

voice of change

ISSUE 16, MARCH 2017

Empowering the Girl Child Across Rural India

I Can

Therefore

I Am

FROM THE CEO'S DESK



Dear Friends,

This Voice of Change edition focuses on an issue that is very close to our hearts. The Satya Bharti School Program was initiated over a decade ago to provide free quality education to underprivileged children in rural India with a special focus on the girl child. Some of the inspiring stories of girl students impacted by the holistic education content and approach in our schools are captured here.

The **Satya Bharti Girl Child philosophy** is embedded in all our programs; with interventions directed towards ensuring that no girl child remains out of school in the regions where Bharti Foundation is operational. A Satya Bharti School environment is geared to supplement this by remaining sensitive to the effective inclusion of the girl child and creating special platforms for recognition of girl achievers. Teachers are trained to encourage girl students to believe in themselves and follow their dreams. Under every initiative, the emphasis on safety and other needs of girl children remains vital. Further, as active stakeholders, parents are encouraged to take pride in their daughters and provide them with opportunities to be self-sufficient. This approach is highly relevant in the rural context where our schools operate and is gaining greater traction through our Satya Bharti Quality Support and Satya Bharti Learning Centre Programs active in Government schools.

It is gratifying to see girl students emerge as role models and change agents as they excel both in academics and spearhead social change through community campaigns. I take this opportunity to invite you to visit our schools and centres to witness firsthand, the daily triumphs and social transformation being brought about by our girl students in 11 states across rural India.

Jai Hind!

Vijay Chadda
CEO
Bharti Foundation

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EDUCATING TO EMPOWER, INSPIRE AND ENABLE

A young girl, carefree, confident, capable; knowing she has her own place in the sun and is unafraid to seek is the vision that India cherishes today. At Bharti Foundation, a focus on the girl child has formed the basis of our education programs and community interventions since inception. We have ensured concerted efforts towards enrolment, continued education, safety and empowerment of the girl child. Our flagship initiative, the Satya Bharti Schools as well as our Government School initiatives provide ample opportunities to girls to fulfil their quest for quality education, helping them become contributing citizens of the country.

The sustainability of any development program is embedded in the engagement of and acceptance within the community. We have therefore developed a **4E approach** with the first being - **Environment** around girls; be it schools, the community, her parents, teachers or peers. Each of these important stakeholders are sensitised, engaged and encouraged to participate, build accountability and understanding of their respective roles. It is imperative that we bring together all of the above influencers as cohorts for accelerated impact. Very often, parents request us to upgrade our primary schools to elementary and even secondary levels quoting the confidence and reassurance that they have with regard to safety, respect and encouragement that their daughters receive in our schools.

The second 'E' - **Enrolment**, is a natural progression of the first. Structured identification, intervention and enrolment processes tempered with sensitivity in community engagement; have led to **substantial enrolment of girl children** in our clusters with much **lower dropouts** in the course of the school year. The inclusion and support of Panchayat members in the identification of out-of-school girls as well as awareness generation activities in the community have also played significant roles in increasing enrolment. The **49% girl child enrolment in Satya Bharti schools** demonstrates the impact of all of the above processes, while 53% of our **female teachers as role models** in the schools, ably guide and mentor our girl students.

To help girl students achieve their potential and fulfil life's aspirations, there is a strong focus on the third 'E' - **Education**. The holistic education program followed at the Satya Bharti Schools begins with bolstering the communication skills of the students who are also taught leadership, problem solving and life skills that stand them in good stead. Community campaigns carried out and often led by our girl students build

awareness; allowing them to explore the potential of their influence and voice while infusing a sense of self worth. Education is imparted by well-trained teachers using activity and project based teaching techniques, ensuring active participation and engagement with learning processes. Monitoring systems combined with ongoing assessments gauge learning levels at regular intervals. The Foundation's educational intervention closes the loop with soft as well as other 21st century skills to ensure employability. It is noteworthy that **96% of parents with a girl child studying at Satya Bharti Schools want her to pursue higher education beyond schooling as against 73.7% parents with daughters in other schools.**¹

The fourth 'E' of **Encouragement** is exemplified by our girls, as they reaffirm their belief in themselves, learn to take on leadership and decision-making roles, represent their village, district, state and country with élan; bringing home laurels and recognition. The Foundation's own systems for recognition in academics, sports and cultural achievements boosts the spirit of our girl students. While Student Councils create an opportunity to develop young community leaders, **awards and certifications received from various platforms such as Design for Change, Pramerica Spirit of Community Awards and Aspire Inspire - Global Citizens in the Making** bear testimony to their efforts at national and international levels.

