



NEWSLETTER

Volume 12. July 2022.

“Education was about the practice of freedom.”

— Bell Hooks, Teaching To Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom

We have new members on board, to work, learn and grow together. It is a true pleasure to welcome all the new talent to our Team. As we expand our engagements, with plenty of expectations and plans, we hope that this addition will be a great start and will see further development. As Schools reopen after board exams, Girls are back and all other stakeholder interactions resumed actively for the current academic year. SwaTaleem's field Team started planning

Continuous Engagements with KGBVs: 2022

Library Books for Girls

In April 2022, we distributed language-specific library books to all KGBVs in partnership with Eklavya and Pratham. The objective was to increase Girls' exposure to rich, diverse, and learning-appropriate content. There is a range of stories for Girls in different genres like drama, fiction, non-fiction, and poetry in both English and Hindi.

Water Cooler Inauguration

On 26th April 2022, we collaborated with the Pragati Foundation to provide water coolers for 5 KGBVs in Mewat, Haryana. The inaugural event happened in the presence of all principals of 5 KGBVs and Ramnivas Sharma, the newly appointed District Project Coordinator of the Department of Education, Haryana.



Water Cooler Inauguration- KGBV Nuh

Regular In-School visits

In April 2022, we restarted Teacher Professional Development In-School sessions in KGBVs and facilitated 4 sessions in Firozpur Jhirka and Nagina on capacity building. We continued driving In-School sessions for Girls and coordinated 4 sessions on "Our Childhood" in Nuh in April, where around 100

helped them understand reality and how they should strive forward for a better future.

Admissions/Exams

March 2022 was the period of intense focus on the first annual exams for the Girls in KGBVs since the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, we assisted KGBVs in community engagement for Girls' admission to schools.



During in-school sessions in KGBV Nuh

"Bridging the gender bias"- The Hindu article

On 16th April 2022, The Hindu published an article about our efforts with KGBV schools and our stakeholders, "Bridging the gender bias" by Archana Subramanian. This covers the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) that

support.

Click [here](#) for the article

THE HINDU

Bridging the gender bias

Swa Taleem ensures that girls, especially from under-represented communities in Haryana, do not lose out on their education

■ ARCHANA SUBRAMANIAN

SwaTaleem translates to 'own your education'. The name combines the Sanskrit Swa (which means your own) and the Urdu Taleem (education). The organisation has been working to educate the girl child since 2018 and is one of the recipients of Google.org Impact Challenge for Women and Girls 2021. Founded by Ananya Tiwari and Vaibhav Kumar, alumni of the Ashoka Young India Fellowship, SwaTaleem uses an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) to help bridge the gender divide in education, especially among under-represented communities in Haryana. It came into its own during the pandemic-driven shift from classroom to virtual learning.

IVRS are audio files that can be played through speakerphones without the help of the Internet. Through these, girls had access to



The SwaTaleem team SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

information about subjects like Math and Science, and also financial awareness. The application also brought together parents, teachers and the government to create an ecosystem that supports the girls' education. Over half the parents confirmed that the girls were receiving

the content sent and remained engaged in their education throughout the pandemic.

Relevance

In the past, it has been shown that adolescent girls are more likely to drop out when schools are closed in

crisis situations. This leads to an increased gender gap in education, early and forced marriages, early pregnancy, and other social outcomes. During COVID-19 as well, girls had to drop out of school and take responsibility for housework while the parents engaged in some economic activity that would contribute to the household income. While digital education emerged as a major contender to offer a solution to closure of schools, access was both economic and gendered. Lack of appropriate devices and network coverage is a critical challenge, as it disrupts overall levels of learning and widens socio-economic disparities. Moreover, girls lose out on not just education, they also experience reduction in peer interaction and loss of protective environments and social support networks.

How it works

These are the issues SwaTaleem addressed during the lockdown. In the first 39 weeks of the pandemic,

SwaTaleem uses an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) to help bridge the gender divide

over 65,000 calls were made and over 7000 hours of education sessions were conducted. "We create stories that are mapped on the context that surround the girls and include curriculum-related key points," says Tiwari. For instance, a story on Mitwa involving a local Mevati family with the profession, names of members, size, their language, is designed to address concepts like speed, distance and time from Mathematics, and courage and resilience from socio-emotional skills. These stories are pre-recorded and delivered through IVRS.

