Educational Tour to Tilonia Village
Organized by T&P Cell, Poornima University

*Destination: Tilonia, Barefoot College*
*Date: 26-12-2013*
*Faculty Members: Mr. Pankaj Gakhar & Mr. Sushil Jain*

The Training and Placement Cell, Poornima University organized an Educational Tour for students of B.Tech and BCA II year, who were selected for Short term Industrial Trainings in the duration of their Semester Break.

Such students from different branches of engineering were given an opportunity to visit *Tilonia Barefoot college* in Tilonia village, Ajmer Road.

The aim of the visit was to environmentally analyse the team work, other positive traits as well as academic excellence through innovative technology and methodology such as *Solar Plants, Biogas Plants, Drip Irrigation etc.* The Barefoot College, also known as the ‘Social Work & Research Centre’ is located in a remote village called Tilonia at the outskirts of Ajmer district in Rajasthan. This is a voluntary organization which began in the year 1972 under the leadership of Mr Bunker Roy. At the outset it was initiated mainly on the issues of drinking water in a block called Kishengarh.

This institution believes in imparting informal, non-structured, on-the-job practical training by identifying the poor, unemployed youth who have been unable to finish their formal education and have returned to their respective villages as dropouts. The five principles which are an integral part of the functioning of the college are equality, collectiveness, self-reliance, decentralization and austerity.

The education programs there focus on the overall development of rural children, with literacy being just one part of it. It encourages hands-on or learning-by-doing process of gaining knowledge and skills. Lessons are focused on awareness about the environment and socio-economic and political forces that dominate development. The aim is to provide the children with a right balance of education and literacy so that they choose to stay in their village and work for its development. The college has different programs for children
and women. There are *Balwadis* (rural crèches) established for children between the age of 6 months-5 years for the convenience of working mothers. Night schools have been set up for ‘working children’. There are bridge courses, courses for night school children who aspire to join formal day schools. In these night schools, initiatives like the children’s parliament are established which allow them to participate in the management of their schools through a democratic process. Candidates are selected through a proper election process, giving them an idea of the working of a democracy.

There is also a huge emphasis on the holistic development of women by empowering them socially, financially and politically. In the past 38 years, the college has trained more than 15,000 women in jobs ranging from construction work, education, metal craftsmanship, toy making and solar engineering, to mechanical repair and fabrication, health care, water testing, handicrafts, film making and social activism.