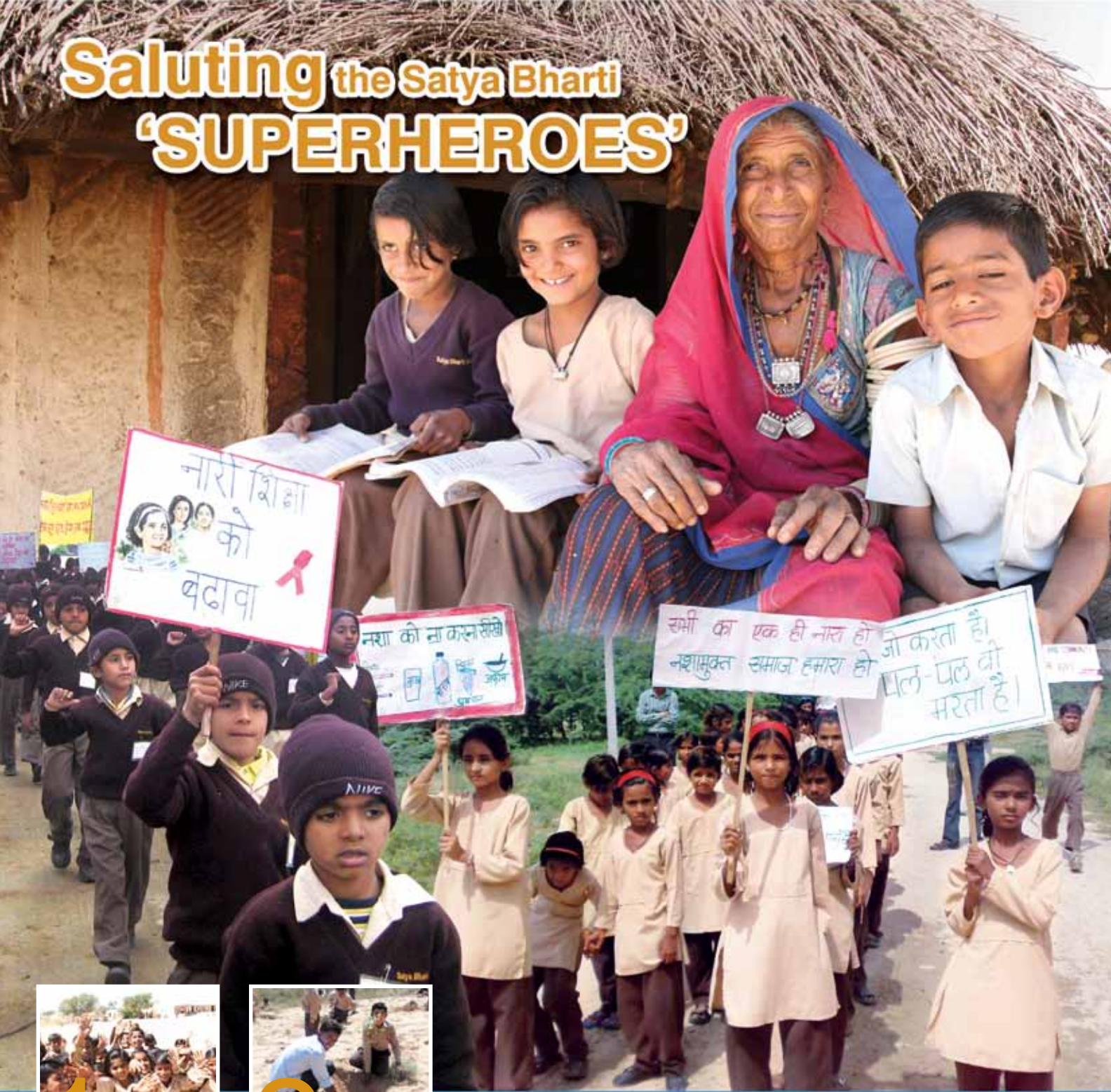


voice of change

ISSUE 4, DECEMBER 2011

Saluting the Satya Bharti 'SUPERHEROES'

