



SHANTI BHAVAN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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- But India continues to grow. Don't the poor benefit from this growth?
- How does Shanti Bhavan fit in?

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POVERTY IN INDIA

- How pervasive is poverty in India?
42% of India's 1.2 billion person population lives under the World Bank defined international poverty line of \$1.25 per person per day.
- But India continues to grow. Don't the poor benefit from this growth?
India is synonymous with growth and is considered a future superpower with influence in the global arena. However, the economic expansion that India has harnessed has not reached the millions of under-nourished, under-educated and under-employed poor. It is amidst this population that India's deeply entrenched caste barriers thrive.
- How does Shanti Bhavan fit in?
The Shanti Bhavan model recognizes the ever expanding gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' in India. It seeks to break the cog of economic and social disadvantage in this vicious cycle of repression by providing poverty's children a holistic high quality education, the promise of a professional career, and the ability to reach their full potential. By harnessing this largely overlooked productive potential, India can continue on a path of growth based upon educated and productive workers and empowered consumers.



SHANTI BHAVAN: THE BASICS

- What is Shanti Bhavan?
Shanti Bhavan, or "haven of peace," is a home and an exceptional school for 210 of India's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. The success of the school has received world-wide acclaim, and has been featured in the international media, including: BBC, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Lehrer News Hour, Charlie Rose, and in multi-Pulitzer prize winning author Thomas Friedman's book, "The World is Flat."
- When was Shanti Bhavan founded?
Shanti Bhavan was founded in 1997 by professor, entrepreneur, and author Dr. Abraham George as a project of The George Foundation (TGF).
- Where is Shanti Bhavan located?
Shanti Bhavan is located in the southeast state of Tamil Nadu near the borders of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, 1.5 hours southeast of the city of Bangalore past the town of Hosur. The closest village is Baligana palli.

- What is the school's mission?

Shanti Bhavan's mission is to fully develop the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children of India's lowest caste by providing them world class education and globally shared values to enable them to aspire to careers and professions of their choice.

We believe that the children of Shanti Bhavan, once educated and successful, will help their families and communities break out of the vicious cycle of poverty. As founder Dr. George has stated, "If 1 child is successful, he will carry 1000 more forward."

- Where does Shanti Bhavan get its funding?

Originally, the costs for building and running Shanti Bhavan came primarily from the founder, Dr. George, along with close personal supporters. Downturns in the market during 2008 severely limited the extent to which his endowment could completely fund the operating costs to pay teacher's salaries, and children's living expenses.

Over the last few years, Shanti Bhavan has expanded its funding base to overcome this shortfall. It has reached out to personal donors through grassroots campaigns and has pursued grants and corporate sponsorship to provide for significant financial needs.

- Is Shanti Bhavan affiliated with a particular religion?

No. Shanti Bhavan is a non-sectarian institution, focused on equal opportunity for education for the children, regardless of caste or religion. All religions are respected and celebrated; no particular religion is propagated. Holy books of all the major religions in India are kept in a common prayer hall for students, and festivals from all religions – such as Diwali, Eid, and Christmas – are celebrated at the school.



SELECTION PROCESS

- Who are Shanti Bhavan's children? Where do they come from?

Children recruited to Shanti Bhavan are well below the Indian poverty line – Rs. 2,400 (\$48 USD) per month for a family of four or more. 60% of the children come from rural villages and 40% from urban slums.

Approximately 95% of the children who fit this criterion also belong to Dalit, or formerly termed "untouchable" communities.

- At what age do students attend Shanti Bhavan?

All of our children start at Shanti Bhavan at age four, except in the first year of operation when we also admitted five year olds. Children continue their education with Shanti Bhavan until graduation from high school. In fact, Shanti Bhavan just graduated its first class in 2010 – all 14 of 14 graduates are now attending top universities in Bangalore, all of which are considered among the best in India.

- How are the children selected?

The children are selected from states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka by a recruitment team comprised of a social worker, a clinical psychologist, a pediatrician and the school principal.

Selection of children is a three-stage process. The social worker visits homes to ascertain the support of the parents for admission and possible issues such as criminal backgrounds. The child is then screened by the pediatrician to ensure overall good physical health. A child who is physically or mentally handicapped cannot be considered for selection as Shanti Bhavan does not have the resources to look after such children. Lastly, the child is screened for his or her cognitive ability. A clinical psychologist conducts culture-friendly tests to determine whether the child will be able to handle leaving home and undertake a rigorous high school curriculum.

- How many children are chosen per grade?

Each year, 12 boys and 12 girls are selected. In 2008 and 2009, no new classes were admitted due to financial constraints. If the financial needs are met, Shanti Bhavan may admit one or two new classes in 2010.



OPERATIONS

- How does Shanti Bhavan differ from other schools serving the poor?

