SIES adopted the village ‘Kawthewadi’ situated in the Karjat Taluka of Raigad District and dedicated it to Shri. Anna Hazare on 18th May 2014.

An unfailing adherence to social responsibility reflected in the deed of the adoption and dedication of this village. The transformed village is now a model village - a benchmark for both development and perseverance; both, for the residents of the village as well as the “Change Agents” of the institution respectively.

“A nation grows on the strength of its institutions which have a special responsibility to reach out to the poor and the weak. The youth power that institutions like ours claim can be ‘Change Agents’. Education is not just preparation for life, but life itself. Changing experiences emerge from social initiatives. In two decades to its century, the Society has committed itself to a greater share of its activities being devoted for social responsibility. The SIES – ISR is a step in that direction.”

These were the words which marked the immortality of the novel idea; dedication to and of a social responsibility.

-Arnold Monis | SYBA
Social Responsibility – From Empathy to Empowerment

Social Responsibility as the current buzz term has attracted immense attention in the world. Not just companies, but even institutions are now convinced that their impact on the economic, social and environmental sectors directly affects their relationships with stakeholders in the long run. A strong social responsibility program is an essential element for sustainable development as well as in achieving good business practices and effective leadership.

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility germinated from the honest, ethical, and fair treatment of all business relations. Philanthropy was a virtue for wealthy persons sharing some of their wealth with the community. Later came in stewardship, which embodied the notion that those in society who were in positions of privilege or wealth should engage in activities in the interest of the less fortunate. Most Indian public sector units deployed policies and practices in labour welfare and community well-being as part of their venture and a way of life.

Corporate Social Responsibility in India has traditionally been seen as a philanthropic activity. In keeping with the Indian tradition, it was an activity that was performed, but not deliberated. The practice of social responsibility in India still remains within the philanthropic space, but has expanded to institutions by moving from the institutional building (educational, research and cultural) to community development through various projects.

Institutions in India have been engaged in serving the society even before the advent of the term Corporate Social Responsibility. Ever since their inception, corporate companies like the Tata Group and Indian Oil Corporation, have been involved in serving the community. Through donations and charity events, many other organizations, especially educational institutions, have been doing their part for the society, in order to inculcate the cherished values of charity and empathy in students.

Today, more educational institutions are adopting the policy of Corporate Social Responsibility under the term of Institutional Social Responsibility. SIES College of Arts, Science and Commerce has already adopted Kawthewadi, a small village in Karjat Taluka. This noble initiative will ensure Kawthewadi as the emerging face of the institution in the time to come.

- Nandita Seshadri | SYBA

ISR - The Beginning

Humanity is a fast fading virtue which SIES attempts to nurture in its students through various awareness programmes and extra curriculum. This virtue has been accentuated in the form of Institutional Social Responsibility. SIES-ISR came into existence on 16th March 2012 and works directly towards societal upbringings of the backward or needy. This addition to the curriculum was meant for educational institutions, which have a major role to play in channelizing Corporate Social Responsibility funds from the corporate sector through the student fraternity’s spirit so as to create a change in the society.

The SIES-ISR Project accelerated under the leadership of Dr. Harsha Mehta (Principal of SIES Arts, Science and Commerce), Mr. George Abraham (Vice Principal) and a stunning batch of teaching staff, non-teaching staff and students who took their first step towards serving the society by eagerly supporting the project. Furthermore, SIES College made a donation of Rs. 1.5 crores for the development of the village Kawthewadi.

