

Vocational Skills have given students wings

Vocational skills is different from academic education. Here we emphasise more on **knowledge ,skills and attitudes** that help students handle practical challenges and work situations. Skills programs emphasise only on hands on skills. However in the vocational courses done in schools we lay emphasis on the **practical skills** as well as the **underlying theoretical knowledge**. Our focus is also on the 21st century skills required to be successful in the fast changing work place. These include **communication skills, digital and financial literacy and entrepreneurship**.

This emphasis on practical's and learning a skill gives students tremendous confidence to face the real world challenges and earn their livelihood. Here we would like to share the experiences of some of our teachers and students from Assam. In this issue we bring you glimpses into the life stories of Assamese students from a Hindu, Bodo, Christian and Muslim background all of whom have developed wings and are exploring their potential.

For us, nothing speaks more eloquently about the need for these programs and the impact it has on our students life journeys than their stories. Here are a few of them, in their voices and through the reflection of our passionate teachers. These are a few chosen stories from a rich tapestry of stories we see, in classrooms every day. Every month, we will continue highlighting these stories of inspiration, passion, change and success. After all, its stories like these, that make our work rewarding and real.



Siton Basumatary is a Class X student of Tukrajhar Higher Secondary School. His father works in a shop that makes steel almirahs and also looks after their small farm. His mother helps with the farm and runs the house.

Siton has two elder sisters ; Seema who studies in Class XI and Rongina who studies in Class XII and one younger brother Sanjiv Basumatary in Class VII. All of them go to school by cycles as it is 5 km away.

Tokrajhar H S School conducts classes in Boro and English. Siton who belongs to Bodo tribes speaks Boro fluently and Hindi and English with a little help. There are 13.5 lakh Bodo folks in Assam and Siton is very proud of his heritage. The Bodo language is one of the scheduled 22 languages in the Indian Constitution. His sisters wear the traditional dokona to school; he mischievously says he wears long pants to school although during festivals he too wears the traditional gamsa. He is looking forward to the Rongjali Bwisagu festival which comes in April every year signalling the spring season when there will be dance and lots of good food to eat. Bathouism is the Bodo religion. They believe in the five mighty elements of God – land, water, air, fire, and sky . In addition to Bathou many Bodo folks practise Hinduism and some practice Christianity too.

Siton has become fluent in MSWord and using computers thanks to his Vocational Course in IT/ITeS at school. Since the last one year he has started working in a DTP shop near his school for two hours/day after school where he does work on MS-Word, some DTP work and earns Rs 1000/= to Rs 1500/= every month. He puts in approximately 20 days a month of work. With his income he contributes to his home ; pays for his notebooks and stationary needs ; and treats himself to paratha and puri bhaji at the sweet shop near his school.

After his Xth class Siton is exploring doing a Diploma at the CIT in Kokrajhar but he does not have all the information as yet. He plans to get guidance from his teachers before taking the next step.

A story of Siton Basumatary student from Tukrajhar H.S. School , Chirang. VT – Rongjali Mochahary.



Shajidul Islam lives in village Chakla and studies in Chakla H.S. School. His father is a poor farmer ; they grow rice to take care of their personal needs as well as sell a bit. His father is very keen to educate his children and he encourages both Shajidula nd his younger brother Abdulbaten to do well in studies. Sometimes Shajidul also helps his father in farming . Shajidul is very intelligent & always secures first rank. He was excited and enrolled for the IT/ITeS course in Class IX. He has developed proficiency in Excel, Word, powerpoint, database and doing ecommerce transactions. He cleared his IXth standard with 90% marks and made his parents very proud. He encouraged his younger brother also to opt for the IT/ITeS course in school. When he moved to the Xth class he had to spend more time in studying as well as he needed money for tuition fees and study material. So he started working in a DTP shop in the village. He goes to the shop between 3 pm to 6 pm after school and earns between Rs 2000/= to Rs 8000/= per month.

This year Shajidul is to appear in the Board Exam. He is studying with full dedication. His hard work, confidence, struggle and success is truly inspiring .

**A story of
Shajidul student
from Chakla H.S.
School,
Bongaigaon.
VT – Syed
Dilowar
Hussain .**



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Rashidul Ali studies at Halakura Higher Secondary School in class X . He is busy preparing for H. S. L. C Board examination scheduled in February 2020. Rashidul's parents are unwell and unable to provide for their family. The mantle has fallen on his elder brother Amjad Ali who had to drop out of school and runs an electrical repair shop. Rashidul Ali works with his brother after school and helps run the family. With some help from his brother he can now repair a TV, Refrigerator, mixer, and grinder. This way he is able to contribute Rs 6000 to Rs 8000 per month to meet the family expenses.

Rashidul Ali studies IT-ITeS in school. He enjoys the classes and hopes to learn some aspects of maintenance of computers too. He is confident with MS products and also knows how to do ecommerce online. Once he ordered a pair of sun glasses online on Flipkart but had to cancel it because his mother convinced him it was not necessary !