These four 'E's create the groundwork for **Empowerment** - through knowledge, skill building, engagement and enablement that in turn leads to enthusiasm, taste for success and self-belief. **Community Outreach, Adolescent Education and Safety norms tied to Gender Sensitivity programs** serve to strengthen our Girl Child friendly standards in schools.

Our commitment is renewed each year by the fact that our girls have emerged as leaders within their schools as well as communities. This year we have partnered with **Girl Rising India Foundation** and are synergizing efforts with the **Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao** campaign to create opportunities for all our girls. This newsletter contains inspiring case-stories of our girl students personifying 'Beti'- the indomitable girl child of India.

Mamta Saikia
COO
Bharti Foundation

¹ Social Impact Assessment of Satya Bharti School Program - Report by EY



Change Ambassador

Parents and community members in the village of Balia were growing concerned with the increasing incidents of eve-teasing and assault on women arising from the prevalence of substance abuse in the village. In this scenario, parents of girls were hesitant to send their daughters to school without an escort. Seeing no immediate solution and sensing an urgency to protect their daughters several parents started withdrawing their daughters from school and worse, they began to marry them off at a young age.

Parents of young Geeta Devi, student of Satya Bharti Elementary School, Balia were also among this growing group of concerned parents. Upon learning of her parents plans to get her married at the tender age of 16, Geeta decided to resist this move. She tried hard to dissuade her parents from making her quit her education. With truth on her side, she passionately explained the benefits of studying and the unmitigated risks of child marriage.

However, her parents' minds remained swayed by the popular opinion of the community; completely overriding young Geeta's pleas. She was not disheartened, instead she decided to influence their thought by rallying the support of other girls who were in the same situation.

“ My fight against child marriage is a fight for my community ”

- Geeta Devi,
Student, Satya Bharti
Elementary School, Balia,
Sangrur (Punjab)



Geeta mobilized these girls beginning with door-to-door campaigns to create awareness about the benefits of educating girl children. She also organised community discussions where she advocated finding a solution to the root of the problem, that of substance abuse, rather than imposing child marriage on them.

The girls' concerted efforts led to Geeta and many more girls going back to school to continue their education uninterrupted. Today not only the girls but even the community has been saved from the various ills that arise from child marriage. Geeta's transformation into a confident young girl has made her parents proud of her and they are supportive of her desire to become a Police Officer when she grows up.

*Story contributed by:
Ms. Parminder Kaur,
Head Teacher*

Change Ambassador



“ It is great to see my mother and other women of my community breathe clean air inside and outside our homes ”

- Jyoti Yogi,
Alumnus, Satya Bharti Upper
Primary School, Gunavata,
Amer (Rajasthan)



Villagers of Amer relied heavily on unclean fuel such as firewood and cow dung cakes for indoor cooking. The smoke from these fires adversely affected women's health. There was also a rising concern of deforestation expressed by the local forest department. Jyoti Yogi, a student of Satya Bharti School, Amer, attended a Swachh Bharat event organized by her school where she heard about the *Ujjwala Yojna*, a Government scheme under which underprivileged families are provided with Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders. She also learnt of the importance of using clean fuel and its impact on the environment.

Jyoti's teachers had taught her that the responsibility of caring for the environment lies with every citizen; on hearing the Sarpanch talk about the benefits of *Ujjwala Yojana*, Jyoti resolved that she would take on the challenge of creating awareness in the community and persuade families to avail of this win-win scheme.

Initially, her parents were not in favour of Jyoti's door-to-door campaign and they also feared that her studies would be neglected. They threatened to withdraw Jyoti from school, but she did not give up and continued to campaign extensively in her community. Her teachers came out in full support and also assured her parents that they would not let



her studies suffer by giving her extra lessons whenever needed. With this assurance, Jyoti's parents gave her their blessings to campaign under the guidance of her teachers.

Jyoti's resolve to increase awareness in the community led to many families applying for the scheme and even more families joining her in her campaign. Together they persuaded many villagers to gain benefit from the scheme. With the paradigm shift in place, the young activist has now moved focus back to her studies as she prepares for her Class VIII Rajasthan Board exams. Her community members regard her with pride as they continue to experience the positive change in their lives.

