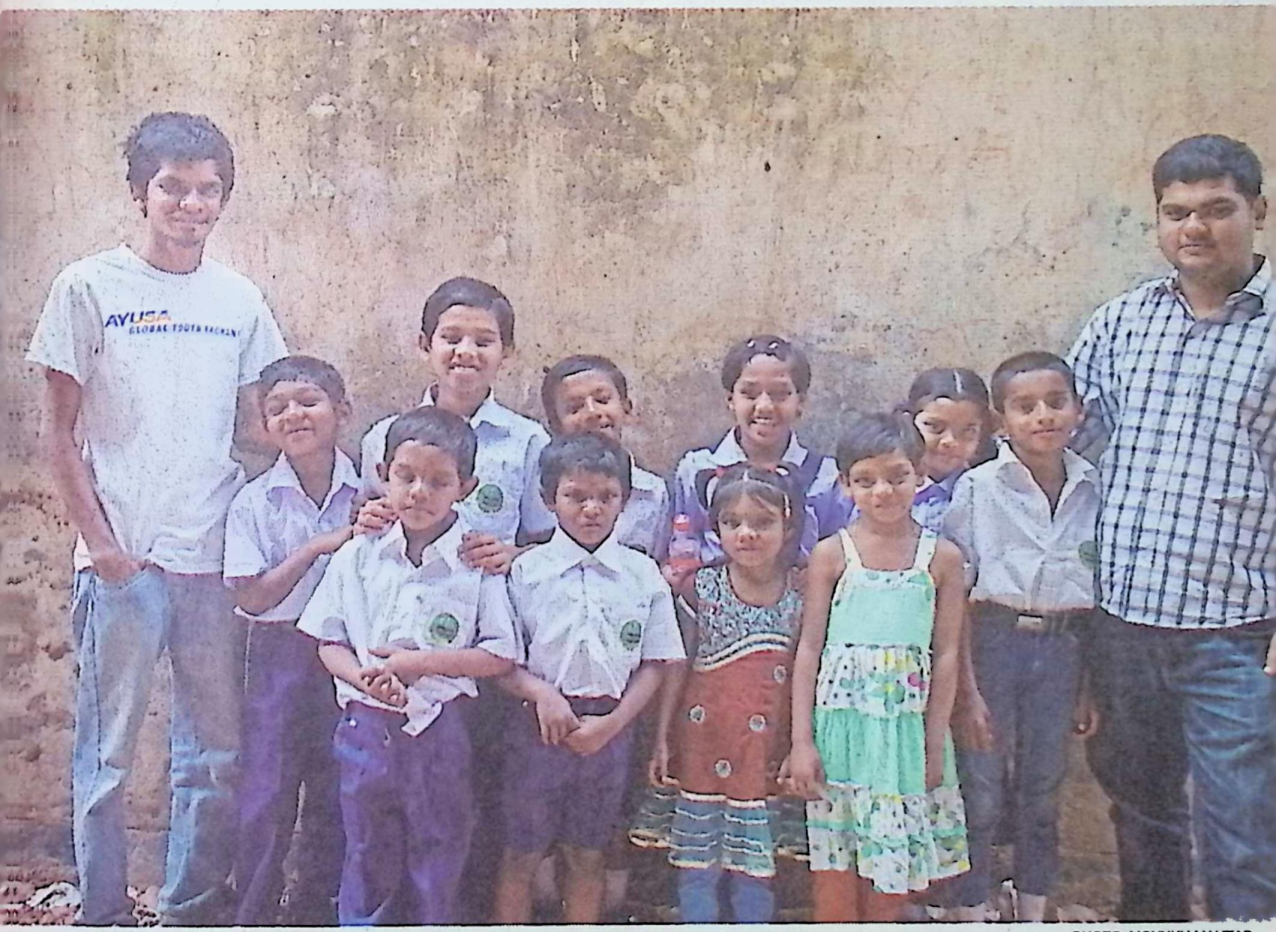
the funds but were not providing the facilities such as desks and chairs which other school children take for granted. What bothered him most was the bleak future that lay ahead for these kids. Without formal recognition, the education they were receiving would not be of much use to these children. At best they could get enrolled into a polytechnic school. What they needed was a proper incorporation into a system.

Iftekhar Ahmed, the Vice Principal of Time International speaks enthusiastically of the reception the children got when they started. "From the beginning, the other kids from better backgrounds had no problems accepting these kids. The guardians on the other hand were worried; they raised issues about the environment and their attire." But he insisted that the proper environment would be maintained.



Smallfoot kids with founder Gulshan Jubaed Prince (L) and Monjurul Asif (R). PHOTO: MOYUKH MAHTAB

Prince started Smallfoot a year ago. Its main objective – to give these children a good education. With its handful of volunteers and 12 kids from the Mirpur slum, Smallfootinitially started its own school. "The parents were distrustful at first, they still are to an extent," says Prince. They were afraid that the school would close down midway.

One year on, Smallfoot seems to be making big progress. It started as a small school of 12 kids taught by volunteer teachers to get them interested in education. Now Time International, an English medium school, has willingly admitted these kids when most good schools were reluctant to take them because of their background.

The guardians, though late, became accepting of 12 slum children going to class with their children. According to the teachers, these 12 children are doing quite well adapting to the environment and their performance is on a par with the other students.

This is exactly what Smallfoot aimed for when they started the project. With no plans of taking on more kids, all they wanted to do was take these dozen and bear the responsibility of giving them a good education till they are in a position to support themselves. Prince says his hope is to raise awareness of the fact that good quality education should not be a privilege for under-privileged kids. He points out that if one school is willing to