

Under Balmer Lawrie's flagship CSR initiative 'Balmer Lawrie Initiative for Self Sustenance' [BLISS], the Company aims at providing and improving the long term economic sustenance of the underprivileged. As a part of this initiative, Balmer Lawrie is associated with Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy (IICP) and SOS Children's Village.

IICP - Two classrooms are being sponsored under the "Corporate Leverage and Support Scheme" (CLASS) of IICP for supporting the differently abled, particularly children suffering from cerebral palsy. In all 30 children are being supported. Soumyadev Biswas and Tabassum Khatoon the beneficiaries of this programme have their stories to share with us.

Soumyadev Biswas- Junior Academics-II

Hello, I am Soumyadev Biswas, affectionately called Kaju. I am 14 years old and study in Class II. I have difficulties in speech and thus I use an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) support system. I can access my communication board using my left index finger. I love interacting with people and according to my friends and teachers I am fun loving and jovial. And what do I enjoy doing? I love listening to music and stories. I get upset when people talk to me or treat me in a way that makes me feel younger than my age.



I am sure you want to know what I do in class. Initially I was not very keen but now I enjoy all class activities. I enjoy reading short passages in Bengali and do comprehension exercises from them. Maths is fun too. My teachers are amazed that I not only achieved my set 6-month goals but learnt additional topics too. I can multiply, do additions, read the clock and much more...

Well, let me tell you one thing about myself. I am very curious by nature and like to gather information about new things. I just can't wait for my General Knowledge class where I get a chance to ask questions about varied topics.

And before you think we only study in IICP, let me tell you we have a wonderful balance of work and fun. We have hydrotherapy and physiotherapy which I admit is tiring but at the same time enjoyable too. I take it positively because I know it helps in improving our physical abilities. The library class is something I look forward to because I get an opportunity to look into the interesting books that we have and learn new things. It made me extremely happy when my teachers offered me the chance to attend a Co-curricular Club of my choice and I immediately chose Music Club.

I think I have told you a lot about myself. I just want to add that I have now realised my capabilities and am determined to work hard to achieve higher goals academically as well in

extra - curricular activities also. Some years ago my father passed away – it was tough time for Ma and me but with the support of IICP, Balmer Lawrie and my family, I am over the worst.



Soumyadeb with his friends



Soumyadeb during Saraswati Puja

Tabassum Khatoon – Class IV

I am 11 years old and am studying in Class IV of Academic Unit Hindi and English Section. I first joined IICP when I was 6 years old. Initially I was very apprehensive because it was a totally new environment but soon settled down. My teachers always praise me and say that I am a very well behaved and polite girl. Reading storybooks is my favourite past time because I feel books are a good source of knowledge and a person's best friend.

In my opinion studies are not a burden but fun. I can read passages and stories in Hindi and do comprehension exercises on them. Maths is a subject which I feel needs regular practice and so I always remember to do my homework - what better way to practice our lessons than this? This year, I appeared for OBE Class III examinations. All my effort and hard work paid off and my family and teachers were very happy with my result because I passed all 5 subjects in my first attempt. I sometimes even enjoy trying my hand at creative writing.



We all have hydrotherapy and physiotherapy to help us improve our mobility. Our lovely library is a storehouse of knowledge and I never miss any opportunity to borrow books to read during leisure time. My ability to manoeuvre a wheelchair independently helps when I participate in cultural programmes. Each time I represent IICP in any interschool event is a moment of pride for me.

Two years ago, I lost my mother and it was a very difficult time for me. The support from all at school and home enabled me to overcome my loss and made me a stronger person. I would also like to thank Balmer Lawrie for the support it has been giving to my school. I will strive to work hard and do well in academics. My dream is to be a teacher. Do you know why? I feel this is a very noble profession and moreover, I want to be independent in future and support my family.



Tabassum-as a presenter in assembly (solar)



Tabassum at prize day

SOS Village - Balmer Lawrie supports two Family Homes at SOS Children's Village – 1 in Kolkata and 1 in Vishakhapatnam. Here is the success story of Dhana Lakshmi from the Visakhapatnam Family Home (Home No.1).

Dhana Lakshmi - Sagar Nilayam Family Home, Visakhapatnam



I belong to the Sagar Nilayam family home (Home no.01) where I stay with 12 children living under the care of loving mother Ms. Sunitha. I was brought to SOS Children's Village, Visakhapatnam at the age of 8 along with my younger sister Maniratnam and placed in Sagar Nilayam Family Home. Since then I have been a part of the family and I am extremely attached to my mother. I am very affectionate and concerned about all my brothers and sisters.

My sister and I am really thankful to SOS Village and Balmer Lawrie for facilitating our formal education. With all the support that I received, I was able to pass my intermediate (Bi.P.C group) this year from Sri Chaitanya Junior College, Visakhapatnam with flying colours scoring 96.5% and topped my village. My sister Maniratnam who had appeared for the class X exams this year secured a GPA of 8.5 and I am really proud of her.

I completed my class 10 from Raghu English Medium School in the year 2014-15 with 9.8 GPA for which I was awarded with PRATHIBHA Award and a prize money of Rs. 20,000/- . It was a prestigious moment to receive the award from Honorable Chief Minister Mr. Nara Chandra Babu Naidu.

Apart from studies I am also interested in sports, especially Throwball and Kho Kho. I also like participating in debate competitions and have won many prizes.

I believe that hard work and sincerity is key to success and I want to be a role model for youngsters in the village. My aim in life is to become a Doctor and I am currently waiting for admission to a medical college.



With my family