

**IMPACT TEACHERS**

**TEACHER'S SPECIAL REPORT  
MARCH 2017**

## SAARTHAK NAARI - WOMEN ACHIEVERS AWARD



"Saarthak Naari 2016- Women Achievers Awards" was an exclusive award ceremony organized by CNBC TV18 and 1000 Petals, in Bengaluru. Exceptional women achievers were lauded for their contribution to the fields of education, literature, performing arts, medicine, science and technology, politics, public service, sports, agriculture and lifestyle. The organizers made in-depth enquiries nation-wide to identify those that have been working quietly, at the grass-roots, away from the public eye, but achieving exceptional outcomes.

IIMPACT was thrilled to know that their CEO, Mrs. Nirmala Tandon, was selected as the most exceptional contributor in the field of education. The scope and reach of her work was recognized, celebrated and honoured. Her silent but considerable contribution, and its remarkable impact in rural India, was acknowledged for reaching out to over 1600 of the most backward villages of India, educating over 50000 girl children.



# REAL IMPACT REAL STORIES

## **'IIMPACT-A FULFILLING MISSION'**

### **NIRMALA TANDON CEO IIMPACT**

Life has an uncanny way of throwing up surprises and challenges. It certainly did for me. By profession I am a teacher. I came from a privileged background where my grandfather and father were closely involved in the field of education. Their work had a deep influence on me and I decided to tread their path and have an experience of over 32 years in the field of education.

One day my life took a dramatic turn. My husband and his batch mates who were involved in setting up an NGO for girl child education, were looking for teachers who could go to remote places to teach young girls and also enrol them in the learning centres. My husband put forward the idea to me. During that time I was teaching in a reputed school and was in a dilemma as what to do. The power and conviction of my husband's ideas had a stronger effect on me than the Principal of the school, who did not want me leave.

Finally, with a prayer in my heart I took the decision to leave the school and march towards a new horizon. I resigned from my job and joined IIMPACT on a honorary position.

There were several difficulties and challenges that one faced and tackled them one by one from a small office space. For the initial 4 years tenaciously I progressed towards my goal singlehandedly. At that time neither did I have a friend close by who I could speak with or consult.

It was extremely difficult to convince the parents to send their daughters to school. I started going to villages couple of times a week. I stayed with girls in their mud homes. There was no water or toilets. With sheer persuasion, having spent so much time convincing them, yes I did succeed. Their simplicity, happiness and hard-work was an eye opener and definitely touched me. It also made me humble.

In 2008, IIMPACT moved to a bigger space in Gurgaon which was lovingly decorated with pictures of happy faces of the girls, their stories told by them and their thoughts. This gave me the courage and encouragement to continue on my chosen path. I would smile looking at the pictures of Meenu, Bhuteri, Kavita and Pooja and Neelam .

As our office was a little way from the city, it was difficult to find help and therefore in the absence of the cleaning staff I took the task upon myself to clean the office. After all it was our office.

Slowly yet surely, hard work paid off. Our girls continued their studies after Class 5, passing with first division, most went on to complete their Class 10 and 12 Board exams. Some of them acquired undergraduate degrees, later they found jobs and settled down in their careers.

Today when I look back I am happy that as a simple school teacher I was able to bring the mission to its current level, reaching out to 50,000 girls enrolled in 11 states of India with the support of our Board members.

Our alumni of 16000 girls inspire and energise us by their own journey of transformation. It's a glorious feeling!



## STORY OF MY STRUGGLE SAKUNDALA

I was married in 1999 in Mubarakpur Ramgarh. My husband was a good man, caring and thoughtful, and he used to look after me and my three children (2 girls and 1 boy) well. We had a good time. I took care of the house.

Unfortunately in 12 years time, my husband passed away. The burden of bringing up three children came on to me. In the midst of my worries, I determined to educate myself further. I wanted a better life for my children. Losing their father was the biggest shock of their lives!

Within a year, with much struggling, hard work and dedication, I studied privately and completed my 12th Standard board exam.( I had finished my 10<sup>th</sup> standard exams before marriage and done well ).

To improve my present conditions I decided to work and earn a regular income.

In July 2013 I got an opportunity to work as a teacher in an IIMPACT Learning Center, to teach in the girl -child program. Meanwhile I completed my STC and BA on the side.

After my husband's death I faced a very bleak future, but my previous education proved useful. I could see that I would have to help myself out of my problems. There was no point in weeping endlessly. Though the challenges seemed too many, I took things step by step.

After joining IIMPACT I gained a lot of courage. The IIMPACT supervisor supported me, guided me and helped me learn many things. I was able to reach out to the little girls make them feel important and teach them to do many things that they thought girls could never do.

Being an IIMPACT worker I started teaching my children also and knew how to handle their difficulties better. I am happy to say they are doing very well at school as I supervise their studies. They are now in classes 12, 9 and 6.

I go to the Learning Centre each day excited that I am teaching so many little girls and training them so that one day they can stand on their own feet. I pray they do not suffer like I did but hope they add to the family income and make a better life for themselves and for all around them.

After 4 years at IIMPACT, I will now see 19 of my girls sit and pass their 5<sup>th</sup> standard exam with flying colours!