Before undertaking the transformation of an entire village housing 550 members, the ISR project in 2013 went about performing several deeds of goodwill. The ideas that were brought to reality are:

- All SIES institutions were assigned drought affected districts and the task of the sustenance of the livelihood.
- Drought-affected areas in Maharashtra were privileged to have ‘Samooh Vivah’ (community marriage) conducted, since the earlier planned wedding ceremonies was hindered due to financial constraints. The event, which involved the marriage of more than fifty couples, was graced by the Governor of Maharashtra Shri K. Sankaranarayanan. The college also distributed sarees in these areas.
- After the drought in 2013, one borewell was sunk in village Kabar Sanghavi, Taluka Chatur, Zilla Latur in the Marathwada district; and handpumps were installed in Karangala Gram Panchayat, Latur Zilla. Chandeshwar Gram Panchayat was supported with pipelines from borewells to village households. Bhujwada Gram Panchayat in Taluka Vashi, Osmanabad district was provided with one borewell of 500 feet.
- 15740 sarees were distributed among 42 villages named project “Aanchal”. A major amount of sarees were supplied by Mahalaxmi Temple and Mumba Devi temple of Maharashtra.

After these small steps towards building an even more responsible society, the recent adoption of the village Kawthewadi is aimed at being unveiled as the perfected module of institutional and corporate collaboration for the fulfillment of social responsibility.

- Pheby Varghese | SYMS
The Scream Became Louder with Every Passing Minute... Yet Fell on Deaf Ears!

"Never did I imagine the dragons that my teddy bear (I thought) warded off for me, would come face to face with me. Albeit the nightmares, they were much more horrifying this time. I didn't know the people I saw around DAILY and let out a faint smile to them, WERE the demons I saw in my nightmares. I called them as Sir's & Dada's, in my school. AND what they did to me, left me shell shocked. I was too naïve to understand but mom used to look at me and have moist eyes, every time. Dad was never like before; his jovial and pampering self was replaced by overtly cautious and suspicious self.

And why so? Because 4 MEN COULD NOT KEEP THEIR ZIP’S CLOSED AND TESTOSTERONES IN CONTROL!

I was only 6 years old, they said, I didn't wear low cut dresses they didn't say.
I was too unfortunate they said, I didn't drink alcohol or smoke, wear make-up and invite RAPE, they didn't say.
I WAS A GIRL. THEY SAID, I was also a KID, they surely forgot this. Didn't they?"

You are free to judge this article as a RANT and skip through, but I wish to raise this question before you today.

Where are we heading? As HUMANS? As a SOCIETY? As INDIANS? As CIVILIZED PEOPLE OF 21ST CENTURY?

I say SHAMBLES. Given the fact what's happening around us, I strongly wish we were heading towards DOOMSDAY instead!

The girl around you and me is scared to look at any male today. Why?
She's not safe in her own safe-keep let alone her choice of hangout or office or school. She's way afraid to see anyone in their eyes and talk to anyone about what she feels.

The urge in her, to pursue a vocation of her choice died down. Long ago it died. Ever thought why?

As per Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, for any human it's their prima facie need to have SOCIAL SECURITY, after basic amenities. Once this need is fulfilled, its then humans move on to any other needs like Self-actualization and the likes.

The woman of 2014 is NOT SOCIALLY SAFE. She's constantly pried upon. She's followed by infinite pair of eyes and much more. This could have been manageable (somehow) for them but the buck doesn't stop here. She's constantly touched inappropriately, dealt with severe masculinity (or you can also call it pretentious Macho-ism), she's molested and teased; with her modesty long gone for a toss. Not to forget the fact that she's raped, by known and by unknown. If not physically, mentally for sure and thus the ordeal of being a woman continues in our society.

Is death penalty a solution to the problem at our hand? Or do we impose a SHARIA law (similar to what is practiced in UAE nations)?

The Answer is Yes and No.

Why Yes? Because for in the short term, awarding death penalty to rapists and cruel criminals will act as a deterrent in the society and can cause reduction in rapes and crimes against women. But the practicality is bleak as death penalty is awarded in Rarest of Rare cases and can be communicated into Life Imprisonment after begging for mercy pleas before the President of the nation. Further, the judiciary system in India takes its own time to identify all the aspects involved in the crime and then identify accused as a criminal.

