

Evolution of Guru Nanak Engineering College

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1- INTRODUCTION

Before the Partition of India in 1947, there was only one engineering college in Punjab known as the Punjab College of Engineering and Technology at Lahore. Admission to this college was based on religious preferences. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were each allocated a certain number of seats. Half of the seats for each quota were awarded based on open merits and the other half were allocated on the recommendation of the provincial government, neighboring independent states, railways, and various components of the Indian military. For example, in the 1946 admission class, the non-Muslims who moved to Roorkee included students nominated by the states of Bikaner, Patiala and Bahawalpur, among others, the Air Force, the Army, the Navy and nominees of various departments of the government of the Punjab province.

After the Partition, the college was moved to India. It was temporarily housed in Thompson College, Roorkee and was named the East Punjab College of Engineering. A set of buildings known as “sisters’ barracks” became the hostel. Admission to East Punjab College of Engineering was based on merits only and all the quotas were eliminated along with the nominations from various government bodies.

Due to the lack of educational facilities in rural area and with the new selection criteria, many of the rural area candidates were not selected. There was a great concern for this situation and discussions were held within the community as to how to remedy this imbalance. Sardar Joginder Singh Grewal of Ludhiana took the initiative, and his efforts were supported by the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (S.G.P.C). This led to the creation of the Nankana Sahib Educational Trust on February 24, 1953. At the same time, the government of India was considering opening 15 new engineering colleges in India.

2. FORMING AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

The forming of educational institutions required immense resources in the form of Land, Buildings, Equipment etc. along with cash reserves to run the same. Sardar Joginder Singh worked tirelessly to bring various prominent people together from all walks of life to achieve this goal. His desire was to keep this institution apolitical and for it to be dedicated to provide quality education and skills to the students enrolled. He was seen working late night and into the early hours of the morning to achieve this dream.

Initially, a pilot project by way of a Polytechnic College was started in a makeshift campus using the Malwa Khalsa School in Model Gram, Ludhiana. Thereafter, the

work for accumulating the necessary resources and permissions was undertaken. The government of India insisted that it would give the necessary permissions if the founders could accumulate a sum of 1 Crore rupees.

In the meantime, the work of writing the constitution, accumulating the necessary funds and finding a suitable location and land for a permanent institution was started. They determined that approximately 75 acres of land between the south bank of an adjacent canal and Gill Road in Gill Village would be the best location. The arduous task of convincing the people of Gill Village to donate their collective land was initiated. After unlimited negotiations, the villagers agreed to donate the land, provided they were made Trustees of the new college and that a certain number of students enrolled would be from the village. The necessary funds required for the institution were obtained by convincing the S.G.P.C to donate the same and to take over the management of the college with their assigned Trustees.

3. NANKANA SAHIB EDUCATIONAL TRUST

In the "Brief Report of the Work and Events Connected with Nankana Sahib Education Trust and Guru Nanak Engineering College till 31-3-1956", Sardar Joginder Singh Grewal, Secretary of the Management Committee of the Trust, explained the objectives for which this Trust was established as follows:

"Whereas the founder of this Trust is deeply interested in the moral and social uplift of the poor and backward section of people who are at present weak mainly, perhaps because for ages they have lived and worked under great disabilities:

And whereas the founder feels that for all such uplift and for the proper development and maintenance of human character it is necessary first to raise the intellectual and economic status of these people and that in this age of machine one of the best ways to do so is to provide them facilities for industrial, agriculture and technical education and training, and thus benefit them to earn their independent living and so stand erect in society but that these facilities are not at present available to them on an adequate scale;

And whereas the Equality of Opportunities now allowed to all people of India has no meaning without the Equality of Facilities which unfortunately does not exist."

3.1 In order to achieve the objectives of the Nankana Sahib Educational Trust, it was decided by the Board of Trustees to set up appropriate institutions for the following purposes:

(3.1.1) To provide facilities for Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Technical, Agricultural, Industrial and all other types of Engineering and Scientific education. Further, the facilities will provide training to the weaker or backward and poor section of people in general, but particularly to such people in rural areas. With this end in view, they planned to establish, maintain and manage an Engineering College in Ludhiana or in its suburbs,

and other Civil, Mechanical, Technical, Electrical, Agricultural, Industrial and Scientific Schools and Institutions at suitable place in the States of Punjab, Patiala, and the East Punjab States union. With the same end in view, they planned to set up plants, workshops and other machinery for the production and manufacture of Mechanical, Electrical, Agricultural and Industrial tools, plants, machinery and goods.