*Story contributed by:
Mr. Babu Lal Jangid,
Head Teacher*



Change Ambassador

On her daily route to school, 10-year old Jannat often caught sight of members from an underprivileged family who had no access to basic amenities such as individual sanitation facilities. In school, the lessons on sanitation and hygiene taught by her teachers had left an indelible impression on Jannat. While children from other schools averted their eyes, Jannat was concerned for the safety and health risks associated with open defecation that the lesser privileged family may already be facing. Armed with the encouragement of her teachers and confidence within herself, Jannat decided to bring about a change in the plight of the family.

On interacting with them she learnt that they were living in acute poverty and did not possess the financial resources required to build even a basic toilet. Left with no option but to relieve themselves outdoors, the family regularly suffered illness as well as humility arising from unsanitary conditions. Visits to the doctor, cost of medication and the consequent inability to earn their daily wages added a further strain on their limited resources. Jannat left their house with a heavy heart but also a deep resolve to help the family.

With encouragement from her teachers, Jannat walked up to the Sarpanch of their village during a school event where he

“I am proud to spread the message of sanitation learnt at school in my community”

-Jannat,
Student, Satya Bharti School, Udharhi, Kurukshetra (Haryana)



was invited as a chief guest. A determined Jannat explained the underprivileged family's socio-economic condition and the urgency of a community initiative in providing them a toilet. Moved by her impassioned plea, the Sarpanch pledged to utilize funds from a Government scheme and provide them with free building materials to construct a toilet in their home.

Today the happy family is virtually free of illnesses and to their greatest relief they have regained their dignity. Jannat's sense of purpose, awareness and compassion helped resolve the problem of open defecation in the neighbourhood with ripple effects in the entire community.

Story contributed by:
Ms. Surmeer Kaur,
Head Teacher

Struggles and hardships have always been a part of Sunita's young life but her never-say-die attitude has helped her tide over the toughest of challenges. She lost her father at a very early age and the family copes with the added hardship of her brother's physical disability. Yet, Sunita did not let such trying circumstances obstruct her path towards achieving excellent results at her school.

Sunita's quiet determination won her the admiration and unconditional support of all her teachers. Their constant encouragement helped her excel at both academic and sporting activities and she successfully graduated from her Satya Bharti School in Class V. Her strong desire to pursue higher studies made her family look for options where she could avail of a free but high quality education, much like her alma mater.

During this pursuit they learnt of the *Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya* selection, an entrance exam that would make her eligible for free education at a residential school. With her eye on the prize and the support of her Satya Bharti teachers, she prepped hard for the entrance exams and cleared them with flying colours. Once the financial burden of her education was accounted for, Sunita was able to set her focus back on her passion for sports.

“I want to win a Gold medal for my village and bring honour to Haryana”

- Sunita,
Alumnus, Satya Bharti School, Kohrar, Rewari (Haryana)



Torchbearers



Her growing inclination towards Kho-Kho made her pursue it with diligence, as a result of which she not only secured a spot in the National Kho-Kho team but also winning an award for 'Best Player' at a tournament in Goa. Awards and accolades, however, have only grounded Sunita; her peers and teachers validate her nature as a humble child in spite of her outstanding achievements.

Sunita is the pride of her family and even today they cite her as an example of how she managed to balance her household duties along with studies and Kho-Kho. Sunita is happy that she has been able to make the right decision and remains thankful to the support of her family and teachers. She dreams of pursuing a career in Sports and bringing medals and honour to her community.

Story contributed by:
Mr. Sunil Kumar,
Head Teacher



Torchbearers

Despite being a daily-wage labourer with limited resources, Anmolpreet's father, Gurnam Singh harboured a strong desire to send his daughter to school. On hearing of the quality education being provided at Satya Bharti School, Jalaldiwal (Punjab) and that too completely free of cost, Singh immediately applied at the school for his daughter's admission.

Like many new students, Anmolpreet was an introvert initially. Gradually she began to blossom under the patient care and sound guidance of her Satya Bharti School teachers. She soon grew confident and shared her keen interest for sports with her teachers. Upon hearing this, her Head Teacher encouraged her to participate in all games of her interest, guiding her with the right techniques on a regular basis.