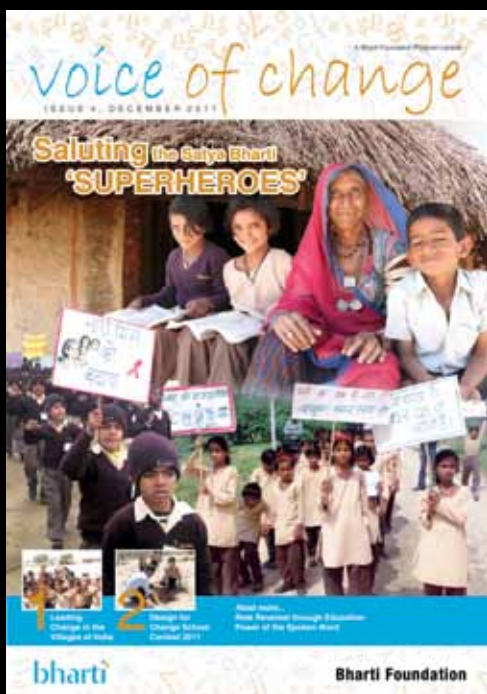


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2 Design for Change School Contest 2011

Read more...
 Role Reversal through Education
 Power of the Spoken Word



From the CEO's Desk

Dear Friends,

Season's Greetings.

This issue of 'Voice of Change' is special because it pays tribute to Satya Bharti School students who are the real 'Superheroes of Change' and documents the accolades won by them at the *Design for Change School Contest 2011*. It highlights various causes that our students have taken on in real life such as child marriages, girl child education, alcohol and substance abuse, adult literacy, amongst others; and have brought about a perceptible transformation in their communities. Student achievements such as these reaffirm our belief in the program's objective of holistic development of children.

I feel particularly proud to share these stories with you because I believe that these children will catalyse the movement to bring about the much needed change for the betterment of our nation and the world – an area where we perhaps have left much to be desired. We continue to have faith that our students will imbibe the basic values inherent in our brand – 'Satya' and 'Bharti' connoting truth, integrity, honesty, country, patriotism and being Indian in all its manifestations.

Please join me in wishing them the very best for all their future endeavours. As always, I look forward to your feedback and suggestions.

Warm Regards

Vijay Chadda
Chief Executive Officer
Bharti Foundation

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Leading Change in the Villages of India

With each passing year at the Satya Bharti Schools, our students continue to cross milestones and make an indelible positive impact on the lives of all those around them.

The Satya Bharti School students play the role of change-agents in their villages by raising their voice against societal issues of concern. Our students lead various *Community Development Campaigns* to usher in a positive change that not only involves their teachers and parents but also their village-community at large. The *Design for Change School Contest 2011* witnessed the success of 12 such Satya Bharti Schools whose call for action was not only heard but also brought about a social transformation.

The *Community Development Campaigns*, an intrinsic curricular component, provides opportunities to our students to interact closely with their surroundings, people, local culture and history. With a constant focus on holistic development of children, the Satya Bharti School Program builds in them a sense of pride, ownership and responsibility towards their own society.

Our teachers form the pivot around which the curricular and co-curricular initiatives of the program have been built. They not only mentor, but are also role-models in our students' journey to grow into educated and socially responsible citizens of tomorrow. Through regular training processes, we aim to groom our teachers to be aware and sensitive facilitators and guides for the students.

Program Statistics

Number of Operational Schools : **253 (236 Primary, 12 Elementary and five Senior Secondary)**

Number of Students Enrolled* : **33,197**

Percentage of Girls : **48%**

Percentage of Children from SC/ST/OBC Categories : **76%**

Number of Teachers : **1,337**

*Data as on November 30, 2011

The Satya Bharti School Program is the flagship initiative of Bharti Foundation to provide free quality education to underprivileged and marginalized children, especially the girl child, in the villages of India. Currently, we have 253 schools (236 primary, 12 elementary and five senior secondary schools) operating in the states of Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, reaching out to over 33,000 children. Working closely with the community, our partners, government authorities and like-minded organizations, we intend to create scalable, sustainable and replicable models of quality education in our country.

Mamta Saikia
Head - Development & Alliances
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Students planted saplings on the dunes in Belwa Ranaji

Defeating the Thar

Campaign: Plantation Drive - A March against Desert March
School: Satya Bharti School, Belwa Ranaji, Rajasthan
Number of Student Participants: 26 students of Class V
Winning Category: Jury Mention

Students carry out a plantation drive on the sand dunes in Belwa Ranaji

Belwa Ranaji is a small village situated in Western Rajasthan, amidst sand dunes and barren hills. Far from basic amenities like infrastructure and transport, it remains cut-off from most of Rajasthan and the rest of the country, earning its livelihood primarily through farming and animal husbandry.