(3.1.2) To provide facilities and make special arrangements for poor, backward and other deserving students to prepare for competitive examinations and tests required for Civil and Military services, and all other services of every description, and for admission to the Professional Colleges, Schools and Institutions in India.

(3.1.3) To supply necessary information for the said purposes to people through books, magazines, papers and otherwise.

3.2 Trust Management

During the preliminary stages of the establishment of the Trust, S. Sham Singh Mukandpuri and Jathedar Bachittar Singh of Pepsu constantly worked for the Trust. Mention may also be made here of S. Karnail Singh Sidhu, stenographer to the Principal, Government College, Ludhiana, for rendering honorary services for the large amount of correspondence during the initial period of the establishment of the Trust and the institutions.

A reference has also to be made for the extremely valuable services rendered by the members of the Panchayat and Lambardars of Gill Village as also by Zaildar Harnam Singh, and Sardar Gajjan Singh for the gift of 75 acres of land made by the old and new residents of Gill Village.

But this report will not be complete without at least a brief reference to the services rendered or sympathy shown, and encouragement given, by certain well-meaning persons, at a time when the plan was in its early development phase. Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke gave birth to the idea of Guru Nanak Engineering College and nucleus for the same was prepared by the formal creation of Nankana Sahib Education Trust with its fine constitution and organization. In order to start the project, the S.G.P.C, under the guidance of Master Tara Singh, donated a sum of rupees 2 Lakhs. The resolution to donate the funds was moved by S. Sarmukh Singh Chamak and seconded by S. Mangal Singh Gill of Gill Village. In addition, S. Ishar Singh Majhail, S. Mohinder Singh Sidhwan, and S. Basant Singh Moga came to its help when their help was most needed, and they are largely responsible for the payment of rupees 8 Lakhs by the S.G.P.C. There were differences of opinion at that time when much confusion prevailed in that body. S. Partap Singh Kairo, Chief Minister of Punjab, earnestly exercised his influence with the Nagoke Group for this payment of rupees 8 Lakhs and advised keeping the management of the Trust above party politics. Sarvshri Swaran Singh, Gurbachan Singh Bajwa and Ujjal Singh, all of whom were Government Ministers, also fully sympathized with the management in their task and did whatever little they could to help. The names of S. Inder Singh Kt. of Jamshedpur and his son S. Baldev Singh and R. B. Basaka Singh, Sir Sobha

Singh, S. Bishan Singh Singaporean and Bawa Bachittar Singh also have to be mentioned for their sincere good wishes. Gyani Kartar Singh also gave his blessings to the constitution.

3.3 First Trustees

The following persons were the first Trustees.

- President, S.G.P.C.Ex-officio. (S.Pritam Singh Khuranj).
- His Highness Maharaj Yadvindra Singh, Malvindra Bahadur Rajparamukh of PEPSU as represented by S. Gain Singh Rarewala.
- Master Tara Singh.

The first meeting of the Board of Trustees was held in Patiala at the residence of S. Gain Singh Rarewala on June 5, 1953. In this meeting, the Trustees appointed the Managing Committee as provided in the Trust Deed.

3.4 First Management Committee

The following were the members of the first committee:

- S.B.S.(Sardar Bahadur Sardar) Teja Singh, Chief Justice, Patiala High-Court President.
- S. Gurnam Singh Judge, Patiala High Court, Vice-President.
- S. Harnam Singh Judge, Punjab High Court.
- S.B.S. Karnail Singh, General Manager, Indian Railways
- S.B.S. Sarup Singh Chief Engineer, (Punjab) Retd.
- S.B.S. Natha Singh, State Engineer, Jaipur (Retd).
- S. Mohan Singh, Managing Director, Bank of Patiala.
- S. Bahadur Singh, M.A., M.P.
- S. Prithvi Singh, Advocate, Ferozepur.
- S. Joginder Singh; Advocate, Ludhiana-Secretary.

The first meeting of the Management Committee was held on July 26,1953, at the residence of S.B.S. Teja Singh in Patiala and a resolution was passed to start a Degree College in Ludhiana.

4. COLLEGE LOCATION, TRUSTEES, BOARDS AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Through the kindness of Sardar Sahib Sardar Udhe Singh, P.C.S. (retired Rais of Ladhran), President and S. Joginder Singh, Advocate, Secretary of the Gurdev Trust Ludhiana, a building of the Trust was obtained for the temporary lodging of the diploma classes in Civil, Electrical and Mechanical engineering. The college opened on October 21, 1953, with sixty students.

