

Outlook

initiative



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Ranjoo Mann



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WOMEN REDEFINING LEADERSHIP



Conquering Bastions of Education with Grit

RANJOO MANN

Pro vice chairperson, Delhi Public School (Sonepat)

In the year 2003, Ranjoo Mann started building a school in Sonepat, a burgeoning city on the peripherals of the National Capital region, with the intent to provide quality education to a largely unserved area. Her determination was structured and stubborn. She applied for the Franchise of Delhi Public School, which through its process took longer than she wanted. At the age of 40, a mother to two girls, Ranjoo Mann along with her husband founded the Mann Technical Education Society with the intent to build a world class school with fantastic architecture, soulful grounds, and infrastructure that spoke to the local prowess of Haryana.

Delhi Public School (DPS) gave her the franchise for DPS Sonepat, a brand that instilled trust in education in an emerging city. The school organically grew to become one of the first world class schools in the area. This reversed

the education path of Sonepat to Delhi; it was now the opposite.

With her long experience with schools, Ranjoo was able to bring a multiple stakeholder experience to the school that encouraged diversity of students and resulted in bringing international students to the school. By 2010, DPS, Sonepat had the maximum numbers of foreign students in any CBSE school in the country.

One would think why such a fascination for this particular branch from a huge network of DPS schools? The credit would go to Ms Mann, who believed in skills that are taught beyond the classroom in various faculties that had been created in the school.

With a keen focus on diversifying a child's skill-sets the school invested in heavy infrastructure to develop a curriculum on art, culture, sport, community service, grooming, gardening, animal care, paper recycling, composting, and the good old

Japanese method of students cleaning their own classrooms.

This focus on 'out of syllabus education' was employed by her to slowly change the mindset of parents that the school has a larger responsibility than marks and covering the syllabus. DPS Sonepat was setup as a school that taught life skills, grounding its values in creating an environment where children can feel free to engage and make mistakes all at once. Nothing is out of reach.

She built one of the largest olympic size training auditoriums for Table Tennis players, becoming a major sporting venue Haryana that has coached children to compete at international levels. The government of Haryana and the Sports Authority of India work closely with the school to make it accessible not only to the children admitted to the school but the entire state providing boarding and lodging to anyone who would like to train.

During the pandemic, Ms Mann took a direct approach with the parents in coaching them as the children were returning home. This was a big change not only for her school but also for the Modern Indian Parent. Bringing a calming direction to the new normal, she enforced the hybrid model of teaching very early on and informed parents of how education formats are now going to change and that they must also restructure their efforts on the children by better caution on a child's mental and physical wellbeing during uncertain and chaotic times.

Not just interested in running a school, Ms Ranjoo truly wanted to educate a child. Ranjoo was not interested in just running a school, she wanted to truly educate a child. Rather than focusing on returns on investment as she built a school, Ranjoo focused on sustaining the school on its credibility as an inter-disciplinary institution. As an institution that maintained its standards not just with marks, but by exposing the child to a fully rounded childhood that gave nature, sport, study and character building equal emphasis no matter what the circumstances.