

Agumbe is the gateway to one of the ecologically sensitive, evergreen forest range, on the Western Ghats. It is situated at an altitude of about 2000 ft. m.s.l, on the top of the western ghats, on the border of Udupi and Shimoga districts, at a distance of 60 km from Udupi, and 100 km from Shimoga. Well known for its heavy rain fall (about 8000 to 10,000 m.m , a year), Agumbe is home for hundreds of species of rare flora and fauna. Agumbe attracts travellers, trekkers, environmentalists, nature lovers alike. With vast range of evergreen forest belt, it contains the famous sunset view point, enchanting water falls like Barkana, Jogigundi, and Onake Abbi, which attract tourists all round the year. Away from the hustle and bustle of the cities, the peaceful Agumbe is virtually a paradise for those who worship nature.

Dr. T. M. A. Pai, philanthropist, educationist, and a visionary who was instrumental in putting the city of Manipal on the world map, was moved when he saw the need of a high school for Agumbe. Many of the students of Agumbe and its surrounding areas had to discontinue their studies after middle school because the nearest high school was at Megaravalli, a distance of 15 k.m from Agumbe. Only about 10% of the passed students who could afford were going to the high school every day by bus and the rest could only dream of higher education. As Agumbe was a poor, backward Malnad village, the people there thought it was beyond their reach to think of a high school at Agumbe. Guided by Dr.T.M.A.Pai, the people of Agumbe met under the president ship of Sri.D. S. Vijendra Rao a progressive thinker and a leading personality of Agumbe and constituted the "Education Society" Soon after, the govt. granted a high school for Agumbe. It was in 1965, June 27th , Sri Venugopala Swamy High School was inaugurated by Dr. T.M.A.Pai on the first floor of Sri. Venugopala Swamy temple. The school was housed in the temple premises for one year. Later it was shifted to the workshop of M.G.T.S, a transport company of Agumbe.

The geographic, economic, and environmental conditions of Agumbe influenced Dr.T.M.A.Pai's charitable mind to adopt the school under " The Academy of General Education", a big umbrella organization with many educational institutions under its wing, and provide financial help whenever the need arises. Naturally the education society of Agumbe gratefully accepted this suggestion. Over the period of time, under the able guidance of Sri T. Ramesh U. Pai, Registrar of the Academy, the school performed well and became a model school in the district. The support received by the school from The Academy has been overwhelming. From the old workshop, the school moved in to a new spacious R.C.C building in the adjacent plot, constructed and donated by the Academy. The new building with 4 classrooms, office and staff rooms, a laboratory, a library and a stage for cultural programmes, has been a land mark in the history of Agumbe.

The school became a focal point for all important activities of the village. The old school building which was almost in broken stages was restructured and redesigned by the Academy as an auditorium. Soon it became a centre not only for school activities, but also for social gatherings and functions of Agumbe and the neighbouring villages. This became a centre for conducting seminars / workshops, educational training programmes, and the school itself became a centre for social and academic activities. The village weddings, functions began to be held in the auditorium free of cost, which was of immense help for the local neighbouring villagers This resulted in the generation of renewed vigour among the villagers to participate in the developmental activities of the school.



Later the school administration was very effectively guided by Dr. H. Shantaram, the Administrative Officer of The Academy of General Education, who was very much instrumental in bringing school up to the level, where it is today. Apart from some government grants, the Academy contributed financially to a great extent to run the school effectively.

The academic performance and achievements of the school has been phenomenal. The school started achieving higher degree of success in academic and co-curricular activities right from 1970, and the student strength started rising. From the academic results (of S.S.L.C) of 60 to 70% during 70s and 80s, the chart started climbing up in the 90s to around 80 to 90% pass in the S.S.L.C exams. The culmination of which was in 2001 - 2002, when the school achieved a record 100% in S.S.L.C results with 5 distinctions and 20 first classes.

The teaching at the school has been consistently good. Though there was shortage of competent staff, the school managed to hire the services of additional qualified staff on temporary basis.