The Board of Trustees and the Management Committee were reconstituted with the mutual consent of the two groups, consisting of the following persons.

4.1 Board of Trustees

- President, S.G.P.C. Ex-officio. (Master Tara Singh).
- Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke, M.P.
- His Highness Maharaj Yadvindra, Singh Rajpamukh of Pepsu.
- S. Gain Singh Rarewala, Ex-Chief Minister, Pepsu.
- S. Mohinder Singh Sidhwan.
- S. Chanan Singh Gill of Doraha, representing the donors of 75 acres of land of Gill Village.

4.2 The Management Committee

- S. Gurnam Singh, Judge, High Court, Pepsu, President.
- S. Kartar Singh, B.A., LL.B., Advocate, Ludhiana, Vice President
- S.B.S. Karnail Singh, General Manager, Indian railways.
- S.B.S. Sarup Singh, Retired Chief Engineer, Punjab.
- S.B.S. Natha Singh Randhawa, Retired State Engineer, Amritsar.
- S. Dharam Singh Engineer, Ex. President, municipal Committee, Amritsar.
- Dr. Harnam Singh, M.A. Ph.D. D.P.I, Pepsu (Retd)
- General Shivdev Singh, Minister P.W.D. Pepsu.
- S. Bahadur Singh, M.A., M.P.
- S. Dasundha Singh, Advocate, Ex. Minister, Punjab Government.
- S. Basant Singh Moga, Ex-Vice President, S.G.P.C.
- S Bakhshish Singh Bhamadi, Contractor, Ludhiana.
- Principal, Guru Nanak Engineering College, Ex-Officio.
- S. Joginder Singh, Advocate Secretary.
- Reserved for a nominee of Government of India.
- Reserved for a nominee of Government of Punjab.

5. FINANCIAL ADVISOR & OVERALL PROJECT

For the management of funds, S. B. Bhai Jodh Singh, M.L.C. was appointed as financial

advisor. The S.G.P.C., under the Presidentship of Master Tara Singh, donated a sum of rupees 2 Lakhs on August 3, 1953. The same body donated another sum of rupees 8 Lakhs in March 1954 under the Presidentship of S. Ishar Singh Majhail. The residents of Gill Village donated an extremely valuable piece of land measuring 75 acres on October 4, 1953.

The institution had been identified for development in the First Five Year Plan and the government sanctioned rupees 5 Lakhs and 40,000 as a grant and rupees 2 Lakhs and 40,000 as a loan for the development of a hostel, free of interest, repayable in 33 years in equal annual instalments. An additional rupees 22,500 were sanctioned as a grant to meet additional recurring expenses.

The project envisioned the establishment of the first engineering college in Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering and a diploma course in the same subjects. The plan also envisioned the establishment of a technical institution as was approved by the government of India for the training of craftsman. It was further intended to start small scale technical institutions in as many important places in the Punjab and Pepsu regions as possible at the desire and financial assistance of the local people. The entire project in Ludhiana was estimated to cost rupees 1 crore when completed, as detailed below:

**Estimate of Cost
Guru Nanak Engineering College, Ludhiana**

For Degree Diploma in Engineering and Technical Training Institute for
Craftsman Training
(In Rupees)

Main building	9,37,000
Workshop	8,55,000
Hostels (double set for 500 students)	8,55,000
Equipment	16,25,000
Roads and drainage system and sewage scheme	2,50,000
Water supply and electrification	2,25,000
Residential quarters	7,01,000
Gymnasium, swimming pool and tuck shop	2,01,000
Other subsidiary buildings, levelling plots, grounds for sports and T&P	90,000
	57,39,000
Technical training institute for craftsman	21,90,000
Gurdwara and library (religious)	3,50,000
	82,79,000
Land and other incidental charges	28,00,000