Shanti Bhavan follows a completely unique model of educating the poor and fighting social injustice; no other model of educational intervention commits the same level of long-term and quality investment in the lives of these children, or holds more promise for their futures and those of their families. Shanti Bhavan's students come from the poorest of the poor communities, where families are denied any formal educational resources. The children attending Shanti Bhavan live on a hygienic, beautiful campus 10 1/2 months out of the year and are provided a complete K-12 education free of charge.

Shanti Bhavan's curriculum is based on the ICSE and ISC exams, considered the most difficult in India. This is the first time in history a school for Dalit children has successfully administered this curriculum. Students' studies combine both advanced academics and liberal arts to provide a fully robust education. Children are exposed to global topics, engage in debates, and are instilled with the confidence and skills they need to break free from their circumstances.

We believe that our comprehensive approach achieves a quantum and permanent change in the progress of the children impacted. Ultimately, Shanti Bhavan's mission is to not just provide for the basic needs of the poor, but to shape leaders able to compete in today's world so they in turn can support their communities and break free from the vicious cycle of poverty.

- What is Shanti Bhavan's campus like?

Shanti Bhavan is a beautiful campus complete with fruit gardens (over 20 varieties that meet the entire needs of the school, year round), trees and landscaping that attract many types of birds, butterflies, and other fauna. The serene and inspirational location provides a true "haven of peace." The campus consists of school buildings, with individual classrooms for each grade, additional classrooms for older grades, science labs, a computer lab, art room, music room, two libraries, separate residences for each grade, gymnasium, kitchen and dining hall, administrative buildings, basketball court, and an athletic field.

- Are there full time staff members at Shanti Bhavan?

Yes. Shanti Bhavan maintains a highly competent and dedicated team of full time faculty, administrative staff and support personnel. The school hires full time Indian teachers that work at the school year round, as well as an administrative staff that oversees the day-to-day operations, supported by the ground crew of cooks, aunts, gardeners, caretakers and security.

- Do the children have the opportunity to visit their homes?

Yes. Children have a one month break between the Spring and Summer semesters, typically during the month of May, and a two week winter break, typically during the second half of December. Parents are always permitted to visit their children at the school and typically come for special events, such as graduation or Parents' Day.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- How is Shanti Bhavan involved with the local communities?

One on one interaction with parents and representatives of village and slum communities is a constant process. Over the years, Shanti Bhavan and The George Foundation have established a positive reputation in surrounding communities and maintaining these relationships is a crucial part of our work. In addition to Shanti Bhavan, The George Foundation is involved in housing and well construction, farming, vocational training and medical projects that support the local communities.

- Are the children involved in helping their communities with their education?

Yes. Shanti Bhavan children, upon returning home during summer and winter holidays, conduct classes in their villages on subjects such as mathematics and sciences. They are role models for many children in their villages and guide their households on matters of hygiene and health.

Furthermore, families from which a child attends Shanti Bhavan have an eased financial burden, which allows them to better support themselves. Households from which Shanti Bhavan children come from also show greater acceptance of education as a viable option for their children based on feedback and surveys conducted. And, with less financial stress, many families are able to send their other children to school.

HOW TO HELP

- Does Shanti Bhavan accept Donations?

Yes! Your gift/donation will make a significant positive impact on the lives of the children. Donors are able to sponsor a child for a full year's tuition (\$1500 USD or 60,000 Rs.), donate to the college fund, give a one time or recurring donation or contribute material donations. Donations can be made electronically online, by check or by wire transfer. Shanti Bhavan is a 501(c) (3) non-profit public charity in the U.S. It is registered in India under the Indian Trust Act, and has 80-G tax exemption status.

For full information visit the donation page: <http://www.shantibhavanonline.org/donation/donate.html>.

- What items can I donate to Shanti Bhavan?

As a residential school that houses children, teachers and support staff, Shanti Bhavan has many needs similar to those of any home. Material donations greatly reduce our financial burden in obtaining these necessary items. We welcome donations such as computers, books, footwear, clothing, sports equipment, medicines, stationery, audio-visual equipment, toiletries, and bath and bed linen.

To view a complete "wish list" visit: <http://www.shantibhavanonline.org/donation/donate.html#otherdonations>

- Does Shanti Bhavan accept volunteers?

Yes! At any one time, Shanti Bhavan has between 10 and 15 volunteers. Since its inception, Shanti Bhavan has had over 200 volunteers from 12 countries visit the school. Volunteers come from all ages and backgrounds. Former volunteers and visitors include NASA astronauts, business leaders, Broadway stars, research scientists, college students, and New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, to name a few.

To learn more about volunteering at Shanti Bhavan, visit <http://www.shantibhavanonline.org/volunteers/volunteers.html>.

- Can I help even if I can't go to India?

Yes. Shanti Bhavan is supported by an operations team that works on different tasks such as fundraising, volunteer recruitment, events and publications. We are always looking for skilled and enthusiastic people to help advance our mission. If you would like to get involved, please contact us at: shantibhavanchildren@gmail.com.