Year after year, Belwa Ranaji faces the harmful advancement of sand dunes that consume the fertile agricultural lands, hills and water tanks during the summer months and also make transportation difficult. The students of the Satya Bharti School in the village thus undertook the challenge against this desert march and deduced that the only way the harmful effects of the desert march could be averted was through large-scale plantation in and around the sand dunes.

The campaign was initiated with an awareness program on desert march and by garnering community-support. The Satya Bharti School students focussed on motivating the Panchayat members and sensitising the villagers to support the drive. The Sarpanch of Belwa Ranaji was highly impressed by the initiative and sanctioned 300 free saplings from the government nursery for the

plantation drive. The screening of a video-clip on desert march and discussions on its adverse effects helped inspire the residents of the village and they rallied alongside the Satya Bharti School students. Flagged off by the Sarpanch, the students and community members carried out plantations in and around the sand dunes. Motivated by the cause, the students and teachers of the government school in the village also joined in large numbers.

Impact of the Campaign

The 'March against Desert March' Campaign has been a huge success in Belwa Ranaji. While the impact of the plantations on the environment is a long-drawn process, the signs of it are already visible, even at this early stage. The student-initiative has created awareness and mobilised the entire village to understand the grave concern and work towards an effective solution. Declaration of the dune as protected land, by the village Sarpanch, is also under process. This ongoing campaign will require continued efforts and the Satya Bharti School students are determined to continue the plantations and provide a 'green' cover to the desert.

“I had heard about Government programs to prevent the deserts from expanding, but had never thought of such an initiative. These children have done a wonderful job in sensitising us to implement such a program. I am also planning to meet the Forest Department officials to discuss the declaration of this area as Reserved Land.”

– Mr. Khet Singh, Sarpanch of Belwa Ranaji



Power of the Spoken Word

Campaign: Positive Behavioural Transformation - Meethi Boli Boliye, Khushiyon ki Thaili Kholiye

School: Satya Bharti School, Marena Wangar, Uttar Pradesh

Number of Student Participants: 31 students of Class V

Winning Category: Top 20

Students bring about behavioural transformation in Marena Wangar

“I realized that it was important to support the students and compel the community to be respectful. Our combined efforts led to the success of the campaign.”

- Mr. Dharam Prasad, Sarpanch of Marena Wangar and a surrendered dacoit

Students launch a campaign in Marena Wangar to reiterate the significance of good behaviour

Marena Wangar houses a populace that is economically weak and migratory. The village, located on the banks of the River Ram Ganga, is flooded during the monsoons every year, cutting it off from nearby areas. This physical disturbance only adds to the history of criminal activities of the area and is reflected in people's conduct and lack of respect for others.

The Satya Bharti School in Marena Wangar has, however, continued to focus on positive behavioural transformation of students. Its importance was only reinstated when the students met with children from other schools and realised that good behaviour earned them the respect of others. The campaign on polite behaviour was thus launched by the students of the Satya Bharti School in the village and targeted the community and especially the out-of-school working children prone to anti-social behaviour.

As part of the campaign, a workable code of conduct was formulated and the students and community members were required to abide by this rule and display basic etiquette. The students also identified prevalent obscenities and sought the support of the Panchayat to tackle it. They undertook rallies, street plays and demonstrations of upright behaviour to sensitise people. They also put up slogans appealing for polite behaviour and popularised words like 'please', 'sorry' and 'thank you' by gifting sweets and roses to children and elders on their usage. The challenge of the campaign however, was interacting with the out-of-school children. It was with the Sarpanch's help, that the students carried out special team-building activities with these children to explain the significance of healthy and good practices.

Impact of the Campaign

The campaign registered significant impact with the residents of Marena Wangar pledging to practice socially acceptable behaviour. Post the campaign, the student community has remained in constant touch with the community to assess their progress and also organises workshops on social etiquette for the villagers.