## MY SUCCESS AND EXPERIENCE SAHAWAR KHATOON

For us poor village girls, marriage is a very big thing. All of us are married at a young age. I too was immediately married off after passing my class 12th exam. My pleading : please, please allow me to pursue higher education, was not heard. Despite knowing my love of studying, my parents quickly arranged my marriage. After my wedding, my in-laws committed all sort of atrocities against me. Soon I was going to have a baby and they did not show me to a doctor or provide me with food.

When I could no longer bear their hate and violence, I ran away and went to live with my mother. After a few days my family informed my in-laws and my husband took me back to his house. I cannot tell you how much I suffered, I went through hell with constant physical violence and mental abuse. When I could no longer bear the pain and torture, I informed my family members and they took me away.

I gave birth to a baby girl and informed my husband and in-laws. But none of them came to see me or my baby. We were left on the way-side, discarded.

Soon we got news that my husband had got married again. I had no financial support or money so I could take no legal or other action.

As time passed by, I got a job as a teacher with a Learning Center set up by IIMPACT in our far away village.

Now, thanks to IIMPACT, I am earning and they are encouraging me to study. I have also done a computer course now. IIMPACT has helped me in many, many ways. I have now become self-sufficient. This has made it possible for me to take care of my daughter. I also educate my younger sister and more than that, I will study more, learn more and grow to be a better more efficient person. My nightmares are over!



**MY SUCCESS STORY**  
**POOJA KUMARI**

I had a tough life growing up though my parents were supportive and not preventing me from studying.

Born into a large, poor, dalit family is not easy. We are seven members in the family and my parents toil very hard as labourers in the fields to make ends meet. Drought years left us particularly destitute!

My primary education was completed in the village school. I had to let go of my further education as my father was unable to pay the fees.

But my mind was set, I did not lose hope. I helped my parents by doing odd jobs and decided to complete my education. I struggled to understand the portions in my textbooks and continued to do well. I finished my secondary education with a 1<sup>st</sup> division. This made me very happy and I wanted to learn more.

The UP Govt recognized my efforts and awarded me a scholarship of Rs 25000/- and a cycle to commute to school. I continued to work as a labourer and study alongside. I passed Class 12 with 1<sup>st</sup> Division marks again. IIMPACT recognized my ability and hired me as a Learning Centre Teacher. I was thrilled! I had a job! My family looks up to me.

My struggles and hard work, reading and learning in the few free hours when others rush off to play or chat has helped me become a better person. Now lots and lots of village girls look up to me. I feel special.



## MY LIFE

### GEETA

Village Life is never easy. The girls know little about life ahead. Daily struggles as farm hands is their lot.

Geeta was born into poverty, in a region where girls were suppressed, where very few girls ever went to school and those that did were spoken ill of. In such an environment, with no encouragement, studying would be an uphill task.

One fine day, Geeta along with 30 others got the chance to enrol at an IIMPACT Learning Centre. Geeta enjoyed learning and took her role as a student seriously. Soon she longed to become a Teacher like the one standing everyday in front of her, supporting and guiding.

Geeta has this to say :

"I was 15 years old when I completed my 10th Std board exam. My family somehow supported me so I could complete my studies. I had a strong urge to study, I never felt defeated . With my hard work and my resolve to become a teacher I finished my 12 board exams with 2nd Division marks. Being poor and from a large family I could not study further. My father got me married. After marriage I worked in the fields and continued to study. Later, I got a degree. After that I had two daughters . My husband didn't work and my in- laws separated us. I struggled to understand the situation but it was tough!

By 2013, not knowing what to do, I gathered the courage to apply and join IIMPACT's girl child programme as a teacher. Becoming an IIMPACT teacher has become the best decision I ever made. My childhood dream has now come true! Besides it has given me confidence, an income to support my daughters and above all I continue to study and learn at the regular training sessions conducted by IIMPACT. I am now in charge of so many girls, seeing them learn and grow makes me happy."



**MY WAY**  
**ANJALI**

"A son in a family, even today, is craved for. We are 3 sisters born in a backward village, to a poor family, yet my father married again and left my mother in shatters. My mother, not educated or aware, suddenly had to look after us - all alone. She, not knowing what to do, joined the community service center. Before long, she had an accident while in the center, and became handicapped. She later sent us sisters to work for a rich family. The people were kind and sent us to school daily. Every morning early, we used to do the household chores like sweeping, swabbing, cleaning etc and then go to school. This way I completed my 12th standard and later finished my BA and MA.

In 2012 I got an opportunity to work as a teacher at the IIMPACT girl child program. Slowly, this helped me settle down in life. I now have some self confidence, although in the beginning I faced several challenges. As a teacher I had to settle many caste issues, children were not coming to school etc. I did not lose hope and was continuously in touch with the community and kept them engaged. This way I was able to bring about a change in the mindset of the panchayat and villagers. Slowly they started sending the village girls to study. The girls are very happy to come to school, we have a fun time together, they are curious and always wanting to know more. They have started taking a great interest in their studies. The village I teach in is now getting more alert and aware ! I am enjoying my position in the community ! "



thank you.  
teacher



TEACHERS PLANT THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE  
THAT LAST A LIFETIME