

Shivli Tyagi

"I simply don't know why I have been given so many awards. I just love doing work and everything I do, I do it with zest and zeal," says Manjula Pooja Shroff, the founder of Delhi Public School, Ahmedabad and the winner of this year's Educational Excellence Award by the Management Studies Promotion Institute. Apart from this award, she has won many such prestigious ones like the 'Secular India Harmony Award' from the United children's Movement by the then President Shanker Dayal Sharma in the year 1996, the 'Eminent citizen of India award (1998)' by National and International compendium and the '21st century Millennium Award' by the International Institute of Education and management, last year.

Passionately devoted to quality education

"I was 28 years old when I got my first nomination and was most surprised. After that I have on and off got some or the other nomination, some of which I have refused while others I have accepted," she says.

Talking about her background, Shroff says, "I came from a very conservative family where the women were kept in *purdah*, let alone educated. But, I always compared myself with my brother and had a very strong desire to do something in life.

"Education was the closest to my heart. So after coming to Ahmedabad in 1994, I realised that though Ahmedabad had good institutions for higher education like IIM and others, it did not have good schools. That is when I decided to start the school project," says Shroff.

She goes on to say that the school project has been the closest to her. "I had a management background so I thought about introducing those concepts in the running of a school. I introduced the concept of 'Parent being a customer'. I wanted to change the mind set of teachers and others who were involved in providing education to be more sincere in their approach."

And why did she choose Delhi Public School (DPS) for her project? "Well I thought that DPS had a good model with strong fundamentals and by combining my concept with this model I could establish a school which was par excellence as an institution," she says.

It has now been almost five years since Manjula Shroff started the school and since then there has been no looking back. She has been a pioneer in introducing programmes like 'customer orientation'

for teachers. "This is a day-long programme which we hold in the beginning of each session. We

attention and facilities that they require. The most important aspect for such children is to provide them with an individual teaching mechanism so that they can also cope up with the rest of the children. We have employed five teachers who are currently undergoing rigorous training and we will formulate lesson plans and assessment techniques for these students," she says.

Manjula Shroff has also been instrumental in establishing 'Visamo' which was a special tent colony set up on the university grounds for the homeless people right after the earthquake. She says, "Visamo was able to provide people what they desperately wanted at the time of crisis. We had almost 800 volunteers and people requiring assistance were provided with free food, clothing, medical help, psychological and spiritual assistance."

So now how does she feel having won the Education excellence award, 2001 by Management Studies

Promotion Institute?

"I accepted this award because it was a known institute but I don't work for awards. I genuinely work for the pleasure of it and because I have a strong belief

in myself."

And now that she has a three year old son, how does she manage both her career and her home? She laughs and says, "I definitely manage my career better than my house but then I love to delegate work and that is what I do at home also."

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Manjula Pooja Shroff

Woman Power

acquaint teachers on how to deal with parents as customers and providing them information and listening to their demands and problems."

The school is also planning to start a special facilitation programme for children with learning disability (Dyslexia).

"Conceptualisation of the Dyslexia school was done because there was no school which could provide these students with the kind of

