

# Sanjay academy has 'teething trouble'

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A year after its establishment by Andhra Pradesh Government, the Sanjay Automobile Academy in the city is still grappling with countless teething troubles.

The troubles stem mainly from the disinterest of the Government as also the incapability of the academy's management to meet the objectives set for the institution.

Although envisaged to complement and supplement the activities of the reputed automobile testing institute at Pune and other seats of learning like the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and the Madras institute of technology, the Sanjay Academy is, at best, a poor cousin of the local industrial training institutes.

The academy was planned and executed in a great hurry as the then chief minister, Mr M. Chenna Reddy, wanted to inaugurate it on August 15, 1980 barely 50 days after Sanjay's death to vie with other states setting up memorials to the youth leader.

In fact, the project report of the academy was submitted to the Government a fortnight after the academy was inaugurated.

A registered society, the academy is described as "a memorial to the commitment of Sanjay Gandhi, one of the greatest youth leaders of modern India and a modern-minded persons who set great store by the role of science and technology in the nation's development."

Located 15 km away from the city, behind Autonagar, an abandoned automobile industrial estate, the academy consists of six asbestos sheds, two of them still incomplete. The administrative offices, a paint shop, classrooms and workshops for "specialised" training in motor, diesel and auto electrical mechanism are housed in these sheds.

Only the sheds and a few ramshackle vehicles lying around dot the 25-acre landscape of the academy with the entire area, including drying lanes covered with rocks and thick shrubs.

So far the academy has drawn a blank in five of its six main objectives—setting up automobile servicing units, small-scale production units automobile ancillary industries, research and development and automobile testing facilities.

With regard to the sixth objective of imparting academic instructions and training leading to diplomas and BE and ME degrees, suffice it to say that the academy could attract only 93 students as against the intake capacity of 144, with nine dropping out subsequently.

In the 1981-82 academic year, 94 students are proposed to be admitted without any addition to the existing facilities. However, only a few students had joined when admissions began early this month.

While the number of students in the academy is only 84, the strength of the academy's staff is 35. The Managing Director,

whose office is situated 25 km away from the academy in Secunderabad, visits the institution twice a month. The principal formerly with an ITI, comes to the academy "only in the afternoon as he is otherwise busy in the secretariat," the instructors say.

Most of the students are drawn from the backward classes and the physically handicapped. Having completed their ITI courses they expect placement in jobs after training at the academy. They are getting a measly stipend of Rs 80 out of which Rs 25 is deducted for bus passes. Not a single diploma has been awarded after 13 months of training.

The academy has two ambassador cars two jeeps, three motorcycles an autorickshaw, a scooter, besides a bus to train students in driving and mechanism. Students complain that they have to more often push the bus than drive it.

They allege that the vehicles are rarely available for driving as the instructors use them for personal work. Some of the driving instructors they say, learnt driving only after joining the academy.

According to the curriculum, the students were to be trained for six months and one year respectively in light and heavy vehicle driving but none of the trainee drivers has driven a vehicle for more than two months.

At the end of the academic year, the trainees are being refused driving licences, as promised by the management on the grounds that it cannot afford to pay Rs 1000 for the licences for the 25 trainees. In the meantime, the date for renewal of their learner's licences has also expired.

In one of the courses — auto electrical mechanism — there is only one student and two instructors. One of the instructors has since been transferred elsewhere.

For the courses in diesel, auto and electrical mechanism and painting, examinations which were to be held along with the ITI's were postponed on account of disturbances in the Old City.

The question papers for the ITI and the academy being similar fresh papers will have to be set again exclusively for some students. It is to be seen whether this will be feasible as also when the State Council for Training in Vocational Trades (SCTVT) will award the diplomas.

Another complaint of the students is about the hostel which is nothing but a large industrial shed at Autonagar. Although a monthly rent of Rs 1,600 is paid for the shed, it lacks furniture, running water

or toilet, and leaks heavily during rains.

It was originally planned to spend Rs 2 crores on the academy in a phased manner till 1985. Of this amount only Rs 25 lakhs have been allotted and so far utilised for construction of sheds and some costly equipment.

The academy requires a big dose of funds if it is to execute the ambitious expansion programmes, but in view of its tardy progress, the Government is unlikely to come forth with the money. In fact, a senior official of the Labour and Technical Education Department, when approached, even pleaded ignorance about the academy and refused to comment till he studied the academy's objectives.