Why No? Instilling fear never reduced crimes and always has received flak to be ineffective in curbing the crimes as anticipated. Also imposing laws practiced in UAE like SHARIA Law will go against the human ideologies of the Indian Constitution and also violates the Code of Conduct towards Humans.

Thus in order to solve this problem of increasing Sexual and Non-Sexual crimes against women, there needs to be a proper mindset of the people which does not objectify women as just a piece of meat, to be used to satiate their lust. Also, a radical paradigm shift in the thought process of victimizing the victim needs to happen and the victim needs to be looked with empathy and not with despise and shunned as if she had perpetuated the rape herself.

The act of Rapes and other crimes inflicted on women should be viewed in same light as Murder and their Silent Screams should not go unnoticed and neither should they fall on deaf ears, as they do now. Only and only then are we creating a society safe for our daughters and sisters!

- Akshay Agarwal | Co- Founder, SIES Skyline | Alumni, SIES College, Sion

PUBLIC SPEAK

Smruti Mani SYJC ARTS

Sudhanshu Shekhar SYBMS

Lavina Shetty SYBMM

"You can be defensive, yell out slogans and hold vigils and protests. The fact is that rape is more prevalent and widespread than ever. A woman is strong, powerful and bold. But unfortunately, most of them don't know it yet. She is not to be protected but respected."

"What we need isn't another law but a change in thinking. Don't blame the victim, don't make excuses for the perpetrator. Why is mental illness always mentioned when a woman is assaulted? Why is it that the assaulter gets off scot free? Why is the girl blamed for wearing 'revealing clothes, going out at wrong times or drinking'?"

"One cannot judge punishment for the perpetrator on a yes or no basis. It is the personal responsibility of every man as a human being to respect women. Don't ask the girls to be careful, ask the boys not to rape."

Smruti Mani

Sudhanshu Shekhar

Lavina Shetty
Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, and South Indian Education Society did behold beauty in a village with scorching, desolate land and houses of sticks and hay. The credit goes to the vision of SIES for the betterment of society guided by their most effective workforce - the union of teachers and students.

The village Kawthewadi is located 85 km from Mumbai. It consists of 101 families with a population of about 550 people. Spread across 2.5 acres of land, it comprises of Adivasi “Thakurs” classified as tribals, whose average monthly income is about Rs. 4000/-. Equipped with a primary school having two classrooms for 69 students, 4 graduates and a few students with a high school certificate, an economy sustained through the cultivation of one kind of crop (Kharip - which grows throughout the rainy season), lack of water supply and 4 toilet blocks; this village Kawthewadi still bloomed with enthusiasm, which SIES tapped into, thus successfully revealing the justified result of hard work.

This project was systematically divided into three sections for affective divisions of skill, with regard to areas of improvement for departments of the college to work upon. Infrastructural development, educational development and environmental development were the three divisions to be built on for the fulfillment of the vision of a Kawthewadi being a model village. Infrastructural development commenced with the recognition for the need of basic amenities for sustenance of livelihood, sanitation and societal development. Progressively, MoB (Members of Brotherhood) – a professional NGO engaged in rainwater harvesting – was commissioned to make suggestions for the construction of check dams for holding rainwater and using them for irrigation during non-monsoon time. Galaxy Group of companies volunteered to support the activity in the field of hygiene. The company ‘Architects Combine’ and ‘Maruti Buildtech’ built the much needed roads, community hall, houses and school. ‘HS Solar’ (Chembur, Mumbai) worked on the instalment of solar panels in the village.

The first stage of rerouting CSR funds through ISR projects was deemed successful with the commencement of construction. Hurdles due to the requirement for organized management and capable manpower were also skillfully nullified by the significant influence of the Principal of South Indian Education Society College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Sion (W) Dr. Harsha Mehta and Vice Principal George Abraham; along with their staff and students respectively. Here, the college’s departments stepped in to keep true to the cause of institutional social responsibility. These leading figures’ dedication to this project was seen clearly in the unfailing numerous visits made to the village along with perseverant efforts made in coordinating and creating developmental activities for the village.