Very soon her prowess in hockey became evident as she wielded the stick like an extension of her own arm. Her school teachers got together and sought the services of a coach in the village who agreed to provide free coaching to Anmolpreet and her friends after school hours. Anmolpreet began to train rigorously for the next two years. With her inherent skill for Sports and an outstanding ability in hockey, compounded with the sound training that she received, Anmolpreet was soon hailed as the 'Little Champ of Jaladiwal'!

“With encouragement in both academics and co-curricular activities at school, I could work towards my dream of a career in hockey,”

**-Anmolpreet,
Alumnus, Satya Bharti School,
Jalaldiwal, Ludhiana (Punjab)**



She was selected as a resident student at the prestigious Mata Jaswant Kaur Memorial Academy in Muktsar, Badal (Punjab), where she receives special training to hone her skills in hockey as well as devote time to her studies.

Spurred by the first recognition that she got while representing her school at the Cluster level and winning medals for her team, today she continues to show her prowess in hockey during tournaments. The young Anmolpreet has done her village proud as she continues her winning streak at several District and State level competitions, setting a stellar example for girls in her community.

**Story contributed by:
Ms. Amanjot Kaur,
Head Teacher**

Sapna Chauhan comes from the remote village of Basai Bhopal Singh in Neemrana district (Rajasthan). Her family fights a daily battle against their challenging socio-economic conditions coupled with the anguish of her ailing parents. While school is a centre of all activities, Sapna spent a lot of her study time helping her sick parents and attending to household chores. Four years ago, at the tender age of 12, she was unable to cope with so many responsibilities on her young shoulders because of which she remained an average student in school.

The teachers at Satya Bharti Government Upper Primary School, Basai Bhopal Singh (Rajasthan) knew that constant motivation and support was necessary for Sapna to improve her performance. They left no stone unturned to guide the child towards a successful schooling experience. Gradually, their efforts began to bear fruit, Sapna's academic performance improved to the point that she began winning several school awards including 'Star of the Week', 'Star of the Month' as well as certificates for subject excellence.



“I want to become an IAS officer to uplift the poor and serve my country,”

**- Sapna Chauhan,
Alumnus, Satya Bharti Govt.
Upper Primary School, Basai
Bhopal Singh, Neemrana
(Rajasthan)**



The constant encouragement drove her to work harder in school and soon she was awarded the coveted 'Bharti Foundation Girl Child Achiever Award'. Sapna continued her success story, scoring 95% in Class VIII and 92% in Class X. Her performance was well noted by the District Administration and she was recognised at a Government award program where she was given a laptop.

After graduating from her Satya Bharti Government Upper Primary School in Class VIII, she continued her educational journey and is currently a high performing student of Class XI at a Government school nearby. Sapna dreams of becoming an IAS Officer and serving the underprivileged in her community. Even now, she continues to inspire girls at her alma mater with the determination and courage she showed to achieve a stellar performance.

**Story contributed by:
Mr. Rajaram Yadav,
Head Teacher**



“Winning First Prize at the Kala Mahotsav was a dream come true”

- Girls' Team
Government Senior Secondary School
Budhpur, Rewari (Haryana)



Fillip to
'Beti Padhao Beti
Bachao' campaign led by
Government of India



“The provision of a Sanitary Pad Bank and Question Box in the school has brought about a MUCH needed Change for the girls”

-Ms. Snehlata, Principal
Govt. Senior Secondary School, Kanina Mandi, Mahendragarh (Haryana)

During the ice-breaker session, the Satya Bharti Quality Support Program team met with the Principal, Mr. R K Sharma and teachers from the Government Senior Secondary School. Dance emerged as a major area of interest for girls enrolled there. Aware of the resistance that the girls were likely to face in their community, the Principal lent all his support to promote their interest. He was convinced that folk dance was a means to help these girls find the roots of the glorious traditions and culture of Haryana.

To promote their talent, Bharti Foundation initiated an art and culture club in the school, where a team of 15 girls received regular coaching to hone their folk dance skills. With professional support and guidance available to them, the team began to win first prizes at Block, District and State levels of the popular Kala Mahotsav (Art Festival) organized by the Government of Haryana.

The highlight of their efforts was when they won the title of 'runners up' at the National level. Their performance and victory underlined the state government's focus on the 'Beti Padhao Beti Bachao' campaign.

