

IIMPULSE

IIMPACT's Quarterly Newsletter

October-December 2021



**“If you educate a man you educate an individual,
but if you educate a woman you educate a
nation” – *African Proverb***



"I love coming to my Learning Centre every day, here I have made so many friends – we study together, laugh together, play together and talk about our dreams.

I want to join the police services and punish all bad people around me "

Gulfareen Khatun, LC Damda

IIMPACT is a non-profit organisation established in 2003 by the IIM-Ahmedabad alumni batch of 1978. The organisation, through its Girl Child Education Program identifies out-of-school, irregular to school, and dropout girls between the ages of 6 to 14 in marginalized villages of India and provides them with quality primary education. The objective of the program is to empower and mobilize young girls from rural disadvantaged and socially backward communities, provide them with holistic education-focus on skills and competencies which enable the child to be a self-reliant, confident learner and become active change agents for their communities.

The vision of IIMPACT is to transform the lives of women, families and entire communities in India by educating and empowering the girl child.

IIMPACT started with just 450 girls across 15 Learning Centres in 2004, Today IIMPACT has its presence in 11 states and supports close to 60,000 girls across 1936 Learning Centres.

The IIMPACT Learning Centre model establishes single-teacher led Learning Centres imparting Primary-level education using a Multi-Grade Multi-Level approach. IIMPACT runs this project for about 5-6 years in one locality, up to the time that each girl enrolled in the Learning Centre has received a firm grounding in primary education.

To know more visit www.iimpact.org

From the Executive Director's Desk



Dear Friends,

Wishing you all a very happy new year! Hope the year started with hope for all of you!

The last quarter witnessed a stabilization of the pandemic in the country, and as a result, all our Learning centres were able to operate without any disruption during the period. In fact, from December 2021 ALA has been operating with children coming in batches of 15 every alternate day.

However, this quarter, was also a festive season with the possibility of a 3rd wave looming on the horizon. So, our teachers joined hands with the local community and ensured that public safety and awareness remain of primary importance. Door to door visits, vaccination awareness drives, distribution of masks, sanitizers & wellness kits comprised of nutritional supplements, were some of the initiatives undertaken by the CMC members, at times along with ASHA workers for the safety and well-being of the local community.

One of the highlights of this quarter was full roll out of the technology platform ZOHO by IIMPACT bringing the entire data and planning of GCEP under its fold. The tech platform is primarily a CRM tool, encompassing all activities associated with the program. With the tech platform a major chunk of the manual work has been cut down to ensure streamlining of the processes with better management and tracking.

We also started on tracking our alumnae , as many as possible and were able to see becoming of many ' change makers' out of those girls' who were once part of IIMPACT LCs. These girls' as role model continue to motivate others alongside continuing their own learning voyage.

Next few months will be difficult too as tough times are still not over with Omicron banging on our doors. In the midst of a global pandemic, addressing the issue of a huge learning loss amongst students will remain the key challenge to address. However, our team is confident to overcome it with the support of our partners' , communities and parents.

With the new year, new hopes and a new set of challenges, we are ready to initiate new initiatives, adapt and grow . We look forward to your being with us in our journey...

Sincere regards,

Dr. Shubhangi Sharma

While schools are closed education is continuing, are we ready to build over?...blog by Dr. Shubhangi Sharma



The sudden and unprecedented outbreak of Corona pandemic left the whole world stunned. The gross errors of preparedness along with inadequacies of facilities became brutally evident. Lives came to a stand still and continue to be in the same state for several months now. The pandemic has thrown crores of livelihoods into a chaotic twister. There are hardly any signs of a revival of our economy until a vaccine is made available to safeguard lives and provide relief. The closure of offices, malls, markets, curbs on travel, restrictions on mobility needs for social distancing; have all been enough evidence of nature's superiority over humankind. Once again, nature has bewildered all of us with its power to regulate and rule. Social media is filled with messages of compassion, patience, and brotherhood against a disease that has brought the entire world to its heels irrespective of economic or nuclear power— making social—cultural and economic divides starker than ever before. Moreover, fear and helplessness has united the world in more than a few ways.