The Academy of General Education, Manipal evinced keen interest in the activities of the school, and has been upgrading infra structural

facilities at the school. Another milestone was reached, when a free hostel for girls was sponsored by the Academy. By utilizing the old building, free food and boarding facilities were provided by the academy for poor and deserving girl students. Even though the initial intake was small, the number of students availing the facility started growing up. Realizing this, the Academy built one more spacious building adjacent to the old hostel building. Now there are more than 60 girl students in this hostel. The hostel has been running under the supervision of the Head Master of the school.

The present situation:

Presently the school is on the threshold of breaking new grounds in the field of education, with quite a number of creditable achievements. To match its growth and potential, the school needs to upgrade its facilities in all aspects. The school has all along been run from the support and financial assistance from The Academy of General Education, which had in its 37 years of association with the school, provided complete infra structural facilities, funds and administrative support. The Academy also sponsored a free hostel for the girls. But now, The Academy has proposed to handover the administration of the Hostel to the "Education Society". The free hostel facility too would be withdrawn in stages in a couple of years' time.

While relying heavily on the Academy of General Education, Manipal, for all its needs, the Society had all along been of notional existence. But as of now, it is facing a tough time running the school and hostel, due to the lack of viable financial infrastructure. The society is now facing the gigantic task of building up a fund base to run the school. Apart from the immediate, pressing needs, the society has to plan for the near future too, for the development of the school. Identifying these requirements of the school, the society has prepared a plan of action, to address these problems where in the needs and requirements are clearly specified. The society now solicits whole hearted support from philanthropists, well wishers and patrons, by way of donations, contributions, infrastructure support, aids and grants etc, to efficiently run the school, which has over the decades proven its worth, through various academic and co-curricular achievements, culminating in 100% results in S.S.L.C batch of 2001-2002. These achievements have been quite significant in that , the school situated in the remote Malnad area, most of the students belonging to the poor farming community, and a very tough environment to cope with. With active support, and participation from patrons the school will definitely scale still greater heights and prove to be a model one in the state of Karnataka.

Immediate needs of the school :-

☞ Furniture for the class rooms : The present set of desks and benches are about 35 years old, and are in broken down conditions, and hardly suffice the needs of the students. There is a urgent need to completely overhaul the furniture.

☞ Drinking water facility : The school has been managing with great difficulty, the provision of water facilities to the children for drinking, wash and toilet uses. The school needs to provide purified water for drinking, installation of water purifier, a water tank and pipelines to supply water.

☞ Furniture for the auditorium: At present the school is having an old separate building, which is being used as an auditorium, wherein apart from the school programmes, various social and cultural activities are organized along with seminars and workshops for students. How ever the auditorium is in urgent need of seating facility, to the range of about 500 chairs. The auditorium is also in need of public address system, like mike sets, speakers, amplifiers, projectors, screens etc.

☞ Computer lab: In this age of computer literacy, the school needs to introduce computer education to its students, to create computer awareness and computer literacy among them. The school proposes to have a full-fledged computer lab with at least 10 computers to begin with.

☞ Free hostel facility for girls: At present 60 girls are accommodated in the hostel .The entire expenses of free food and boarding is borne by the Academy. But now to induce local participation in the running of the school and the hostel, the Academy is withdrawing the financial support in a phased manner. Though the school proposes to charge actual expenses of Rs.500/- per student, it may not be possible to charge all the students, as most of them hail from poor families. Support is solicited from well-wishers to ensure the running of free hostel facility.

☞ Creating a fund base :-

- Funds to promote school talent in academics, sports and games.
- Funds to organize seminars, workshops, training programmes for children in arts, crafts, individual development techniques.
- Funds to subscribe for news papers, magazines to cultivate reading habit among students.
- Funds to hire qualified teaching staff, since three vacancies have not been filled yet.



*" To provide
a truly academic environment
for every student,
to rediscover
his innate potential "*



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