

RUGMARK NEWS

RUGMARK FOUNDATION

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Aug. 2006

RUGMARK Schools & Balashraya

RM Students Performed Well on Various Fronts:

"School days are back again" exclaimed children going to RUGMARK schools after a long summer vacation. RUGMARK Schools are now open after one and a half month long summer vacations. This makes the beginning of a new educational session that starts from 1st of July. Children are happy to be in their new classes and in sharing their experiences of summer vacation with their classmates. The teachers and the staff are busy in setting new targets and schedules for the new session. However, before we have a peek at what is coming in the next year, just a review of the past year.

The last Educational Session was full of achievements of RM children. As in the previous years, the RM children have shown excellent performance in their annual examinations. More than 95 % students passed the examinations with high grades.

In October - November 2005, the annual sports and athletic competitions was organised by the Education Department of Govt. of UP for the school children at block, district, divisional and state level. RUGMARK students repeated the success stories of the past years in these events.

Their performance at Divisional level is shown in the following table.

Event	Name of the Student	Position Held
50 m. Race (Girls)	Reema	I
50 m. Race (Girls)	Neetupal	II
50 m. Race (Boys)	Mulayam Yadav	II
100 m. Race (Boys)	Kamlesh	I
200 m. Race (Girls)	Reema	I
200 m. Race (Boys)	Mulayam Yadav	III
400 m. Race (Boys)	Mulayam Yadav	I
Long Jump (Girls)	Reema	I

Four students participated at State level competitions and two of them emerged as heroes in the events. Mulayam Yadav secured the first position in the 400 m. race and was awarded the gold medals, while Reema secured the second position and therefore received the silver medal at the State level.

It may be recalled here that in the previous year during these athletic competitions, RUGMARK students Kashyap and Seema performed excellently at divisional level and secured champion's medals. Then they missed the medal in the State level competitions with a close margin.

In a district level painting competition, organised by a central government sponsored project, one of the Balashraya students, Mukesh secured the first position in junior group. The theme of the painting competition was 'Sources of Alternative Energy'. In another event, on 3rd Dec 05, Mukesh won the appreciation of Basic Education Officer (BSA) of Bhadohi district, when he drew on the spot a sketch of Basic Education Officer. During these events organised at district level, Balashraya students, Deepak and Jeevan got first and second positions in 80 m race and drawing competitions respectively.

These achievements reflected the confidence of RUGMARK students. Mrs. Sharda Subramaniam, Managing Director, RM India, congratulated the children and their sports teacher, Mr. Ram Dhani Yadav for their outstanding performance.

Affiliation/Recognition for RM Schools by UP State Education Board

RUGMARK students, parents and staff are happy that RUGMARK schools are recognised by the UP State Education Board for up to the 8th standard. All the seven RM Schools, including RM Balashraya, a rehabilitation centre for children freed from carpet weaving, were already recognised by UP State Basic Education Board for up to the 5th standard. However, since RUGMARK upgraded its schools upto the 8th standard, it needed the recognition from UP State Education Board for up to the 8th standard. Because this would make the task easy for RM students to get admission for further studies in any of the Govt. run schools in India and become eligible for applying for jobs even with the Govt. departments.

Before granting the recognition to RM schools, Govt. Education Officers inspected and checked thoroughly the required standards. They gave a positive assessment and appreciated the functioning of the schools that paved the way for the recognition of RM schools.

Introduction of Wider Criteria for Factory Based Carpet Manufacturing

The RUGMARK concept was evolved by its founders basically to avoid the use of illegal child labour in carpet weaving. However with the growing trend and demand for verification for additional social standards, RUGMARK Foundation India carried out inspections of some carpet manufacturing units, which are in factory set up using criteria other than the use of illegal child labour only.

As regards social & safety measures the following observations have been made in most of the cases:

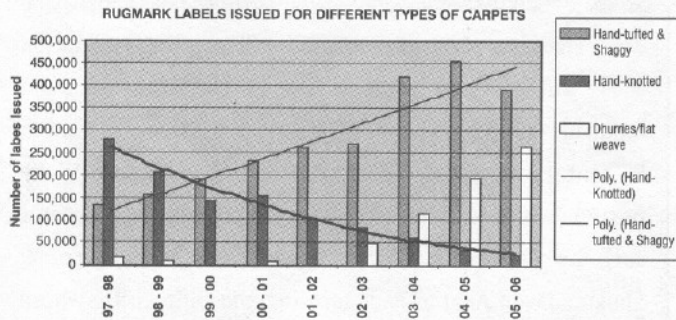
- Fire extinguishers, first aid boxes, doors/gates and exit ways meant for using at the time of accident/emergency were clearly demarcated.
- Drinking water facility / hygienic toilets were found of the reasonable standard.
- Notice boards placed at different places are highlighting the rights of workers and rates of minimum wages.
- The whole factory premises were found neat and clean.
- No hesitation was shown by the management to show their factory.

Development of Labelling and Market Trends for RM Carpets

The volume of business for RUGMARK labelled carpets in number of pieces has been increasing constantly for past some years.

However, the trend towards cheaper carpets continues. Even the hand-tufted carpets are now gradually replaced by hand-woven shaggy rugs, which are cheaper than hand-tufted carpets.

The trend in the demand of RUGMARK labelled carpets from India for different categories of carpets is shown in the graph below.

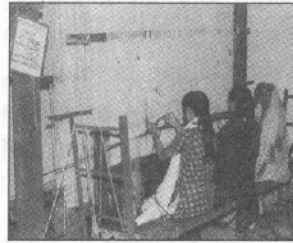


According to Department of Commerce, carpet exports from India during the year 2004-05, decreased by 11.4% (to Germany by 4 % and to UK by 7 %). For the corresponding year, the increase in the quantity of RUGMARK labelled carpets/rugs by 14.8 % (2.9 % in normal size labels and 64 % in small labels) is therefore to be seen as a good result because of the dull market situation.

Projects & Activities in Brief

Schools & Rehabilitation Centre for Children

RUGMARK is running seven schools including one rehabilitation centre. Schools provide free formal and informal education to about 2000 children up to the 8th standard. The children enrolled in the schools are either removed from the looms or those of poor carpet weavers.



Carpet Weaving Training Centre for Women Gopiganj

To impart carpet weaving training to women and to motivate them to participate in income generation activities. This was started at the end of year 2002



Mobile Health Clinic

A mobile medical van equipped with basic health facilities and a qualified and experienced Doctor provides basic health facilities to the children of RUGMARK schools and the villagers. (Started since January 2003).



Camps for Disabled Persons - Camps were organised for free check-up /assessment and distribution of aids & appliances for disabled persons.

In the camps organised in the past, the beneficiaries were provided with tricycles, wheel chairs, sticks for blinds, hearing aids, auxiliary crutches and various others artificial limbs viz orthosis and prosthesis limbs etc. The camps were organised in collaboration with ALIMCO, Kanpur, U.P.

Polio Immunisation Camps

RUGMARK Schools and Balashraya staff is actively participating in National Polio Immunisation Programme. Around 2000 children under the age group of 5 years are administered polio drops in each phase of the programme. District Administration has awarded 'Certificate of Appreciation' for the contribution of the organisation and its staff in its drive for polio eradication programme.

We are pleased to share with our supporters and well-wishers that RUGMARK Foundation India would cross the milestone of labelling 5 million carpets/rugs with RUGMARK labels by the time this newsletter reaches you.

All this has only been possible with the support and guidance of our Chairperson Mrs. Maneka Gandhi (the dedicated Board Members) and the great co-operation of our valued licensees (carpet importers and exporters).