Grand Total

1,10,79,000

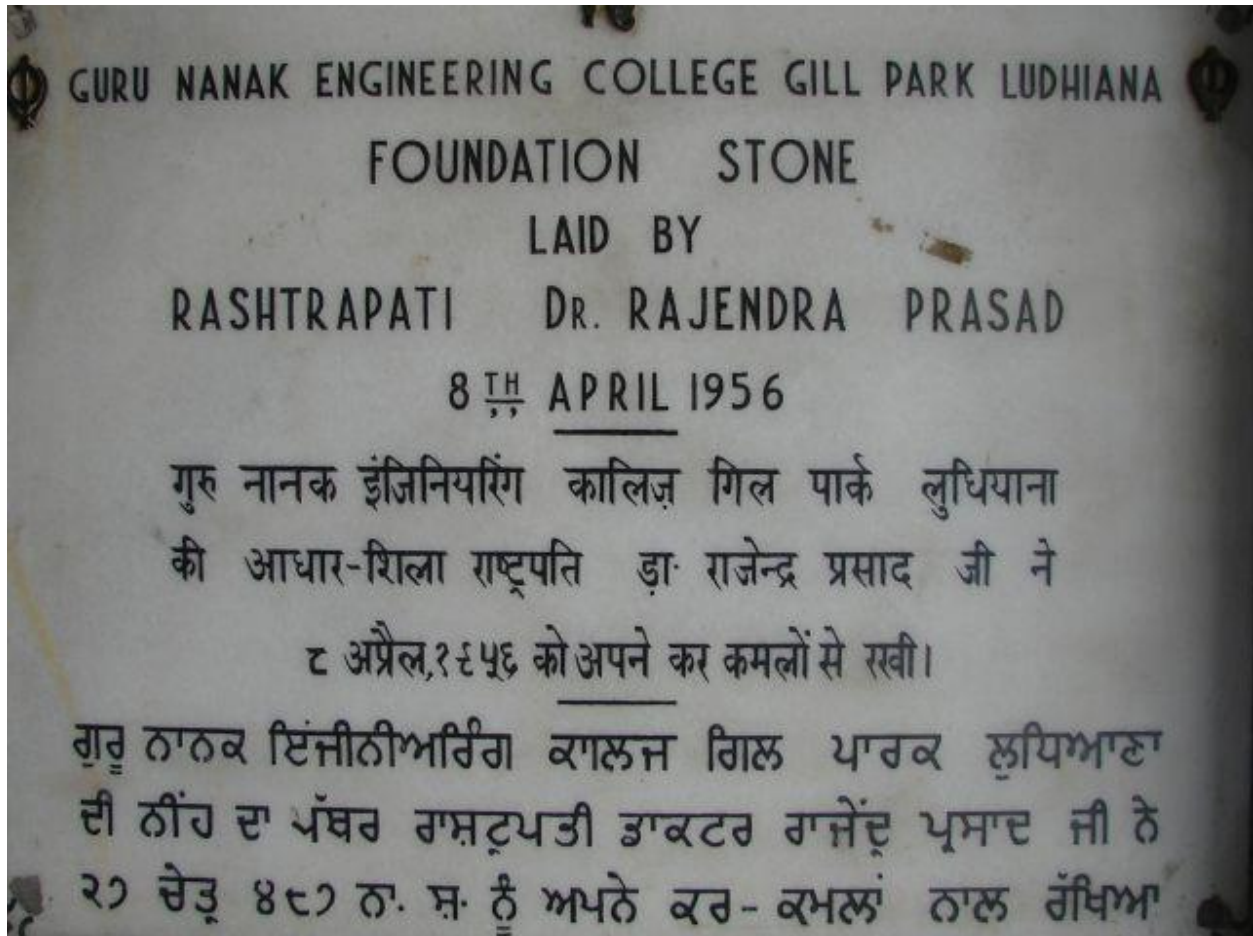
Approximately rupees 1.0 crores

It must also be revealed with a mixed feeling that the first brick was placed on the present site of the College on Wednesday the 25th of May 1955, the day of Shaheedi Gurburb of Shri Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj, in the early hours by the founder of the Trust himself, accompanied by S. Ajmer Singh, Overseer of Rurgarh in Pepsu. This day was selected as no bigger ceremony was possible than Shaheedi Gurburb and the day was too auspicious to be missed