Gradually, in the second phase, this dedication seemed to magically reflect in all of the college’s departmental efforts towards the steady enrichment of the village and all of its residents.

- Arnold Monis | SYBA
The adoption of Kawthewadi began with the idea for development of apparent infrastructural shortages, but gradually transformed into a journey of incomparable delight; in both transforming unprivileged land and rallying students to live by a social cause.

Looking at the wider perspective, ‘Education’ is a social responsibility in itself. When SIES institutes began to appreciate the idea of this adoption of unprivileged but deserving land, the meaning evolved into ‘education’ being not something to be just got, but a virtue to be gifted.

Mr. V. Shankar, the President of South Indian Education Society, inspired confidence into the project merely with a letter of introduction to the ISR initiative and motivated momentum for true change through his understanding about the prospective face of this village ‘Kawthewadi’. He rightly pointed out that the peril of backwardness is not only poor sanitation, irregular water supply, unemployment, lack of internal roads and roofless schools, but is mainly lack of direction for throes of youthful energy.

Principal Mrs. Harsha Mehta and Vice Principal George Abraham, the torch bearers of Mr. V. Shankar’s pledge to Institutional Social Responsibility, spread like wildfire once all of the college’s academic departments were finally meant to be involved in this noble gesture. Departmental involvement changed the scenario, accelerating the project’s momentum.

It began with the detailed report that the Biochemistry department made on the societal factors that effected growth and sustenance of activities. This gave direction to the project, stressing on the fact that infrastructural development isn’t of much use when the residents aren’t groomed to utilize it to its best.

The BMS department and Rotract Club began their task by surveying the village’s houses and figuring out the needs of its members. EDC - Enreuprenurship Development Cell then went on to teach enthusiastic villagers basic methods of making useful things from paper and other available material. They specifically developed marketing strategies for the villagers to maximize their profits in sales.

Teachers from various departments integrated their skills to teach papad and pickle making, stitching, agarbatti and phenyl making skills to the women of the village. These products were later marketed in the college.

NSS (National Service Scheme) involved themselves in the preparation of the dedication and were involved in huge numbers for the Tree Plantation drive of the Botany Department.

NCC (National Cadet Corps) undertook a project which was named - ‘Tumhi Aahe Deshachya Thingnya’. They organized day long camps for children of all ages and trained the teenagers in leadership and speaking skills. These camps consisted of leadership training, environment sensitization movies, sanitation and cleanliness drives and discipline training through basic drills.

Microbiology Department undertook the program of ‘Haath Me Sehat’ in which they sensitized the villagers about uses of water by scientific demonstrations. The department also educated them on good hygiene, water filtration and soil types and betterment of soil by use of bio fertilizers.

After the dedication of the village, the Botany Department planted trees along avenues and the community hall. A varied number of trees were planted over 1 sq. km of land with the help of Botany students, NSS and NCC volunteers. The plantation was completed in half a day and the securing of the plants were undertaken by the villagers.

An SIES – ISR committee is being formed to keep track of and evaluate the progress made in the field of social responsibility. This committee aims at forming reliable teams and integrating enthusiasm to maximize effects with respect to efforts. This committee wishes to see active participation from every student; not just departmentally but individually working collectively to be a “CHANGE AGENT”.

- Arnold Monis | SYBA
LAMENT OF A GIRL

Born with radiant and shimmering eyes,
glistening soft hair that made me look bright,
Clothed with white cloth when I arrived.
But longed for care for which any child would strive.
I was born with amazing courage,
but when I grew up I was told my mother was killed.

It ripped me to pieces as I got to know the fact,
But what could I do, so I sat intact.
I was born with amazing talent but my stepmom would put a stop,
She never liked the way I sang or talked.