Together the two boys Amjad and Rashidul work hard and take care of their parents and younger sibling. We wish Rashidul best of luck for his 10th exams and hope he will continue to study and work side by side.

A story of Rashidul Ali student from Halakura H.S. School , Dhubri. VT – Abu Taher Ahmed.



Mazbat is small town of Udalguri District of Assam. It is surrounded by large numbers of tea estates such as Mazbat tea estate, Bahipukhuri tea estate, Dhansiri tea estate, Lamabari tea estate etc. In Mazbat most of the villagers work on the tea estates as labor. Their life is difficult , they live in remote areas; their children are forced to drop out of school and work in the estates to make ends meet ;and they have been exploited since generations. However with the help of the Assam Chah Mazdoor_Sangha there has been pressure on the government to provide them with facilities to improve the literacy and economic situation.

Asman Tigga, belongs to this tea workers community and is a student of Mazbat Higher Secondary School. His family is poor and it is a constant struggle to make ends meet. Except for Asman and his younger brother all his other siblings including 2 sisters and 2 brothers dropped out from school and are working in the tea estates or outside . Asman lost his father a few years back. Asman is a good student and enjoys his studies. He has just completed Class IX and has moved to Class X. He too helps his family by working in the tea estates during the school vacations.

Asman got an opportunity to join IT/ITes course in Class IX. He enjoys the classes and his voice visibly perks up with enthusiasm as he describes what he has learnt. He especially enjoys the practical sessions and is thankful to his school and teacher for providing him the facilities. In the nearby town which is around 16 kms away there is a DTP shop. Asman hopes to go there this vacations on his cycle and explore some part time work opportunities. Computer related work opportunity is a new life line for him and he is determined to pursue it.

We wish Asman the very best in the pursuit of his dreams.

A story of Asman Tigga student from Mazbat H.S. School, Udalguri. VT – Jahnu Baruah .



Ronsing is a student of Class X. He is 15 years old and stays in the house of a Teacher –Ms Anjali Das whose home is 2km away from school. His own home is more than 2 hours away by bus so he cannot go home everyday. Ronsing’s mother tongue is Assamese. Though his school subjects and study are both in Assamese and English he prefers to talk to me in Hindi which he is more comfortable with. Ms Anjali is a teacher of social science and is happy to help him with his studies from time to time.

Ronsing’s village is Kongkat gaon , District Karbi Anglong , Assam. His father, Romen Teron is a farmer and has a tea planation. His mother runs the house, looks after his two younger brothers who study in Class 3 & 4 respectively; and also helps in the fields. His parents wanted him to study well in a good school and that is why he stays away from home.

Ronsing has been learning computers in school since last two years. He likes the course and enjoys the practical sessions. Once the school administration asked for their help in preparing folders with student records for Class 6 to Class 9 students and he volunteered and helped. He enjoyed the work. He thinks taking computers will help him score good marks.

Ronsing’s childhood ambition is to join the Indian Army and serve the nation. He is 5 ft 7 inches tall and does some jogging every day to meet the fitness requirements of serving in the Indian Army. He has two more years till Class XII to understand the steps to get into the Army and will seek help from his teachers at school.

When I asked him what his village was famous for; Ronsing laughed, thought a bit and said Buffalo fights during Magh Bihu which happened recently and is a great spectacle to watch !

A story of Ronsing Teron student from Central Dharamtul M. Bora H.S.S, Morigaon. VT – Lalit Pradhan.



Arundhoti Medhi VT shares the story of her student Mehbuba Sultana from Jagiroad HSS , Morigaon, Assam



Arundhoti VT says “Mehbuba has IT/ITeS as an elective subject and is going to appear for her HSLC examination in Feb 2020. She has chosen this subject to upgrade herself with new generation technology. Mehbuba was very interested to learn computers , but didn’t get an opportunity till Class IX. When I joined this school as a VT in IT/ITeS she was the first girl student who came to me and enrolled herself in this subject.” Mehbuba says, “I will gain more confidence and fluency in speaking English.” She wants to find a job based on the practical knowledge. When the board exams are over she will explore how she can help in the school with her computer knowledge in making and designing Powerpoint presentations”.

“Mehbuba’s parents told me that they found her improving in everything as she became smarter than before and she helped her elder sister in typing her assignments and filling some online forms for her neighbors and earned a little money to spend on her daily needs”.

“As a teacher, I find her very charming , very enthusiastic and always with a positive attitude”. Mehbuba’s father is an English and Social science teacher. Her two elder sisters are doing their graduation. Her younger brother is in Class 6. Her parents are very supportive and encourage her to study and take up whatever course she likes. She wants to be a doctor. She also wants to learn computers. All power to this bright young girl to fulfill her dreams wherever it takes her!