In such a scenario, for many of us interested and involved in the process of education, this period has been a time of serious introspection and reflection. To be honest, like all other practitioners for us also, as a community of practitioners, the period started with a sense of loss – schools are closed, children are compelled to stay inside homes and there is no likelihood of us seeing them soon in the near future. In such a terrible scenario what is there for us to do and look forward to? Furthermore, the thought of children lagging in education due to this absence from schools is something which had kept bothering all of us.

However, as time passed by a new realization emerged – going beyond initial straight-line thinking of taking ‘scholastic education’ to ‘tech platform’ to engage with children without being mindful of the fact that a large number of rural deprived children in India still don’t have access to technology even in its simplest form. Many of us even started to wonder whether it is a point of worry at all or there is merit in being hopeful that ‘education’ is still happening and we must be able to capture it and make it a part of our ‘scholastic’ delivery as and when the schools open. Several of us wondered – Is there a way that we can educate our child even while schools are closed? Is she sitting at home and idling away time or is she still learning? And the answer was ‘yes’, just that we need to know about it. While physical spaces named ‘schools’ remain under lock and key, children are constantly on a steep learning path and we can still engage with them wherever they are, whoever they are, in whatever circumstances they are in.

76-year-old *Kamamma*, a resident of Chennagirikoppalu, lost her job as a housemaid due to her age. Her landlord felt terribly scared of keeping an old person for household chores amidst the corona lockdown. It was only sometime back that Rotary Heritage – Mysuru took up the responsibility to feed *Kamamma* as she had no means to sustain during the lockdown. The same *Kamamma* donated Rs 500 out of her Rs 600 pension for a corona relief food program; then also she regretted being able to contribute only that amount.

This is just one story of several stories floating around exemplifying care, concern, and compassion for fellow beings. One wonders what the story does not have to build scholastic learning – even literacy, numeracy, and environmental studies over and above human values. Even at the risk of making it too simplistic, I would say – Police and doctors on duty at this critical hour, is an education enough for a child to understand that sense of duty is supreme. People themselves earning meagre salaries putting up *langar*’s, a tradition in which free food is distributed and shared with fellow beings, is teaching enough for the child to be able to share whatever little one he or she has; A number of young person’s going out each day to locate and feed hungry animals on the street, is an education enough to understand that life is important in any form it may be; Several families across the country choosing for minimalist existence, is a realization enough that there is a difference between needs and wants; and also a revelation that ‘greed for accumulation’ after a while is futile; people distributing food in every nook and corner of the country is learning enough to understand that sharing is caring.

Lessons are plenty and more. Only that we need to see how a child might be learning inside her family, seeing television, listening to radio news, and observing her surroundings...And if we learn enough, we need not be worried about the loss of time for the education of the child which seemed to have gripped several of us over a period of the last three months. If that is not education, then I wonder, what could be a better way to teach and instil in a child the often-repeated human values and skills for the 21st century. And if it is indeed ‘education’ then how does it matter that schools do not run for a few more months or exams are not held in the immediate future. How does it make a difference that the business of literacy and numeracy skills is halted for some time? Nothing is going to be lost forever...



The point here is that an observant, inquisitive, and intuitive child is 'learning' a lot while schools are closed. However, are we learning what the child is learning, to be able to engage with her in due course. What is the role of us 'educationists' going forward? Perhaps, for now, to let this education happen, and if possible, see that it is strengthened through our intervention once the child is back to school. There are ample opportunities created for a dialogue with that child; to listen to her observation of the period she spent outside this physical space where education seemed to have happened earlier, and make those observations the 'foundation' for further learning and scholastic interventions.