"This is followed by assessment questions administered through IVRS itself, which map onto six main areas: English, Science, Maths, Hindi, Reproductive Health, and socio-emotional skills. In our context, these are used to disseminate educational content to the girls where they can communicate using a basic click-button phone. The stories are designed by the teachers of the school and proof-read by us," adds Kumar

SwaTaleem partners with the government. "We train teachers and local women through life skills and English workshops and meet the girls in their everyday settings to promote learning. To further advocacy and system-based scaling, we engage with parents and orient government officials at block, district, state, and national levels," adds Tiwari.

The article published in "The Hindu" on 16th April 2022

Women Lead Differently: Vital Voices Festival

In May 2022, Ananya Tiwari, Co-Founder of SwaTaleem shared a platform with Melonie Parker, Chief Diversity Officer at Google, Nina Easton, Co-CEO of Sellers Easton Media, Eugenia Podesta, Vice President of Leadership and Social Impact at Vital Voices and Jennifer Klein, Co-Chair of the White House Gender Policy Council to discuss issues of gender inequity, the work that SwaTaleem Foundation does and the ways to move forward. This discussion focussed on advancing gender equity through #EconomicEmpowerment during the Grand Opening of the first-of-its-kind Vital Voices' Global Headquarters for Women's Leadership in Washington DC.

Click [here](#) for the discussion video



Ananya talking about SwaTaleem's work

Being part of the Rural Collective

In April 2022, Vaibhav Kumar, Co-Founder of SwaTaleem took part in the recent gathering organized by the rural collective in Delhi, a consortium of 24 organizations spread across India, working in remote geographies on education. The meeting focused on collective charter signing and brainstorming for the next academic year. The primary discussion was around building a collaborative ecosystem for a larger impact amongst Educational organizations working in the remote geographies in India.



Margaret McNamara Education Grants (MMEG) Grants

Ananya Tiwari, our Co-Founder, has received the 2022 Margaret McNamara Education Grants (MMEG). This fund supports the work on the sense of belonging among rural adolescent girls. It pushes the conversation from enrolment and learning outcomes to the schooling experiences amidst structural determinants of gender inequality.

Ananya Tiwari



Country of origin: India

University of Illinois

PhD in Educational Psychology

MARGARET
McNAMARA
EDUCATION GRANTS

recruits joined in the last week of May 2022, and we organized an orientation for them from 23rd to the 27th of May, covering an introduction to the organization and team members, field visits, verticals-based sessions, reflections, and discussions on the upcoming month's plans.

New Office set up in Delhi

In April 2022, we started operating together from our new central office at Shahpur Jat, Delhi. Now, we have a base in Mewat and a central office in Delhi. We will be expanding our projects to other KGBVs in Haryana this academic year.



Meet our Team members!

**Ekta Varshney**

Ekta is from Aligarh, she has completed her Electronics Engineering from Aligarh Muslim University. She completed her Gandhi Fellowship in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra which gave her exposure to the social sector.

**Farheen Anwar**

Farheen is from Delhi, she has done her post-graduate in Education at Azim Premji University. She has experience in Play for Peace as a Mentor. She was a Chief Mentor in Rahmani 30 for CA and medical students.

Town Hall for our Volunteers

On 15th May 2022, we organized a Town Hall, for all those keen to know about our efforts. That platform was a fun introductory session where everyone got to meet SwaTaleem Team members and our efforts. People asked questions about our efforts and recent updates about KGBVs and interacted about our future plans. Let us know if you are interested in joining the next Town Hall by emailing us at info@swataleem.org.



SwaTaleem Foundation



TOWN HALL

*Talk to us!
Know more about our work!
Explore opportunities with us!*

9PM IST/10:30AM CST, 15th May, 2022

A Note from one of our Directors

"The pandemic brought many challenges in the lives of the rural adolescent girls and SwaTaleem has been pretty successful in reaching out to them

SwaTaleem Team with all the new initiatives and collaborations overcomes the multitude of challenges in the given times to create a positive impact in the life of adolescent girls."

-Monika Mahto, SwaTaleem Director

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