Ecstatic with their achievement, the girls enthused, "The support given by Bharti Foundation in identifying and encouraging our talent has helped us achieve the impossible! They helped us in designing support materials (banners, video tutorials, etc) and providing us with costumes. Their encouragement made us confident and helped us focus on our performance." These joyful and energetic girls from the remote villages of Haryana had proved to the Nation that when girls are given rightful place in the sun, they can outshine any prejudice and sway the opinion of an entire community towards goodness.

Two years ago, when a team from Bharti Foundation visited Government Senior Secondary School, Kanina Mandi in Mahendragarh (Haryana) they found that student attendance was at an all-time low. It soon became apparent that girl students abstained from attending school during their menstruation cycle, finding it embarrassing to use toilets with broken doors. Menstrual hygiene continues to remain a taboo topic even today, causing girls to go deeper into their shells and hesitate in voicing their concerns or queries.

Ms. Snehlata, Principal of Govt. Senior Secondary School, Kanina Mandi, Mahendragarh (Haryana) a school under the Foundation's Satya Bharti Quality Support Program, was determined to find a solution to this problem and therefore initiated a lecture series with the support of the team from Bharti Foundation. A lecture on 'Adolescent Issues with Focus on Menstrual Hygiene- Myths and Misconceptions' was initiated at the school by the Foundation, with the aim of providing information and knowledge to adolescent girls on menstruation and personal hygiene.

A group of 46 girls from the school attended the lecture. They were not only encouraged to shed their inhibitions by taking part in an open discussion, but were also guided with hand holding support that encouraged them to think through and find solutions to their problems. To supplement this initiative, a 'Sanitary Pad Bank' was proposed by the Bharti Foundation team. Sanitary Pads were procured and stored at school and the distribution was personally overseen by the Principal. Further, a discreet question box was placed in the school which encouraged girls to drop any queries on menstruation or women's health. A local doctor teamed up with the principal to answer the queries and thereby increase awareness.

This novel approach in a rural context has directly resulted in an increase in girl student attendance and thereby led to the uninterrupted education of the girl child in the school.



“ I can write and I can read,
tomorrow I will lead ”

- Alisha

Student, Satya Bharti Learning Centre, Jitko (Jharkhand)



Fillip to
'Beti Padhao Beti
Bachao' campaign led by
Government of India



“ I want to make a difference in the world,
when I grow up I want to heal the sick ”

- Asma

Satya Bharti Learning Centre, Rin Malar, Jodhpur
(Rajasthan)

Alisha and her three siblings live in the remote block of Amrapara in Jharkhand, with their father, Lakhi Ram. His meagre income was often insufficient to meet even the basic needs of his family and bearing the cost of educating his children remained a distant dream for Lakhi Ram. During a survey conducted by the Satya Bharti Learning Centre program team in Jitko (Jharkhand); Alisha was identified as an Out of School Child.

The dedicated Education Volunteers from Bharti Foundation met with Alisha's father to convince him to enroll her at the Learning Centre. During the counselling sessions they learnt that the family had no choice but to withdraw Alisha from school after Class I due to severe financial constraints. Subsequent to this she started collecting scraps from the forest along with some other children of her age to support the family income.

Enrolled in the centre after a long gap in her education, eight-year-old Alisha remains in happy spirits as she shows an insatiable quest for knowledge. She has begun to master rhymes, the English alphabet and numerals with the help of Education Volunteers at the Learning Centre. Active participation in *Bal Sabhas* (student meetings) has further sharpened her skills and added to her holistic development. Alisha's sincere efforts and urge to break free from the shackles of illiteracy has finally paid off and she has been mainstreamed into Class 2 at the Government School where the centre is being run.

Alisha still goes to collect scraps from the forests, however today there is a spring in her steps as she looks forward to a brighter future. A girl who had no hope of an education, today dreams of becoming a teacher and spreading the light of knowledge in her remote village.

A labourer at a salt production unit, Akki Mohammad is the sole earning member in his family of seven. Spending all his earnings to feed his family, Mohammad was unable to pay for his children's education. To this effect, his four daughters and son had never been to school and instead contributed by running errands and carrying out domestic chores.

It was not long before Asma and her siblings were identified as Out Of School Children (OOSC) by Education Volunteers from Satya Bharti Learning Centre, Rin Malar. As part of the program's processes, Education Volunteers met with Mohammad to counsel him, urging him to enroll his children at the Learning Centre. During these visits they learnt that the fear of incurring huge expenses associated with education was the main apprehension harboured by Akki Mohammad, preventing him from enrolling his children in school.