Much progress could not be made in the construction of the new buildings for various reasons. The construction work was earnestly taken up only a few months prior. S. Kishan Singh Gill, P.S.E. (Retd.), a very capable and energetic engineer who was well known for his efficiency and honesty in the Punjab, was appointed in July 1955. He was in charge of important building works at Patiala. It was through the kindness of General Shivdev Singh that the College was able to get him relieved from his other employment duties. After he was appointed, a good deal of work was completed in a few short months. A first-rate workshop with an area of 19,000 square feet (much bigger than that of Government Engineering College at Chandigarh) was fully established. The estimated cost of this workshop was rupees 2 Lakhs. A large tube well with a discharge of 1.5 cusec and 200 feet deep also was sunk at a cost of rupees 14,000. The building of the hostel, large enough to accommodate 250 students and estimated to cost about rupees 5 Lakhs, was almost half finished. The various buildings were designed by the well-known architect Shri J. K. Chaudhri, consulting architect to the government of Punjab. The institution was recognized by the government for the development of diploma courses in the First Five-year Plan. It was perceived that if all went well, the institution would be considered as suitable by the central government for inclusion in the list of fifteen Engineering College to be established and developed by the central government in the Second Five Year Plan. Although the plan was ambitious, they had a good start, and the community resources were inexhaustible, leading the Management Committee to believe the plan could succeed.

It has also to be added with great pleasure that in view of the importance of this institution and the desire of the community, Rashtarpati Dr Rajindra Prasad ji had very kindly consented to lay the foundation stone of the main building of Guru Nanak Engineering College at its new site Gill Park, Ludhiana, on Sunday April 8, 1956. It was proposed to have opened the various buildings, the workshops two hostels, the staff quarters, tube-well, etc., by some benevolent donors, who had the desire and means to serve this institution as Trustees or otherwise. The development and the progress of this Trust and its various activities and stages - good, bad or otherwise- through which it has

passed, should be a good benefit for the public.



Foundation Stone of GNEC laid by President of India (1956)

6. ADMISSION AND COURSES OF STUDIES

The first Principal of the College was Doctor Harchand Singh Retired Principal, Punjab Engineering College, Roorkee. Dr Harchand Singh was there for a short period of time and Sarda Tara Singh, who retired as Principal of Panjab Engineering College Chandigarh was appointed Principal of Guru Nanak Engineering College Ludhiana in 1956 and remained until 1970.

6.1 The Managing Committee was tasked to establish the rules for admission and examinations of students and trainees and the rules can be amended by the Managing Committee as necessary. Such rules must have the approval of the Trustees and be consistent with the provisions in the Deed for that purpose

6.2 The courses of studies at the engineering college should preferably be the same as prescribed for a similar college of the Punjab state or the state of Pepsu.

6.3 The minimum qualifications for admission of students to the engineering college should preferably be the same as fixed from time to time for the engineering college of the states of Punjab or Pepsu, and the college should be affiliated with the University of the State of Punjab or Pepsu if possible, as decided by the Trustees. The examination for a degree in engineering should also be the same or similar as for the engineering college of the states of Punjab or Pepsu and, if possible, held by the University of the State to which the college is affiliated.

6.4 **RESERVATION OF SEATS:** Whereas the Trust was created primarily to help the people of rural areas, who are admittedly a backward and weaker section of people, and the Trust would not be fulfilling its purposes if such people did not get the fullest benefit from the activities of the Trust, so it was provided that in case the number of candidates is more than the seats available for admission to the engineering college or to any other school or institution of the Trust, 70% of the seats shall be filled from among the candidates hailing from the rural areas, provided such number is available from among the candidates who have applied for such admission. It has to be noted with particular interest that though the Trust is sponsored by S.G.P.C., a religious body, but consistent with the essence of Guru Nanak's mission, the doors of the institution are open to all irrespective of creed, caste and religion, and admissions are held on merits.

7. OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED

This herculean task undertaken transpired over a period of 5 years resulting in the seed sown to grow into a pioneer engineering institution which has produced Lakhs of outstanding engineers flourishing all around the globe.

For additional information about present state of the college please, log on to the college web site <https://www.gndec.ac.in>

Acknowledgments:

We highly Appreciate the efforts of S. Parambir Singh Grewal grandson of Sardar Joginder Singh Grewal and Professor Ranbir Singh Sandhu for providing information, S. Kamaljit Singh Hara for his persistent pursuit to find information, and Genconians for their help to complete this project.