Building Ties through Sports

Campaign: Peace Initiative - Zindagi Mile Nahi Dobaara

School: Satya Bharti School, Kurria Kalan, Uttar Pradesh

Number of Student Participants: 26 students of Class V

Winning Category: Top 20

Students appeal to the villagers of Kurria Kalan to forsake their enmity

The age old rivalry amongst villagers in Kurria Kalan saw people belonging to different castes and sub-castes committing repeated crimes against each other. Children were often dragged into this cauldron of gang-wars and during school events they would openly display their hatred for each other, thereby disrupting school activities. As a result, parents refrained from sending their wards to school fearing clashes. The warring factions, however, least realised the futility of such hatred till the Satya Bharti School students in Kurria Kalan decided to use sports as a medium to knit the community together.

A student-survey conducted in the village, to gauge the extent of the problem, established that influential leaders were exploiting people's sentiments to fulfill their political intentions. The students of the Satya Bharti School in Kurria Kalan, therefore, started the campaign with a peace rally, appealing for dissolution of enmity. They met the police officials in charge of the village and the priest of the local temple to request them to motivate people. The campaign also involved individual home visits to share the intent, wherein students realised that the majority of the community desired peace. A play 'Zindagi Na Mile Dobaara'

Breaking Social Barriers

Campaign: Against Caste Discrimination

School: Satya Bharti Government Primary School, Labana, Rajasthan

Number of Student Participants: 17 students of Class V

Winning Category: Top 20



The village-community of Labana pledged to eradicate caste discrimination

Students launch a campaign to eliminate caste discrimination in Labana

The village of Labana in Rajasthan had, for long, remained divided on grounds of caste. People from the socially upward classes abstained from intermingling with people from the backward sections of society, who formed majority of the village population and were deprived of the facilities enjoyed by the rest of the village. As a result, people from the backward

communities believed that their children too would face discriminatory behaviour by upper class children and teachers in school and thus refrained from sending them to school. Furthermore, they were of the opinion that educating their children would serve no purpose as they would also have to do the same menial jobs as their parents.



Students used sports to unite Kurria Kalan

was then staged in the *chaupal* emphasising the importance of mutual love and highlighting the loss incurred because of the feuds.

The Satya Bharti School in the village also organised a Cricket Match, aptly named the 'Shanti Cup' which witnessed children from warring families playing in the same team. A post-match tea-party helped the community interact on a neutral ground, thereby helping them understand the significance of non-violence.

Impact of the Campaign

The student-campaign is the first instance of a peace-effort in Kurria Kalan. Motivated by this student-initiative, the village Panchayat passed a resolution in Kurria Kalan to resolve conflicting issues and help bind the feuding families. The Sarpanch of the neighboring Palhora village has also come forth in support of the Satya Bharti School students and has formed a 'Sadbhavana Committee' to promote unity.

"Our children have opened our eyes. We will now take this initiative forward"
- Mr. Ram Singh, resident of Kurria Kalan

It was to fight this social prejudice that the students of the Satya Bharti School in Labana decided to undertake a campaign to eliminate caste discrimination in the village and unite the community. The students conducted a march through the village and went door-to-door explaining the adversities of such biases, persuading the residents to join hands for an equitable

"We are immensely happy that our children have become so confident so as to lead a movement for social good. Children who refrained from expressing themselves are motivating the entire village."

- Mr. Mahendra Sharma, resident of Labana

society. Specially designed posters, seeking support, were pasted on village walls and parents were requested to send their wards to school, convincing them that their children would not suffer any inappropriate behaviour there. Faced with initial disagreement and community flare-ups, the students undertook a vow for silence till the entire village-community pledged their participation in the cause.

Impact of the Campaign

The strong determination of the Satya Bharti School students against caste discrimination has compelled the village-community to come forth in support of their campaign. The parents have also promised to send their children to school and this has resulted in more than 109 students from the backward communities getting enrolled in the Satya Bharti School in Labana. Awareness programs are being continued during the parent-teacher meetings and community service weeks. It is through this campaign that the students have been successful in bringing together a vastly separated village-community.

Rebuilding Her Dreams

Campaign: Against Child Marriage - Mamta se Motivation

School: Satya Bharti School, Ladhawal, Punjab
Number of Student Participants: 28 students of Class V

Winning Category: Top 66

An attempt by students to prevent the marriage of their 11 year old classmate, Mamta

Mamta is an academically bright student of Class V of the Satya Bharti School in Ladhawal. It is her dream to complete her education and join the police force. However, this dream faced a road-block when her parents decided to get her married at the tender age of 11. Heartbroken, Mamta shared her agony with fellow students and teachers at school, who were determined to fight for her rights.