The challenge for us would be to be prepared to engage with that child who will join back with a more wise, observant, and inquisitive outlook towards the world around her. Who perhaps will be more restless than ever before, somewhat emotionally drained, depressed, confused and fearful as well; who would be full of questions on what happened and what did not happen at this time of chaos, uncertainty, and helplessness; and what she went through in this time of uncertainty? What would be required essentially is to give 'tools' to the child to articulate, think, reflect, analyse, and learn from it.

Will we be prepared enough to answer some of her questions, many of which might not be comfortable to listen to, several might be hard to answer? Would we be patient enough to talk to her, listen to her, and help her in forming her own perspectives as that, is the aim of real education. Some of these experiences might not be of immediate use but certainly, would be worth pondering over to help build a new world – a world filled with kindness, compassion, patience, care, and concern for all. That is the preparation which we need to do as educationists, teachers, and educational pedagogy experts. Are we doing enough to be ready...?



Updates from the training desk

Curriculum Enhancement workshop@VBERC

A five days residential workshop was organised in Udaipur at Vidya Bhawan Education Resource Centre(VBERC). The objective of the workshop was curriculum review and enhancement. IIMPACT for quite some time now has been reviewing the learning outcomes and academic documents to ensure quality education. In this effort IIMPACT has collaborated with VBERC who will help IIMPACT develop an effective and robust curriculum. This workshop took place in the last week of October, members from the IIMPACT academic and programmes team attending the workshop found it an extremely useful learning experience. Some broad areas addressed in the sessions were...

- Nature and Perspective of Language
- Nature and Perspective of Mathematics
- Education perspective related topics
- Content of Language and Mathematics
- Connection of all the discussion with Curriculum and syllabus
- Broder structure of Curriculum

This workshop was definitely a major stepping stone toward IIMPACT's work on quality enhancement.

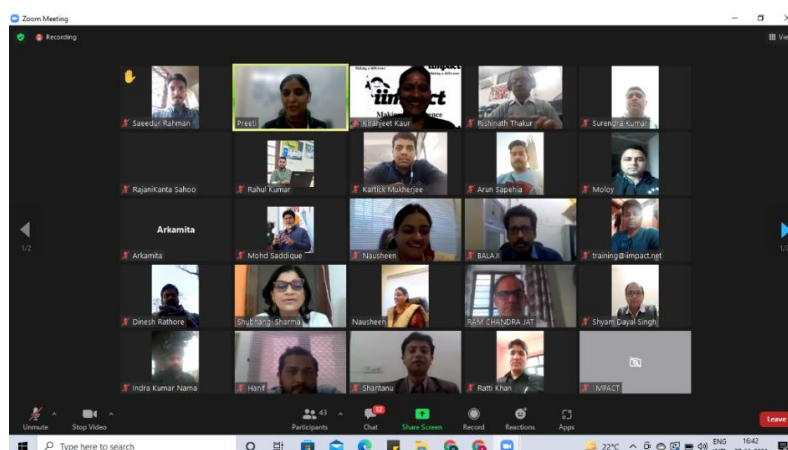


Webinar on Reinforcement of POSH/ASH Policy

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act and Rules, 2013 (“Law”) mandates every Employer to “provide a safe working environment at the workplace which shall include safety from the persons coming into contact at the workplace”. As an organisation working with women and girls, IIMPACT is duty bound to understand the policy threadbare and its various provisions which is not gender neutral and exclusively meant to protect women from all kind of indignities and sexual harassment at work places. On 27 November a webinar was organized on POSH/ASH policy for all the IIMPACT staff. The webinar was facilitated by Advocate Nausheen Yousuf who takes up cases at the High Court at its Original and Appellate Jurisdiction. Nausheen has been conducting trainings on this important topic for the State and Non-State Stakeholders under the Domestic Violence Act and Muslim Women Act across Maharashtra. Her sessions cover a wide range of audience including judicial officers ,protection officers, NGOs, CBOs, colleges, corporates, teachers, professors and many others.



The webinar was an extremely engaging one where participants were divided in to four groups and case studies were discussed thoroughly. An important policy was discussed and put forward simply by Advocate Yousuf’s excellent facilitation skills.



