

From sir, with love: 'Class' room

Jalandhar teacher upgrades govt school with help of NGOs, to get award today

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A government school at Nathhewal village, 12 km from Phagwara, is giving the best private schools in the region a run for their money.

From a campus overrun by grass and infested with snakes, Government Primary School, Nathhewal, has been transformed into a state-of-the-art educational establishment.

Ajmer Singh, the teacher who overcame all odds to reshape the school, has been chosen for the State Award by Education Minister Daljit Singh Cheema on Teacher's Day.

Tiled classrooms, painted walls, an aquarium in the office, a well-maintained statue of Bhagat Singh, textured walls, a modern park with manicured lawns, landscaping and benches, a special shed for serving midday meal, a nursery with Cambridge-style furniture and a computer lab (apparently, the only one at a primary school in the state, claims the teacher incharge) are some of the features which set it apart from other government



Students being taught at Government Primary School, Nathhewal, near Jalandhar. TRIBUNE PHOTO

schools in the region.

Established in 1954, the school remained in the doldrums till Ajmer Singh's arrival in 2007. With just 45 students when he came in, the school today has 65.

The school has two teachers, one of whom is

presently on leave.

Ajmer recalls, "When I stepped in, of the five kanals with the school, only half could be used as a playground. The rest had thick weedy overgrowth interspersed with eucalyptus trees. Ours was considered

one of the worst schools in the block. People believe government schools have limitations and can't match private ones. I wanted to prove them wrong."

As the village primarily has a population of poor persons or labourers, there



Ajmer Singh, schoolteacher

were not many donors. So, Ajmer Singh began seeking the help of donors, NGOs and clubs from outside the village to give quality education and facilities to the students.

"I spent a total of Rs 18 lakh on the school. Every penny was very carefully spent. While some villagers were sceptical at first, 99 per cent of the village backs me today. As much as Rs 4 lakh was contributed by the villagers," Ajmer Singh said.

"I feel overjoyed and thankful for the recognition of my efforts," said Ajmer Singh. "I have a plan for the money I shall receive as reward. In 15 days, I intend to buy a dining table for the schoolchildren," the schoolteacher added.