Together with her classmates, Mamta conceptualised a play citing the evils of child marriage and highlighting it as a criminal offence. Through this play, the students appealed to the community to stop child marriage in the village and send their daughters to school. They also conducted rallies in the village, putting forth their opposition to child marriage. Mamta's parents, forced by the campaign and the subsequent pressure of the community members, eventually called off her wedding.

Impact of the Campaign

The students of Satya Bharti School succeeded in creating awareness on the ill-effects, both physical and emotional, of early marriage on young girls. This consciousness has motivated the village community to put an end to the practice of child marriage in Ladhawal.



Students appealed to stop child marriages in Ladhawal



Instilling Noble Habits

Campaign: Setting Up of Community Book Club

School: Satya Bharti School, Teek, Haryana

Number of Student Participants: All students of Class V

Winning Category: Top 66

Students set up a Community Book Club in Teek to inculcate the habit of reading in villagers

The village of Teek had no book clubs or libraries. While majority of the village population is illiterate, the ones who are educated also did not get the opportunity to read books. Seeing this lacuna, the students of the Satya Bharti School in Teek decided to establish a book-club in the village where the community could spend quality time reading books and thereby, a culture of knowledge-sharing could be brought about.

The students explained their intent to the Panchayat and were duly sanctioned a room, free of cost, for the Community Book Club. The students then conducted a rally in the village to generate interest in reading through slogans like "Padho aur padao, jeewan ko samridh banao". Moreover, the students carried out a book-donation drive to collect books from villagers, scrap dealers and other Satya Bharti Schools in the vicinity. They also requested the residents to contribute their daily newspapers to the club. Seeing the enthusiasm of the students, community members also came forward and donated furniture to the club.

Impact of the Campaign

The Community Book Club has succeeded in drawing the local populace in large numbers to visit the club regularly, read books and interact with fellow villagers.



The Community Book Club in Teek has instilled a love for reading

Equity through Education

Campaign: Girl Child Education
School: Satya Bharti School, Balliyewal, Punjab
Number of Student Participants: All students of Class V
Winning Category: Top 66

Students advocate the education of girls in Balliyewal

In Balliyewal, Punjab, the community is averse to educating girls. During a survey conducted in the village by the Satya Bharti School students, it came to light that the majority of girls either have never attended school or have discontinued their education after Class V. In most cases, this was due to the disapproval of their parents or the absence of secondary schools in the village.

Disturbed by this finding, the students of the Satya Bharti School in Balliyewal undertook a campaign to enlighten the community on the significance of educating girls. As a part of the campaign, the students conducted an awareness march across the village and painted the village walls with slogans upholding girl child education. They also staged *nukkad nataks* reiterating the message that an educated girl is an asset for her family and the society at large.

Impact of the Campaign

The campaign, undertaken by the Satya Bharti School students, has inspired the community to educate the girls in the village and also support their higher education. Post the campaign, parents have also started sending their daughters to the weekend classes, conducted by the Satya Bharti School in Balliyewal to impart basic learning.

Safeguarding the Environment

Campaign: Village Sanitation Drive
School: Satya Bharti School, Bakali, Haryana
Number of Student Participants: All students of Class V
Winning Category: Top 66

Students uphold cleanliness practices through a village sanitation campaign

The village of Bakali in Haryana bore an unhealthy look because of the careless attitude of its residents towards sanitation. The village pathways were filled with garbage and bio-waste, giving rise to illness and discomfort. As a result, students often fell ill and missed school. It was to tackle this concern that the students of the Satya Bharti School in the village decided to create awareness on cleanliness practices in the community.

Mass rallies were organised by the students of Class V and meetings were conducted with the community. The students also held counselling sessions to

include those who had distanced themselves from the campaign. Leading by practice, the students undertook the cleaning process themselves, demonstrating to the community the need to stay clean and germ-free.

Impact of the Campaign

The cleanliness campaign has had remarkable impact on the village. People are now aware of the health hazards of improper disposal of garbage and therefore dispose waste in farms located outside the village. The students of the Satya Bharti School in Bakali also continue their home visits and meetings with the objective of making 'cleanliness' a habit in the village.