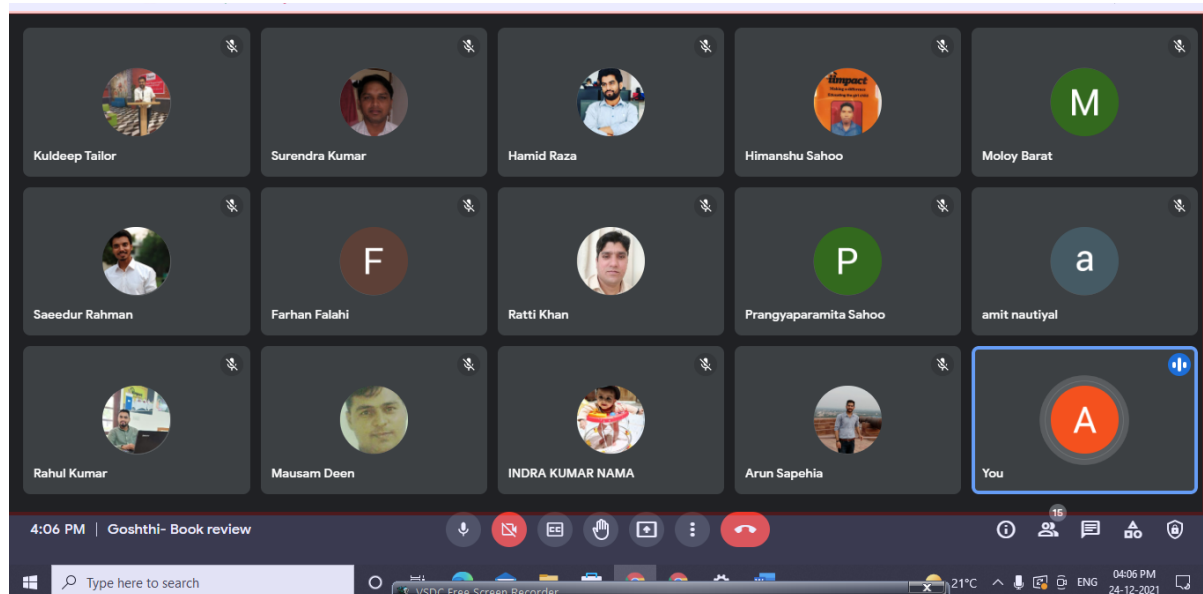
The online complaint box for sexual harassment at work, 2017 received 600 complaint cases in 2 years. According to the report given by economic times, women in the informal sector rarely file a complaint of sexual harassment due to the fear of losing jobs and their family members would stop them from working.

Goshthi – Book Review

‘Books are the quietest and most constant of friends: they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers’ – Charles.W.Elio.

Goshthi, which started initially as a platform for IIMPACT colleagues to interact and learn by sharing their experiences, expanded its scope last quarter with a series of “expert talks” has further evolved into a voluntary forum where IIMPACT team members would participate in a book or article review and reflection led by a volunteer. As people working in social and development sector, everyone in IIMPACT is encouraged to read books, articles, journals. There are some avid readers and storytellers in the team as well. Goshthi this quarter provided the platform to talk about what we have read.

The Book Review series started with it’s first online session on 24 December with reflection on the book Padhna zara Sochna by Prof. Krishna Kumar



“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about” - Margaret.J.Wheatley

The community is an extremely important stakeholder in IIMPACT's programme. The Learning Centres operate in collaboration and with the support of the community. There are plenty of stories which shows how IIMPACT creates building blocks towards it's vision...a vision to transform the lives of women, families and entire communities in India by educating and empowering the girls in those communities. The goal is to form a more facilitative and supportive environment in the villages for girls' education.