On learning that the Learning Centre provides age appropriate remedial learning, completely free of cost; the father's consent was finally won. Asma and her brother were soon enrolled at the Government school where the Centre was being run. With great pride, Asma shares that she is the first female from her family to pursue an education. This ground-breaking girl is extremely enthusiastic about her studies and creating a better future for herself. Her sincere efforts have begun to pay off as she shows good progress in her studies.

Today, her proud father enthuses that she is able to help him find the correct contacts in his mobile phone, unlike earlier, when he had to rely on others to help him out. As a responsible member of her community, during community feasts Asma puts her literary skills to good use by confidently reading out the names inscribed on the utensils and returning them to the rightful owners.

Asma's winning persona and generous attitude has earned her the trust and respect of the entire community of Rin Malar. Education has created unparalleled awareness in Asma and out of concern for the poor health of the people in her village, she is working hard towards her dream of becoming a nurse one day and serving her community.



Role Models

Eight year old Sabana Yasmin, comes from an underprivileged family living in the remote village of Dhalsa in West Bengal. She contracted a rare nerve disease that left her with severe mobility impairment, making even basic hand-eye coordination a formidable task. At the age of four, Sabana stopped responding to treatment and the doctors too, lost all hope. With a meagre income, her father, Alauddin Mullick, who also suffers from paralysis of one leg; could ill afford to pay for her continued treatment. Sabana often faced ridicule in the community, turning her into an uncooperative and unhappy child. She was completely dependent on her mother, Laila Bibi, for her daily needs. Laila was determined to prove her detractors wrong. She knew that in addition to the massages that she gave her every day, her daughter needed a caring environment that was empathetic to her condition. Laila began a search for a better future for Sabana; her quest soon led her to Satya Bharti School, Dhalsa.

The Satya Bharti teachers welcomed Sabana with open arms and hearts. With a focus on the education of the girl child and processes that ensured the safety and needs of girl children embedded in every school activity, the teachers were well equipped to support the special needs of Sabana. A caring environment at home

“My mother and my teachers are my pole stars, I will achieve the impossible for them!”

- Sabana Yasmin,
Student, Satya Bharti School,
Dhalsa, Murshidabad
(West Bengal)



and the consistent support in school proved to be a boon for young Sabana. From a five year old girl who could barely hold a pencil, eat meals on her own or even talk coherently; today, in less than three years Sabana has gained mastery over her physical condition and has conquered the demons that threatened to swallow her reason and intellect. She is always the first to answer her teacher's questions, finish her school work and create beautiful drawings.

Sabana has blossomed into a confident and self-sufficient student loved by her teachers and friends. She nurtures a dream which will allow her to break the shackles of her condition and become an English teacher, earning the respect of every member in her community.

*Story contributed by:
Mr. Pranab Kumar Sahana,
Teacher*

Over a year ago, 14 year old Amritpal had earned the reputation of having an unruly attitude and a reputation of having unpredictable behaviour and an unruly attitude. His teachers counselled him from time to time but their efforts were in vain and complaints from his peers continued to pour in. However, beneath this demeanour was a troubled child – Amritpal was being mistreated at home by his stepmother. Unable to hold back his tears, Amritpal confided in his friends, opening up about his stepmother's sharp tongue, her regular beatings and how he was often made to stay hungry all day as punishment for minor mistakes.

His cousin, Harjinder Kaur attended the same school and heard of his sorry plight. Being a motherless child herself, she decided to help Amritpal by appealing to the maternal instincts in her Aunt. Harjinder's repeated attempts to approach her were consistently shot down, but the child's persistence ultimately wore down the reluctant aunt, who finally agreed to hear her out. Harjinder narrated her own story of loss and pain in the absence of a mother; she explained how difficult it was for a child to face the world without a mother.

Every day Harjinder visited her cousin's home and showed

“We can bridge any divide with compassion and care”

- Harjinder Kaur,
Student, Satya Bharti Adarsh
Senior Secondary School,
Fattubhila, Amritsar (Punjab)



Role Models



her aunt how she was really a blessing in disguise for young Amritpal. Slowly but surely a neglectful mother transformed into a caring one. Harjinder's gentle nature bore testimony to the fact that love begets love, and the mother vowed to treat Amritpal as her own forever. Today, Amritpal is a happy child, better at studies and a great friend to all. Harjinder has shown her peers and her community that compassion and care can tide over the greatest obstacles.