Then I became a lady by the age of eighteen,
as I was walking past the road a stalker was eyeing,
I knew this was a problem so I ran for my life,
But as I tried to hide the stalker came from behind,
What could I do, he caught me
But with great bravery I brought him to his knees.

What excuse could I give my parents so I told a lie,
Running to my room I skipped one step at a time.
My room was an attic with almost no light
But that didn't let me lose my courage to fight,

I tried to get help for my situation,
But nobody would come, as that was the condition.
Trying to cope with the troubles of my stepmom,
I thought there wouldn't be an end.
As this was not a story of Cinderella but a real life to begin,
Just then a picture of my stabbed mother spoke to me,
Giving me courage to fight back and saying it's all good to be me.

This courage helped me bring my stepmom to her knees,
Helping me enter a happy chance of life with a new set of keys.
I won the battle for my life,
but couldn't help other girls in my area who didn't survive,
I'm writing this story in the form of a poem,
to give courage and help other girls to live a brighter life.

- Pheny Varghese (SYBMS)

In the words of Oscar Wilde, to live is the rarest thing in the world, as most people just exist - that’s all. During the course of time, one is confronted with accidents, stricken by sickness, tormented by failure; and then, at that moment, only one question - two words - flash brightly in our minds - Why me?

The reason for this is deeply rooted in our self-image. The next time you feel the ‘Why me?’ complex taking over you, abruptly slam down that question, and tell yourself: Try me. You can decide to have a positive self-image, embrace yourself with the love and respect that you deserve, live in the present moment with humour and laughter, clasp life with persistence and take risks while keeping your goals in sight.

Being happy doesn't mean that everything is perfect. It means that you have decided to look beyond the imperfections. Eventually, happiness is what you decide to attract and get. Also, remember to dream. Dream big, because dreams are our future memories and I strongly believe that one should die with memories, not dreams.

- Cristin Susan Kenny
SYBA
PRAJNYA -VERY IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES

Dedicated to the students of Prajnya

Prajnya is a department at SIES college which provides exceptionally challenging services for anyone with disabilities. Now, Prajnya means “wisdom”, and when has imparting wisdom not been interesting especially when the students on the receiving end are extremely accomplished. One section of such masters of exceptionality are visually challenged persons, who we would like to call VIPs. Since, imparting better knowledge to good people is a respected motto of our college, we decided to interview the brave wisdom seekers...

Good morning, we are from the crew of Skyline, thank you for spending your valuable time with us!

No worries.

Could you tell us something about yourself, your hobbies?

My name is Rahul Rathod and I am from FYBA. I like playing cricket and listening to music. My role model is Sachin Tendulkar. I like him because even though things might seem impossible for him to get through, his willingness, passion and love gets him success. For people like us, he is a great inspiration.

Does the education system do justice to your academic requirements?

This college makes us feel very important. The technology provided here are super awesome. The staff members are caring. These qualities promise good guidance. The education system can get a bit tough on us, but what is life without difficulties?

Surprisingly positive! Other challenges, besides academics, that you so casually overcome daily seem to intrigue most of us, would you mind sharing?

While walking, we accidentally dash into people. They make this very annoying sound… ‘Sheeee, stupid!’ but we are used to such comments, so it really doesn’t matter to us anymore. To us, enjoying life seems much more important than squabbling over naive ignorance. It seems enjoyable to understand reality through sounds and voices, knowing innocence truly exists, rather than having to see it.

Rekindling Humanity

Value of the month ‘August’

SELF-ESTEEM

Value Lab is an initiative taken up by the Philosophy Department headed by Dr. Uma Shankar. It provides a platform to students from all streams to introspect and cultivate values, which are an essential part of character building. One value is assigned each month, for which students conduct various activities, which are updated on the Value Lab board next to the 3rd floor staff room. Moreover, an open discussion is held at the end of each month, when staff and students alike come together to evaluate the practicality of the application of that value in life.