Bankura and Purulia are two adjacent districts of West Bengal with 210 Learning Centres operating in the remote villages. In this edition we bring you two community stories from these two districts

Bhootghar - The abandoned house

“Allah Hu Akbar.....” little girls of Damda clearly hear the Azaan and get ready for their morning prayers to commence while their parents like other villagers get ready for their daily work. As dawn breaks the girls start preparing for their Madrasa School which is the only option for poor Muslim families to provide their children with basic education. Also, the Madrasa serves as a safe space for preservation and upholding the Islamic culture. Around 9.30 am on the way back to their homes the girls see strangers interacting with their family members and come to know that from the CESR office a learning centre will be established here with the help of an organization called IIMPACT under their Girl Child Education programme.

The villagers of Damda were quite welcoming when they came to know that the IIMPACT Learning Centre would add to their children's education in a joyful way.

Making a difference

Rima Mahato had been appointed as a teacher by IIMPACT to run the LC. Initially Rima had reservations, as the locality had an ill repute for being a haven of thieves. She began by scouting for a place for the LC. It was a big challenge because the villagers themselves stayed in their own single or double bedroom accommodations. It was difficult for them to vacate a room for the LC. So



Rima began taking classes in an open strip adjoining a house. She found it difficult to display the lesson boards and the girls were wary of performing activities in an open space. So, she convened CMC and PTM meetings to finding a place where she could freely run an LC. She suggested an abandoned room that she had found. The parents and the children were very averse to that idea because this room, commonly known as 'Bhootghar' (an abode of ghosts) was believed to be haunted. There was no roof on that room. Rima found out from the civic volunteers that after dark groups of anti-socials gathered in that place and created ruckus.

Rima was determined to pursue her idea of converting this 'Bhootghar' into a learning center which would pave the way to banish the stigma of superstition and free up the space from the grip of anti-social activities. The women of the community took up the initiative of collected small donations from the village and two masons voluntarily come forward to lay the roof and repair the walls. Women also actively helped with the construction and after about two months the girls could not recognize their 'Bhootghar' that was transformed into a place where they would study.



The Learning Centre continues on its journey with the help of tested training content and Jodogyan kits aided by various activities involving the children. These make the sessions eventful which have been successful in attracting the girls

in large numbers. Today, more than 50 children regularly attend the LC. The interest has given rise to a demand for additional learning centres to meet the needs of ever increasing student numbers. As a result two additional learning centres have been created in the village of Damda in Purulia.

The Story of Nandigram

The Location:

The flood prone village of Nandigram sits in the main block of West Bengal's Bankura district, which is widely known for its red soil. Nandigram is home to a community of 50 small families, with the river Darkeshwar flowing by the village. Over time, with the increase of population, joint families have broken up into separate smaller families as an effect of modernization and urbanization in this small part of the country.

The Hurdles and the Achievements:

The men of the community mainly earn their living through daily labor. The women are responsible for household chores. They also assist the men in their daily labor, agricultural work or other heavy work like construction. Some occasionally try finding small jobs in nearby towns.

However, the people of this hardworking community are still far behind when it comes to progress of education. 80% of the people in the village are illiterate, thus making it hard for them to figure out ways of improving their socio-economic situation.

Rupa Chatterjee, who has been teaching at the Girl Child Education Center run by IIMPACT in Nandigram since 2016, was one of the first to visit the village as a teacher. During her initial days with the community, she found it difficult to come to terms with the dire socio-economic condition of the families. But she was grateful about the sense of faith the people gradually showed her. They came to trust that the initiative would create better opportunities for their children. Maybe, over time, they sensed that, even if they themselves were illiterate, the teacher could make the lives of their daughters better by spreading the light of education.



In the beginning, the villagers had no awareness of the functionality and necessity of the center. They had scant information about the outside world and were intimately involved with the events of their daily lives to care much. Even long after the center was opened, the parents of the children did not know what subjects were taught at the center, or how much the students were involved in the practice of dancing, singing, and sports that played vital roles in the holistic learning of an individual.

