

A transformative movement

Nexus of Good



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Oasis Movement, which started engaging with J&K government in 2016 to train resource persons for educating children, has now proliferated to multiple states

The Oasis Movement began on a small scale. The first engagement with the government was in Jammu & Kashmir in 2016-2018. It was result of an amazing synergy between some of the finest IAS officers like Shaleen Kabra (Principal Secretary, School Education, J&K), Shah Faesal (Director, School Education, Kashmir) and Saugat Biswas (SPD, SSA, J&K), who sincerely believed in helping students holistically. This unfurled Oasis Life Camps and Oasis Friendship Camps (Jyotirdhar workshops) in the schools of J&K.

In just one year, the transformative impact of Jyotirdhar workshops on around 150 heads of schools across Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh created a ripple effect. Many Oasis programmes were rolled out, not just for students, but also for parents and families of beneficiaries.

I had personally witnessed one of these camps while visiting Leh during my tenure as Secretary, School Education and Literacy, Government of India, and was amazed at the energy and the impact this camp had generated. However, there were challenges in the store. While programmes and modules could be replicated, facilitation of authentic transformation in people was voluntary, intangible, slow and a long-drawn process. Oasis needed to prepare a pool of local facilitators to reach out to maximum children. Without appropriate balance between quality and quantity, scaling would have been elusive.

Good words spread and, soon, in late 2019, the Gujarat government signed an MoU with Oasis to take Jyotirdhar programme to school heads, teachers and students. Unfortunately, the pandemic stalled the momentum.

In 2020, founder trustees of Oasis publicly announced the succession plan. This included two segments. One was the handing over of the management of Oasis Trust to a team of young trustee-elect while hand holding them through intensive leadership education. The other adventure was foraying into national expansion of



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the Oasis Movement through public-private partnerships. This partnership crystalized in the form of an arrangement between 'Jyotirdhar' (with Govt. Education Dept for school heads) and 'Pay it Forward' (with founders of NGOs/social sector). The approach was largely non-commercial.

The objective was to gift the culture of character education — the education of the heart — to fellow organisations by sharing Oasis' processes and programme content with their senior leaders. In turn, it would lead to cascading a value-based culture of integrity and giving, not just across their own organisations but also to their beneficiaries in various segments of society.

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, Oasis began the initial experiment in early 2021 in Gujarat through a new initiative, 'Pay-It-Forward'. Fifty-seven leaders from more than 20 credible non-profits, working in different sectors with a focus on rural, child and women development, joined. Amid the pandemic, they reached out to hundreds of children and women in their respective sectors.

Building on the earlier successes, in 2022, along with Gujarat, the model was replicated in Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Delhi-NCR with more than 60 partners. It is an ongoing process which is now being extended to Odisha, Karnataka and Rajasthan.

In January 2022, a team of Oasis founder members began

this journey from Hyderabad, Telangana. They met a genuine educator Navin Mittal, IAS, Commissioner, Collegiate Department. The project's vision was cleared on that day itself. A workshop series for selected 30 NSS college representatives — one from each district across Telangana — was finalized. The idea was to engage with the youth in social entrepreneurship and nation-building by sensitizing these participating NSS officers. Over the year, three residential workshops have been organized.

Eventually, this one PPP led to multiple MoUs and pilot projects across seven different states/UTs including Telangana, Kerala, Karnataka, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu while such MoUs with three other states of Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Meghalaya are on the anvil.

Oasis has introduced need-based, diverse and customized pilot programmes as well as partnership MoUs in each state. In Kerala, it is a one-year project for 25 educators of Kerala State Civil Services Academy, who are taking the programme down to young student aspirants. Based on this success, a model of Telangana Misaal is now being formulated for college students in Kerala.

The education department of Karnataka displayed a very heart-warming response. A holistic model of two-year partnership begins with Oasis Jyotirdhar sensitization workshop for 35 DYPCs representing each district. They will be

instrumental in identifying a select batch of 35 potential leaders from principals across the state that will undergo Oasis programmes. This will facilitate programmes for more than 6,000 students through training of 100 teachers as key resource persons in the first phase.

The next significant MoU on a similar holistic model was recently signed with the J&K school education department, with a larger outreach, especially to girl students of KGBVs. It entails sensitizing workshops for all senior officials and core team members of SLA, SCERT and education departments to harmonize their engagement with the Oasis project. With the help of the pool of available trained resource persons, the entire programme is aimed to create a core team of 40 project facilitators and 150 KRPs across 20 districts, and influence 10,000 students over the next two years. It also includes leadership training of the core team and 100 youth leaders at Oasis Valleys, Gujarat.

Post the Covid-19 pandemic, Jyotirdhar's MoU with GCERT, Gujarat, has also now been reactivated to prepare 250 KRPs across the state, with a large number of teachers benefiting from the programme over the next two years. The first phase will reach 15,000 students directly.

This PPP venture was a win-win situation for Oasis. In states like Tamil Nadu, where Oasis conducted sensitizing workshops for a select batch of headmasters of government schools

across the state, it not only created an inroad but also became a huge learning experience for Oasis facilitators.

For government schools in larger states like Rajasthan, Oasis has customized a pilot programme with special focus on girl students in the Mewar region. With the support of officials of Samagra Shiksha and education department, in the first phase, a three-day Life Camp festival was organized in the rural/tribal parts of Chittorgarh and Udaipur districts. 557 students participated in 15 such camps engaging around 24 youths from Oasis team and 10 teachers from schools and NGOs as resource persons. A similar project MoU for programmes on character education for school students is in the process of being finalized with the Lok Shikshan Sanchanalaya, Madhya Pradesh government. The focus of this pilot programme will be on the Indore region, and will engage 150 school heads and teachers to be trained as KRPs to benefit 5,000 students through Oasis programmes.

In early 2023, Oasis plans to engage with the governments in eastern regions of Odisha and Meghalaya.

A path-breaking development that emerged recently was an MoU of Oasis with Centre for Good Governance, Government of Telangana, with the inspiration of a retired IAS officer K Skandan. 'Self-Governance for Good Governance — Education of Heart for Authentic Leadership' envisions influencing the bureaucrats and government officials, especially the young, to lead a change in the systemic interventions with a value-basis of integrity and accountability.

Oasis has accomplished what it did on account of the support it managed to get from outstanding officers like V Vigneshwari and APM Mohammed Hanish in Kerala; Ritesh Singh and BB Cauvery in Karnataka; Navin Mittal in Telangana; Usha Kakrila in Tamil Nadu and Alok Kumar in J&K. They present a wonderful example of public-private partnership in the true spirit of Nexus of Good.

Views expressed are personal

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