‘When we seek to discover the best in others, we somehow bring out the best in ourselves.’ – William Arthur Rand

Watch out for the activities conducted by the Value Lab, and notice the difference in yourself!

-Nandita Seshadri | SYBA
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VISIONS FESTIVAL FEVER

College festivals are what I’d describe as an integral part of college life. Alright, so it’s not as though you can’t survive college without having been a part of a festival, but by not being a part of it, you’re missing out on a crucial experience, the absence of which I tangibly felt.

Visions 2014 is no different.

So here’s inviting you - every one of you - whether you’re a volunteer, faculty member, and especially a student - to be a part of the largest inter collegiate festival SIES College has seen till date.

We’ve come up with more than a hundred different events – a huge leap from the mere 32 of last year! Are you a math buff? We have an event for you. Are you a shutterbug who looks at things only through his/her lens? We have an event for you. Dancer? Right here. Singer? Yes, that too. Creative writer? Yup. College festivals are so much more than what meets the eye. They’re tons of fun, no doubt, but they also entail months and months of hard work. Here’s where you can help us. Do make sure you participate in every event that interests you, and we promise the best college experience for you in return.

Visions 2014 is here, and it’s here to manipulate time. Chronokinesis is the ability to slow down time, or speed it up. We’re speeding up this time, and there’s no stopping us!

Visions 2014. Four times bigger, four times more memorable. Don’t miss out. Do check out the official website for Visions at: www.siesvisions.com

- Aditi Mukund FYBMM

Simply Corporate

DEALING WITH CROSS-NATIONAL ASSOCIATES

By: Ojas Barve
Founder, SIES Skyline | Alumni, SIES College, Sion (W)

Working in a multinational organization has always been a matter of pride for all of us. But what does it take to deal successfully with your colleagues working around the globe? Well there are A LOT of things which you need to learn before you start ‘dealing with cross-national associates’. I would like to share a few points which may help you when you join a global organization.

1. Get the names right:
None of us used to like when our class-teachers or our new classmates made mistakes while pronouncing our names. Isn’t it? Come on! We all belonged to the same country-same state-same city. Yet a wrongly pronounced name annoyed us the most. Then how would you feel if a foreigner makes mistake in pronouncing your name?! It is for this purpose that you should know the names of your foreign colleagues correctly.

2. Amplify your listening capacity:
It is rightly said that you have to be a good listener to be a good speaker. English, though internationally accepted business language, undergoes several colloquial transformations depending upon the continent, region, country etc. To be able to have a healthy dialogue with your foreign colleague, you need to listen VERY carefully. It may happen that you understand only half the things during your first interaction. But, KNOW the distinct pronunciations in the first interaction itself!

3. Bridge the socio-cultural gap:
Always remember to greet your global associate on their festivals, cultural celebrations, national achievement days and on other such occasions. This way, you will not only get a blessing in return, but also understand how your colleague celebrates the festivals in his/her country. As a rule, always communicate with details and strong evidences. This fosters ‘trust’ among the associates and improves ‘transparency’.

4. Stay connected:
Communicating on a regular basis is very important not only to transmit and receive professional updates, but also to hold on to the touch between your foreign colleagues. Regular meetings through telephone, instant messengers, video-conferencing etc. are great media to stay connected. Hold monthly meetings with your teammates around the globe to fortify the team-spirit and encourage interaction.

About the author’s global exposure and experience:
Ojas is working with one of the leading business schools in the world having global campuses in cities emerging as commercial, socio-cultural and technological hotspots- Dubai, Singapore and Sydney. He is working closely with:
• President and Registrar of the school – Indians
• Dean of Postgraduate Programs – American
• Dean of Undergraduate Programs – Sri Lankan
• Head of Campus (Dubai) – Indian
• Head of Campus (Singapore) – Singaporean
• Head of Campus (Sydney) – Australian

...along with other colleagues and students belonging to over 30 nationalities.