

**Mahindra Foundation**  
**A report on my visit to SWAROOPWARDHINI,**  
**Pune on 29th, 30th and 31st August, 1988.**

— P. K. Palit

Swaroop Wardhini is a Trust registered under the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950 and run by very dedicated social workers in the city of Pune. This institution has been set up to locate talented and intelligent boys and girls from the under-privileged section of the Society (poor and low Income group) and give them all necessary facilities and guidance so that the latent talent of these children could be discovered and given them an opportunity to succeed in life in whatever sphere they are likely to excel according to their aptitude. I visited Ramkrishna Shakha on 30th August and met the Chairman Mr. K. L. Patwardhan and other teachers and the students. Watching their activities was indeed an awe inspiring experience. The Ramkrishna Shakha has got 5,558 sq. ft. built-in area. The ground floor is utilised for prayer meetings and physical exercises. About 70 to 80 girls and

boys attend the prayer meetings and the physical exercises every evening. On the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors there are well-lit clean rooms, bathrooms and lavatories for the use of the students. These students are picked up from various areas in Pune from low income group of parents and after a period of observation and non-verbal intelligent tests are selected by this organisation and become a part of their movement. There are many students from this organisation who have excelled in academics and some students have even stood first in the Pune University. There are (gifted) students who have obtained 96% in PCM Group in 12th Std. and there are students who are preparing to sit for IIT. entrance examination and IAS. Unique part of this organisation is this, that most of the students, after obtaining certain degree of proficiency, serve the society in any manner that they

can i.e. actually spending a part of time/money to teach and look after other students of this organisation. They also look out and find deserving talented students who can one day join this institution. The organisers have very good experience in social work and have discovered bright students, living in small rooms, with 10 to 14 other occupants where they have no chance even to sleep properly, leave along studying in a desirable atmosphere with well lit clean environment which is required for deep concentration. With Mr. Patwardhan and other members of the organisation I visited some of the places where these under-privileged children live. Besides living in unhygienic slum area, they did not have any toilet facility and in some places there was no water for bathing.

Once a student is located and adopted by this organisation, he is offered the opportunity to come to the one of the centres run by this organisation, bathe, use lavatory and take physical exercises and attend prayer meeting and then study in clean and well lighted rooms. Tutition and guidance by Senior

students and teachers are always available in the evening. They also run regular classes in the evening as an extra tutorial classes to help bright students attain academic excellence.

At present they are looking after 180 to 200 talented boys and girls irrespective of religion, caste or creed. They help boys and girls with their studies and also provide facilities for physical training and encourage them to attend meditation and yoga classes and prayer meetings. they also provide medical aid and supplementary nourishing food to a large number of young students. I individually met many social workers, students and members of the organisation and found that this organisation is doing an extraordinary and quite unique type of work in this country. There are hundreds of orphanages and charitable trusts all over India who just look after orphans and the poor, but this is one institution which is working to give a chance to under-privileged children to stand on their own feet and establish themselves as any other talented person.

The Executive Committee

consists of many prominent people under the dynamic leadership of their Chairman Mr. K. L. Patwardhan who is retired Headmaster. Some of other prominent members of the Executive Committee are Dr. M. S. Pawar, Vice Chancellor of M. Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri, Smt. Kuntala Mazumdar, Mr. Jaisinghbhai V Mariwala, Mr. Pratap Rao Pawar (Managing Director of Sakal).

They have been working in this field for the last seven years and have excellent academic success. Last year 36 students appeared for the S.S.C. examination, out of which 25 students secured between 75 and 89 %. The funds required for this organisation is managed by certain amount of contributions by the social workers, volunteers and the students themselves. They have just constructed a building at the cost of Rs. 15 lakhs and needs immediate financial support. One of the areas for which they have approached our Foundation is to meet the expenses of Rs. 30,000/- per annum required for meeting the expenses of medical,

supplementary food, books, and supply material and clothing. They have suggested that if Mahindra Foundation could create a corpus by donating a sum of Rs. 2,10,000/- the income of Rs. 30,000/- per year could be spent on this account. They have proposed that these activities could named as "Mahindra Foundation Sponsored Programme" FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUALITY SOCIAL AWARENESS AND NATIONAL SPIRIT THROUGH EDUCATION.

On 31st August, 1988 at the M G M Guest house, Pune I met several Executive Committee members of this organisation and was most impressed to know about their present activities and also future programme. Organisation of this nature should not only cover Maharashtra but should also spread all-over India to locate and encourage talented under-privileged students to excel in life. The key to making such a programme a success depends on highly motivated social workers and talented teachers and Swaroopwardhini have them.