So as Rupa would observe - "As the days passed, I began to think that without change, a society would not be able to function as it should. I started thinking about how I could make the parents more aware. I decided that a good way would be to go from door to door and discuss with the parents the difference education could make in the lives of their children."

Rupa tried to explain to the parents that in today's world, manual labor and how much one could give it, was not the sole deciding factor for sustenance. She shared information with the Nandigram community that illustrated how women of today can have better lives as a result of proper education. However, the path to acceptance was not easy.

Girls of this community still had to do a lot of housework. They had to take part in cooking for their parents, feeding their younger siblings, fetching water and in numerous other daily drivel to run their homes.

The parents being mostly away on work could hardly pay attention to the child's education. So, at the start, there were only about 8 to 10 children coming to the learning center in a single day. But now, Rupa has been able to bring all the children in the community to the center through convincing them regularly about the efficacy of attendance and the learning methodology. Now they know that noon means the time for them to go to their center as a group. Thus was overcome one of the first hurdles Rupa faced – that of bringing the kids to attend.

Next, she focused on the children's learning abilities. Gradually the children were taken through elementary education and they learnt to read and explain the meanings of the lessons and do basic math. Those who could not earlier identify the letters of the alphabet, now could read out from books with correct pronunciation. Being able to cross these small levels was a big victory for every child in that community and for Rupa.

The adults also gradually evolved. They were now more particular about having their children visit the learning center and also about them devoting time at home to study. Parents participated in the Centre's various events, especially Children's Day, Independence

Day and other similar celebrations to encourage their children. Today, if a child misses classes on a regular basis, the CMC members along with the teacher, visit the house of that child to resolve underlying issues.

There are many more such achievements that have been gained through the help of IIMPACT GCEP. This project has also helped build a bond of fraternity and has created a sense of philanthropy within the community. It has provided everyone with an impetus to re-evaluate the future of the next generation.



Students of Nandigram LC



Partner Dialogue for Reflective Action

A three day Residential partner dialogue was organised in Dehradun from 14 to 16 December 2021. The dialogue was the first among the 3 Partner Dialogues that have been planned in various locations this year. The purpose of this dialogue was to update each other on the progress and health of the girl child Education Program so far and also engage in interaction around the challenges, areas of improvement, future directions, and reflective actions required to be taken to value add to the intervention. Each partner organisation is an esteemed collaborator in the implementation of GCEP, and a valuable contributor to its growth, efficacy, and effectiveness in changing the lives of so many girls and communities. The meet was an attempt to collectively reflect on the situation, collectively discuss and agree on the actions required that can help us in getting a clearer path moving ahead.

The dialogue was attended by Advisors and Project coordinators of seven Partner Organisations working in Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Haryana along with the IIMPACT field team of the respective region and senior management from the head office. President and Treasure from the IIMPACT board also joined in virtually. The sessions were extremely interactive with a lot of concrete feedbacks and suggestions. The first two days discussions were on programmes and operations while the third day was solely on finance. The accountants from the partner team attended Day 3 for the finance sessions.

A fruitful and constructive 3 days ended with thank you notes and a swearing of Oath on ASH and POSCO



Partners who participated

SPECTRA
PAPN
IDS
MVDA
DISHA
SUDHA

New Year is a time to reflect on the year that went by, and plan for the upcoming one with new goals and a renewed enthusiasm.

Our Resolutions for the year 2022.....



"Wishes are possibilities. Dare to make a wish" – Lailah Gifty Akita



“Educate a girl and she will change the world”



IIMPACT's journey so far has been extremely rewarding. Starting with a mere 20 girls, today we have **60,000** students in **1500** villages. Another **45000** girls have completed their education

However, there are millions of girls who are still uneducated. Only quality education can help them to come out of poverty and give them a chance to lead a better life. If we can't continue their education, they will be put into child labour, forced into child marriage or even sold off.

We just can't allow that to happen. Join hands with IIMPACT , together let's make a difference

Get Involved! The girls need your help

DONATE NOW!

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