

DAYAPURAM EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL CENTRE



Founded in 1984 with the mission of “social equality through education; cultural justice through inclusivism”, Dayapuram Educational and Cultural Centre is a volunteer-run organization with educational, humanitarian and cultural wings for the educational empowerment of orphans, destitutes, women and the socially backward sections of the society in a qualitative and constructive way in its 40 acres of space. The values of social justice and inclusivism are common to the inspirations of this organization, started on an August 15: Islam, the spiritual-ethical code and the idea of India, the constitutional socio-cultural entity.

Origins

Dayapuram is a happy fruit of the association between a Qatari scholar and social leader, and an Indian expatriate-turned social worker. An Islamic studies student in Doha who joined Qatar Police after studies, C. T. Abdurahim was required to escort the Qatar Director for Religious Affairs, Sheikh Ibrahim Abdulla Al Ansari, during his visit to Kerala for medical treatment in 1974. The deep filial connection between them is the reason why C T Abdurahim decided to seek his support and prayers for the orphanage and school that he wanted to launch with his friends under the banner of the newly founded “Al Islam Charitable Trust” 8 years later in Kerala.



The foundational words by Sheikh Ansari:

“Dayapuram should grow to become a centre that gives asylum to anybody who suffers without food, medicine or education, whatever his region or religion is” - (From the inaugural address, 1984)

Specialities

Orphan empowerment in an inclusive way: Ansari Orphanage of Dayapuram marked a shift from the available model till 1980s of “orphan care” in a single religious community-centred way. Rather than giving food and education in a segregated way with special uniforms ruining the sense of ownership in the minds of the children, Dayapuram made orphanages invisible by merging orphans with children who paid fees, giving them equal quality education, boarding and lodging facilities. The first English medium orphanage in the state with more than a 100 students now, Dayapuram also admitted children from all religions with the idea that for humanitarian help, there should be no religion or caste or gender. Not only the hundred-plus graduates including doctors and engineers from the orphanage, but also the fact that other orphanages have remarkably reduced segregation shows the success of this first step. Educational Adoption Scheme, a 2007 addition to the project with another 100 students, has been introduced to widen the base for humanitarian work.

Centre for the Channelisation of Financial Gains: Dayapuram worked as a centre for channelizing the financial gains of the Gulf migration for the Muslim community in Kerala into social advancement through education. A school with 82% as the average board score for 130 students last year (incidentally, the best for any Muslim management run school in Kerala) and a number of alumni at premier institutions such as NITs, Medical Colleges, Delhi University and University of Hyderabad, this social integration project has had an eminent track record.



An Educational Laboratory: Dayapuram renews itself with time to bring the best and the newest practices in education for the benefit of the students and the locality. Participatory schooling in which students are involved even in administration and integrated schooling where students get arts, sports and programming classes from the very school are ideas the school is currently working with. Dayapuram College is trying to network with faculties from premier institutions such as IITs, N.I.T.s, IIMS and premier colleges to create the culture of a solid liberal arts higher education centre.

Self-Sufficient Financial Model: After the donations received in the initial years, the centre has found a self-sustaining financial model: the income over expenditure generated by delivering quality education for the middle class and upper middle class children is spent on the education of poor students and local humanitarian works (medical help and help with housing are quite central- with 32 houses and a road for a disadvantaged area having built by Dayapuram). 90% of the students pay and roughly 10% gets supported from what the organization earns from it- thus the organization works as a channel for redistribution.

Singularity: Defying the norm of working as a supportive mechanism for powerful political and religious organizations, Dayapuram has zealously guarded its singularity. Carried forward only on the strength of the selfless fraternity, the members of which doesn't get any benefits including admissions or appointments, this model has thus managed to resist the onslaught of money and power that the educational sector of Kerala usually suffers from. This stately Muslim organization has 75% of staff who are non-Muslim should talk for its sense of justice and rigorous procedures.

A Platform for Communal Harmony: As an organization that believes in justice and peace, Dayapuram has been working to be a common space for growth for all communities. Sensing danger in the polarization and atmosphere of fear and insecurity, the centre also took to awareness programmes against communalism, terrorism and fanaticism in 2007. Disruption of the social fabric based on selfish demands is dangerous for every single member of the society is a conviction it has maintained since inception.

Research-based Religious Studies and Practice: The values and directives for taking ethical positions are enshrined in religions but they need to be rethought in the changing techno-economic conditions through nuanced research. Dayapuram has also been such a centre of research in Islam, asking questions such as whether Zakath could be given to non-Muslims, organ donations outside the religion are Islamic, why fanaticism is unIslamic and anti-Islamic, how can Islam's history of negotiations with local cultures be understood- and it has also been a land of practicing many such findings.



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