*Story contributed by:
Ms. Ramandeep Kaur,
Mentor Teacher*



Path-Breakers

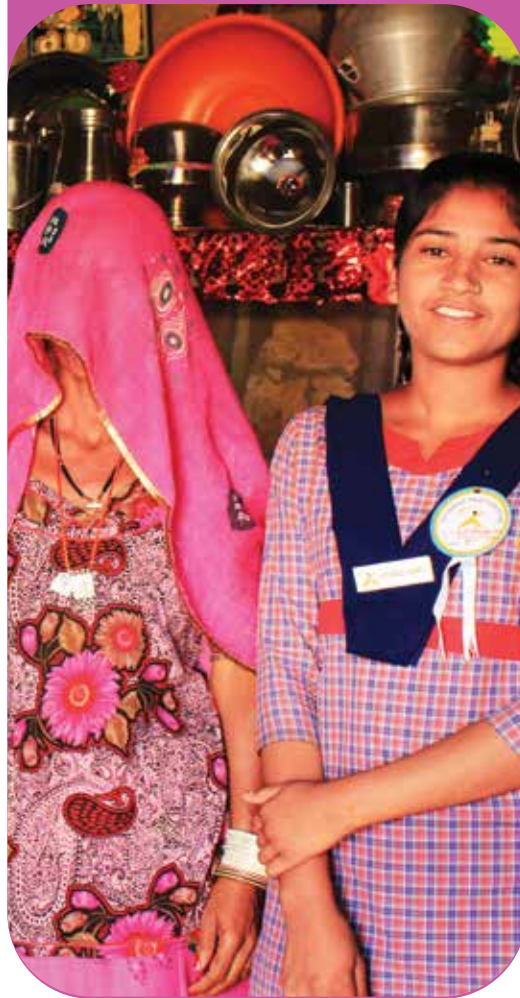
Rani Goyal belongs to the marginalised Bhil Community, wherein awareness on the importance of education is low and providing education to girls is rare. Her father, Goma Ram ekes out a living as a labourer at a local stone quarry, while her mother, Moharo Devi, has lost vision in both eyes. Being the oldest of three siblings, the task of domestic chores and errands fell on young Rani's shoulders.

Not long ago, while taking the cattle out to graze, Rani saw many children from her village happily rushing to school. This scene left a strong impression on her and kindled a desire to study. Due to the constraints of the community she lived in, Rani was hesitant to openly discuss her wish with her family.

Unable to suppress her dreams, she finally mustered up the courage to approach her father. Initially, he dismissed her request, arguing that their community considers education for girls irrelevant. This did not deter Rani and she reinforced her efforts to convince her father. When Goma Ram learned that Satya Bharti Schools provide quality education, completely free of cost and maintain a strong emphasis on the safety and other needs of the girl students, his opinion began to change. With his daughter's perseverance and the availability of quality schooling at all Satya Bharti

“My Dream of a good education is a reality today”

- Rani Goyal,
Student, Satya Bharti
School, Shergarh, Jodhpur
(Rajasthan)



Schools, Goma Ram was no longer averse to the idea of an education for his hard-working and deserving daughter.

Rani continued to fulfil her commitments at home; while extending herself to school work beyond the expectations of her teachers. She completed all her household chores early morning before setting out for school on a long and difficult route. Her perseverance and hard work was recognized in school and she was appointed as Head Girl, winning several school awards over the years.

Rani has also successfully motivated her siblings and many Out Of School children to enrol at her Satya Bharti School. Rani is regarded as a role model by the girls in her village, who have followed her path-breaking journey of quality education at Satya Bharti School.

Story contributed by:
Mr. Shri Ram, Teacher

Path-Breakers



“Studying is my path from darkness to light”

- Angoori,
Student, Satya Bharti
School, Jyona, Farrukhabad
(Uttar Pradesh)



Angoori and her two elder brothers lost their parents four years ago. They now live with their ageing grandmother in the remote rural district of Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh. At the tender age of nine, when other children frolic and play, little Angoori single-handedly runs the household and also cares for the three members of her family. Driven by her dream to study and achieve the impossible, Angoori leaves no stone unturned in completing her chores at home so that she can focus on her studies when she gets to school every day.

