother’s education and cannot see the point of sending a girl to an English medium school. He himself studied till the 10th grade in a Hindi medium school. Fortunately, for her, Himani’s mother, a housewife educated up to 8th grade, is determined that her children should have equal opportunities to fulfill their potential: “She has always told me that I can become anything I want” Himani states proudly.

Taking her mother’s words to heart, this eighth grader refuses to let her decisions be limited by traditions and society. She wants to continue her studies in India, but also dreams about the world outside. “I want to go to the United States at least once,” she says, adding that she wants to become involved with the space program there.

However, she knows that her place is in India, where she hopes her success will inspire others. She believes that India can only completely develop if all of its citizens are educated to their full potential.

This future seems very distant in Himani’s 400-strong village, Sri Sela. The average girl there is lucky if she can continue her studies up to eighth grade in the overcrowded local government school before working at home in preparation for her marriage which is inevitable. Himani’s friends seemed quite resigned to their role as housewives and to the fact that their social interaction would be limited to their husband’s family.

So what inspired Himani to break away from these expectations? Her mother was obviously a great influence, but it was also the environment at Fabindia that made her believe in a bright future. Surrounded by supporting teachers, ambitious classmates and enthusiastic foreign volunteers, she has become a quietly confident, young woman. We hope many more girls in India are given the space to develop in this way!

STUDENT TALK ABOUT THE SCHOOL

I like Fabindia School very much. It has a very nice location with a good green surrounding. All of us students feel good at this place because there are so many trees. I think it is a good opportunity for me to be able to study in this school. My teachers want me to show my best, and I have got so much knowledge about everything.

My teachers have chosen me to be house-captain and I feel that I have got an opportunity to be a leader, which no other school would have given. My favourite teacher is Joyita Ma’am because she teaches me things that I cannot forget and she can feel what the children want. She never wants to me to be a loser and she also encourages me to keep trying till I succeed. She inspires me to always do my best.

– *Siddhi Sharma, female, Grade 9, Age 16*

Siddhi has lots of determination and leadership skills. She excels in all fields, be it academics, sports or team spirit. She has recently been elected as Captain, by her fellow students, which proves her leadership skills. On the sports field she participates in all major games, playing neck to neck with boys her age. She wants to even outdo boys in various things. A sure success.

– *Class Teacher*

On the occasion of Women’s Day I have my these thinking. Women are the half of the population of men from the beginning (ancient time) the women have important roles. In ancient times women have to work just like machine, but now changes or going on. They are getting opportunities to show their talent and thinkings. They are working as the level with man first I used to think that women cannot work; In my society and villages people used to say that girls cannot do work. They have to do only house unless. They cannot go anywhere. And I also used to believe them but after joining this school I get new many information.

Before, I was in other school. There nobody was allowed to talk or discuss about any matter. There children used to come and write and used to learn that things and come to the school. But after joining this school, I felt so much independent, now everybody used to talk and discuss about many interesting topics which teacher, and students like.

After joining this school I got many ideas on women’s



Students in class

After joining this school I got many ideas on women’s role.

role. In class also we used to talk about the problems related to woman like sati. The thinking of people are wrong the woman can also do tasks jobs. They are not made for doing house works. I am also a girl but though also I am studying in school. so that I can be educated and do some jobs and can get success in my life.

The position of woman is very essential because if women would not on the earth no body have been born. In every field the role of women is very important like mother. She used to encourage their children to study, my mother also encourages me to study well and to get success she always used to tell me that she have not educated much due to her house responsibilities and works. She is the big in her family. So she used to take responsibilities. She tells me you are smaller; you do not have any work. So you should study well. From her I have learned much but from school I have also learned too much. As the role of man is important like that the role of women is also important. So we should give women respect and chance to show their feeling. I have these opinions on the role of women.

– *Sbaraddha Sharma, female, Age 15*

The role of women’s in Indian history is very proudful. We feel a great honour to study in CO-ED school. Because it is the school in which no faith is exist. Every body live friendly. I am taking the example of my house that my mother is not as good educated because she is from Rajput Caste and in this Caste that time it was a rule that no Rajput girls will go outside of the home. That time mother’s family thought that education is not necessary for girls. That’s why they don’t make my mother as an educated women. But now days this type of mentality has gone and the parents are making their

Students at morning assembly