Students upheld healthy sanitation practices in Bakali

Creating Healthy Spaces

Campaign: Promoting the Use of Toilets
School: Satya Bharti Government Upper Primary School, Basai Bhopal Singh, Rajasthan
Number of Student Participants: Five students of Class VII and VIII
Winning Category: Top 66



Students upheld hygienic sanitation practices

Students teach hygiene and sanitation practices to the community members of Basai Bhopal Singh

In Basai Bhopal Singh, the villagers used public spaces, including the area around the Satya Bharti School, to relieve themselves. This had adverse effects on health and hygiene in the village, especially on children. The Satya Bharti School students in the village therefore undertook the responsibility of educating the community on the ill-effects of this ignorant practice and reiterating the need for toilets in every house.

As a part of the campaign, students designed posters on the cause and organised a rally to generate awareness on the need for a clean village. They held meetings with the community and counselled people

through personal home visits. The students also staged a play on the cause to motivate the villagers.

Impact of the Campaign

Seeing these student initiatives, the villagers have pledged to forsake the practice of using public spaces as toilets. The Panchayat has taken the initiative forward by commissioning slogans on cleanliness to be painted on village walls to constantly remind people of hygienic sanitation practices. In the months to come, the students of the Satya Bharti School will continue the campaign through periodic reviews and informative sessions on low cost toilets.

Cultivating Social Responsibility

Campaign: Alcohol De-Addiction Initiative - Nasha Mukti
School: Satya Bharti School, Mohanpur, Haryana
Number of Student Participants: 14 students of Class V
Winning Category: Top 66



Students staged a play in Mohanpur on the evils of addiction

In Mohanpur, students launch a campaign to rid the community of alcohol addiction

The rampant addiction of alcohol in Mohanpur has significantly deteriorated the economic and social conditions of the village. The men folk splurge their earnings on drinking, putting the burden of managing the home on the women. Being witness to such grave conditions since long, the Class V students of the Satya Bharti School in the village, decided to launch the 'Nasha Mukti' campaign to put an end to this practice. The Sarpanch assured his support to the student-campaign and egged them on to implement it in the village.

The campaign started with a student-rally, followed by community-meetings and individual counselling sessions with the villagers. A play was also staged

by the students at the village *chaupal* to make the residents aware of the social and familial outcomes of addiction. The students also painted de-addiction slogans on the village walls.

Impact of the Campaign

As a result of the campaign, the people of Mohanpur have realised their responsibilities and have pledged to free themselves from the clutches of alcohol. They also expressed their gratitude to the Satya Bharti student 'leaders of change' for inspiring them to strive for their social and economic betterment.



Students persuaded the residents of Bawarla to forsake addiction

Plummeting Crime through De-Addiction

Campaign: De-Addiction Program for Alcohol and Substance Abuse

School: Satya Bharti School, Bawarla, Rajasthan

Number of Student Participants: 15 students of Class V

Winning Category: Top 66

Students take on the evils of substance abuse and its associated problems

In the village of Bawarla in Rajasthan, a considerable proportion of the population is addicted to alcohol and substance, leading to an increased crime rate in the village. It is to tackle this problem and ensure safety for all, that the Class V students of the Satya Bharti School in the village initiated a campaign to battle this grave concern that faces them.

As a first step, the students organised a meeting with the Panchayat and senior members of the community for their assistance in compelling the villagers to give up their addictions. They also carried out awareness rallies in Bawarla and face-to-face meetings with people to convince them of the ill-effects of their habits.

Impact of the Campaign

Residents of the village, highly moved by the student-initiative, signed an oath to counter this evil plaguing their society. While a complete close-down has yet not been possible, the campaign has affected a change of mindset in the community members. The Satya Bharti School students are, however, determined to carry on the campaign till the village is completely ridden of addicts.

Design for Change School Contest 2011 Award Ceremony

Ahmadabad, November 2011

Students, from the winning schools across the country, gathered at the Riverside School in Ahmadabad for the Design for Change School Contest 2011 Prize Distribution Ceremony. Spread over two days, the event included an exclusive Interactive Session with actor Rahul Bose and Ms Kiran Bir Sethi (Founder/Director Riverside School, India) on November 26, 2011 and the Award Ceremony on November 27, 2011. The Satya Bharti School student winners of DFC 2011 shared their campaign experiences and learning during the Interactive Session on the 26th and were applauded and complimented by all present on the success of their community development endeavours. The next day, the students were handed over their awards by Mr. Shashi Tharoor (Member of Parliament and former Minister of State for External Affairs), who spoke to our students and motivated them to continue their efforts for social betterment.





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