



INVESTING IN EDUCATING THE FUTURE GENERATION

This season, we are seeking your participation in rebuilding our school and dormitory in the holy city of Varanasi on the bank of Ganga. Here is a brief report on our [seva projects](#) for 2019.

1. Formation of *Panchratnas* or “Five Gems” Creating Future Leaders

Five young men who were already involved with the day-to-day operations of Bal Ashram, were selected to actively run and oversee the smooth functioning of the ashram. Working together, they represent the future leadership of Bal Ashram. This young, vibrant and talented team will be mentored, both individually and as a group, from two professionals from Mumbai. The *Panchratnas* will be supported in developing their leadership by Ms. Urja Shah, President of the Setco Foundation, and NGO in Mumbai. They will also receive guidance and management oversight from Dr. Ashish Singh, a native of Varanasi, who currently serves as Assistant Professor in the School of Management at the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mumbai. Both mentors will visit the ashram regularly or sponsor the *Panchratnas* for further leadership development in Mumbai and elsewhere.



2. Rebuilding the Anjali School and dorm for the children in need.



The Anjali School has grown by leaps and bounds over the years. What started as a daycare center for a handful of street children, now educates over 200 children from poor homes from LKG to 5th grade. The existing school building was constructed to serve for the short-term, using minimal funds. As a result of the dramatic growth in our student population due to the success of the educational program offered at the Anjali School, there is a need to establish a permanent school building.

[Anjali School children singing](#)

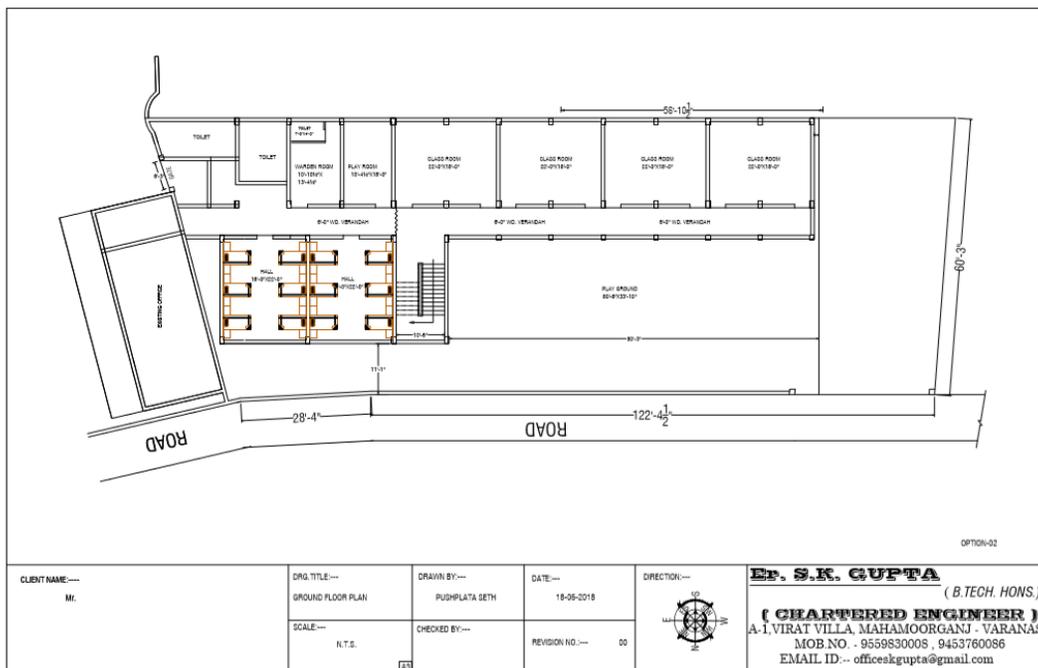
Proposed new school building plus dorm



(Estimated cost \$250K)

This construction need aligns well with the design and construction requirements of the boy's dormitory as required by the Indian Government.

In order to meet new government regulations, we are looking to build a secure dormitory for the boys that is separate from the public portions of the ashram. The dormitory design will address our ongoing concern of moving the boys' sleeping areas to a safe zone above the potential flood levels. Our architect has designed a building that will accommodate separate and secure school classrooms and administrative offices on the ground floor, while placing the boys' dormitory on the top floor.



3. Re-creation of the River Front Garden

Following the flood season, the bank of the Ganga River in front of Bal Ashram often loses its shape and vegetation. During my visit this year, the boys and the ashram team, along with friends from the community, created terraces of flat land. Now there is space for flowers and areas where children can play and the ashram can have yoga and martial arts classes overlooking the river.

Our riverfront area will be the only green zone in the city, and will be a pleasant sight for visitors passing by on boats. Although we may need to do this each year, the terracing is an inexpensive way to beautify our land and maintain the integrity of the river bank.



We hope our efforts will inspire the rest of the city.



You are most welcome to visit us in Varanasi, should you ever get the chance. Whereas Sonoma Ashram in California primarily supports our sadhana, that is, spiritual teachings and practices, the Aghor Foundation in India is a platform for our seva, self-less service, through various projects in Varanasi, including Bal Ashram and Anjali School, as well as Amrit Sagar eco-center and Vision Varanasi eye hospital.

It is very easy to monetarily support these projects by charitable giving in USD to Sonoma Ashram Foundation or in INR to Aghor Foundation in Varanasi. For Indian compatriots one source of support that is often overlooked is INR assets we may have in India. **Another way to support these [seva projects](#) is to spread the word among our families and friends. Often people want to contribute to a good cause but may not be aware of organizations, like ours, that are operating honestly and with transparency.**



For more information please check our website:

www.sonomaashram.org

Or write to

info@sonomaashram.org

Thank you for being a part of this journey.

With blessings

Babaji

Ways to make your tax-deductable contribution:

In USA: Please make checks payable to:
Sonoma Ashram Foundation; P.O. Box 950, Sonoma, CA 95476

Or

Click here to use your credit card for payment

<https://sonomaashram.org/special-project-donation>

In India: Please make your tax-deductable contribution to:
AGHOR GURU SEWA PEETH
Mahesh Nagar Colony, Samne Ghat, P.O. Lanka, Varanasi 221005.

Or

For bank transfer info, please contact us at info@sonomaashram.org