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ADDRESS PRESENTED TO SHRI RAJENDRA PRASAD
PRESIDENT OF INDIA AT THE TIME OF LAYING
FOUNDATION STONE OF MAIN BUILDING
OF GURU NANAK ENGINEERING COLLEGE

Mr. President,

Your benign visit invests us with singular privilege, and we tender to you our heart-felt welcome. You are undoubtedly a man of great natural gifts, best admired and beloved by those who know you best. But we, too, know you as a man of knowledge and of action and even a passing reference to your eventful life is inspiration for us. Whatever fell to your lot to do, was performed by you with such care and effect that everybody could perceive from the first that you were beyond question in the galaxy of the Great, marked out for the highest position in the country. That gentle Teacher of our times, Mahatma Gandhi, who died so that others may live, always received you with open arms and gave you, his trust, confidence and friendship. To no small degree, by your sacrifices and services, you helped him make a walking truth of the dream of a free India. In recent years, your attractive simplicity of character, your courage of a large and honest mind, your solicitude for the welfare of the common man and your genius for business of the highest order, have made you, for a full term, our Executive Head and ensured for us all a period of great glory and of lasting amity and solidarity.

Sir, the education of youth, because it is one of the fundamental functions and responsibilities of Society, is the engrossing topic of our times, of vital concern to us all. It is specially so, because of the present pressure of rapid and unprecedented development of economic life which necessitates a new order in education. To bring about such a new order, with point and purpose is, in large part, the chief impulse of the Guru Nanak Engineering College. It is intended to be a specialist Institution offering a thorough education in Engineering up to university and professional standards.

Justification lies in the fact that society needs expert services of a large and increasing number of helping hands in the future enterprises of the country. More specifically, society needs workers, mechanics and operators who know how to build roads, throw bridges over chasms, tunnels under obstructions, and can take intelligent interest in machines and to use and tend them.

Sir, this College is designedly set in rural surroundings and though it is to cater for every class and community, its chief concern is to provide technical education to less developed area and backward people. Its prevailing philosophy is an optimistic one of success. It is expected that as soon as it achieves that adequacy of equipment and accessories towards which it is already straining every nerve, it will be possible, by degrees, to extend its sphere of activities and open constituent technical schools and minor institutions, throughout the state, wherever local interest is strong enough to promise a successful organization. It is also hoped that its students, while remaining attached to the soil from which they spring and fulfilling their task to the eternal benefits both of themselves and of the country will continue to remind the succeeding generations of two important principles- that principle that the best is not too good for the children of our people however straitened in circumstances their parents may be and the principle that moral and spiritual approval alone, can give society the stability that is needed under the stress of modern unsettling and disruptive tendencies.

Sir, this College is virtually sponsored by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee. To initiate it, it has munificently donated to its funds rupees ten lakhs with the promise of substantial aid for the support and development in future. The Government also has sanctioned a financial aid of rupees five lakhs and forty thousand, in addition to the advance of an interest-free loan of rupees two lakhs and forty thousand. The proprietors of Village Gill have made a magnificent gift of this site of 363 Bighas on which it is possible to plan the College as a complete entity. Within this year the first installment of its permanent buildings will be approaching completion and the college, which ever since its inception has been housed in temporary quarters kindly offered by the Gurdev Trust, Ludhiana, will soon be moving to its own site. To secure its establishment as a permanent foundation, the ownership of its land, other equipment and buildings has been vested in a body of Trustees, known as Nankana Sahib Education Trust, the members of which are tried leaders of established reputation.

The affairs of the College are in the hands of Managing Committee, which consist of firm friends and wise advisers, who are all men of affairs, with practical as well as administrative minds. Their combined sustained and patient efforts have already secured for the college an institutional organization, competent as regards essential rights and powers, if not yet wholly adequate in resources.

For, if this college is to conform to the prescribed standard of management and efficiency as well as its proper upkeep, it must obtain substantial annual grants from the Treasury and a steady flow of beneficial, donations and bequests. Vast sums of money are still needed and are yet to be raised. It has been estimated that altogether it shall need at least rupees one crore. We urge well-to-do citizens and enlightened captains of industry throughout India to give of their abundance to this worthy cause. The College offers a wide field and a noble opportunity for the exercise on modern lines of that charity and benevolence for which India has been renowned from ancient times.

Sustained and ensured by an unfaltering trust, we appeal to you also, Sir, as the Head of the Union of India, to judge the grant earning capacity of this Institution on grounds of general efficiency and desert rather than by rigid rules of calculation and include it as the first among the new fifteen Engineering Colleges envisaged in the next Five-Year Plan.

Sir, we are deeply indebted to you for your graciously coming over to Ludhiana to accommodate our request to lay the foundation-stone of the main building of Guru Nanak Engineering College. We feel sincerely that this day, because of your presence in our midst, has, for all time, become for us a memorable day.

Faithfully yours,

Members of
Board of Trustees, and
Management Committee,
Nankana Sahib Education Trust