

Case study — CORD

“The cloudy monsoon sky, the sun playing hide and seek, 150 kids sitting wall to wall in three class rooms flanked by one veranda, three windows and doors working as light sources, hardly an inch for the camera to move – that was the setting of ‘Teachers’ Journey’, the first film of the series I was shooting, with part support from the Trust



I can easily call it the toughest shoot of my professional life. The idea was to capture classroom dynamics – the teacher, the children, their actions, and reactions, as realistically as possible.

We had spent a very long spell with the children and the teacher, Mukeshji, so that they became comfortable in the presence of the camera. Yet, we did not know how children would react when we actually started the shoot.

A camera always evokes curiosity and fear. Hence, it is always the centre of attraction. And everything just falls into place when a teacher is able to create challenges in the class that are more interesting to solve than looking at the camera. We did our job of shooting silently, and they were just not interested in our work.

When the film was screened, the audience understood the difficult situation the teacher was working in. It might sound a little dramatic, but I found that effective teachers were still alive in the minds of the students who had studied under them more than 20 years ago. It was as if they had just walked out of their classrooms. These students narrated their memories of their interaction with their teachers, and told me how these men and women influenced their life in myriad ways.

We took the teacher of the second film to the village and the school where he used to teach 25 years ago. The word spread like wild fire that ‘Chouhan Guruji’ has come – within 10 minutes, there were 20 to 25 men (in the 35 – 40 age group) coming and touching his feet – narrating to us what the time spent with him meant for them.

In a way, I found that both these ‘effective teachers’ were community people. They liked communicating with people beyond school boundaries. Though a lot of their ‘beyond-school’ life is not depicted in these films, it definitely helped me understand their evolution as teachers and their concern about education.”



This is the experience of Deepak Verma, an independent film maker associated with **Collaborative Research Dissemination (CORD)**, Delhi, a research group committed to giving voice to the problems of the disadvantaged, in an attempt to influence policy and public opinion.

The Trust, under its **Small Grants Programme (SGP)**, supported **CORD**, enabling Deepak to document the professional journey of two remarkable elementary school teachers working in rural

villages of Madhya Pradesh. He also captured how creative teaching strategies and child-centred teaching practices can be realised despite severe constraints.

These films would be made available to teacher education colleges as training material, released on television channels for popular broadcast, and used as training material for teachers and educationists. Documentaries such as 'Teachers' Journey' can play an important role in capturing and sharing stories of outstanding teachers with the general audience, at the same time serving as training material to inspire other teachers.

In view of the dearth of good, audio-visual material depicting classroom transactions of this kind, and considering its potential for sparking a change, the Trust encourages, and consequently supports the production of popular and training material on education.