The family of four survives on the meagre income of Angoori's eldest brother who ekes out a living by working as a daily-wage labourer, earning just enough to feed the family. Despite such trying circumstances at home, Angoori doesn't cease to amaze her teachers with her tenacity and sheer grit as she completes all her chores and classwork with finesse and grace. There are times when she reaches school late, held back by a pressing domestic chore, but her ready wit and bright smile lend her the undying support of her teachers and peers as they bring her up to speed; always encouraging her to attend classes and never giving up on her dreams.

Angoori has already won several certificates and prizes at her school for her excellent performance in academics as



well as co-curricular activities. She is a role model for so many other girls in her village who struggle with difficult circumstances and come close to giving up. Seeing Angoori smile even in the most challenging circumstances, serves as an inimitable source of inspiration to the girls of Jyona. Angoori's teachers share that it is in fact her difficult situation that is the wind beneath her wings. Angoori is driven to excel and pull her family out of the darkness of illiteracy and the lack of prospects. With the love and encouragement of a system that back girls like Angoori, she shares her aspiration of becoming a teacher when she grows up and helping other children, just like her teachers, who continue to support her. She dreams of bringing honour to the memory of her late parents and setting the example of an indomitable spirit which never gives up!

Story contributed by:
Mr. Shivlesh Kumar Mishra,
Head Teacher



Path-Breakers

S Subbalakshmi, a student of Class IV is the daughter of a farmer with limited financial resources. This socio-economic condition never deterred the bright star; she excels in both academics and extracurricular activities in school. With the guidance and encouragement of her Satya Bharti teachers, today, she is an expert at reciting verses of *Thirukkural* (a classic Tamil *Sangam* literature piece consisting of 1,330 couplets composed by poet Thiruvalluvar).

Initially she memorized 350 out of 1,330 verses which was commendable enough; with consistent support at school and at home, she gained the confidence to memorize all the 1330 couplets, a huge victory for a nine-year-old child. She has performed at more than 20 events and has received many Cluster and District level awards.

A sparkling example of Bharti Foundation's aim to ensure holistic development of underprivileged children, Subbalakshmi doesn't neglect her studies or miss school at any cost, maintaining an exemplary record of 100% attendance. Her parents too, make sure that they attend all Parent Teacher Meetings held at school to stay in touch with her progress.

“I am proud to represent my village at the State Level,”

-S Subbalakshmi,
Student, Satya Bharti
School, Pethachikudiruppu,
Sivaganga (Tamil Nadu)



Their eyes gleam with pride when Subbalakshmi's achievements are featured in local newspapers and media. Subbalakshmi is not resting on her laurels, she has also won several certificates and prizes for subject excellence. Her love for Math is matched only by her prowess in recitation. Standing tall among her peers, both boys and girls, she is a source of inspiration for all.

Recently, the State Government recognized her talent by awarding her with a scholarship to continue studies till Class XII along with a cash prize of Rs. 10,000/-. The little songbird continues her song of success and will very soon, receive an award at an event in Chennai to be organized by the State Government in April 2017.

Story contributed by:
Mrs. C. Maheswari,
Head Teacher

Path-Breakers



“My teachers encourage me to dream big,”

- Nisha Rani,
Student, Satya Bharti
Adarsh Senior Secondary
School, Rauni, Ludhiana
(Punjab)

After migrating from Bihar to Punjab, Nisha lived with her parents and five siblings on the outskirts of Rauni, in rural Ludhiana. Her father, a victim of poverty and substance abuse is unable to provide a regular income to sustain the family. The burden of running the household fell on Nisha's mother who works as a domestic help. To supplement this meagre income, the children also took up the petty job of packing incense sticks.

The dismal living conditions of the family moved the teachers of Satya Bharti Adarsh Senior Secondary School, Rauni. Knowing that the only way out for the family was the path of education, the teachers started counselling Nisha's mother, urging her to send her children to their school where quality education was provided to underprivileged children, completely free of cost. She was not keen to send them to school as that meant loss of income for the already struggling family. However, the teachers were able to convince her explaining that the long term benefits of an education far outweigh illiteracy.

In the beginning, Nisha remained physically weak and subdued in her engagement with teachers and peers. Committed to reverse the misery she had experienced, they would provide her with additional stationery, clothing, nutritious mid-day meals and



unflinching emotional support. Nisha lived at a fair distance from the school; to ensure her safety and regular attendance, the teachers would pick up and drop Nisha from her house.

With a solid support system, Nisha started coming to school regularly and her academic performance improved exponentially within a very short span of time. A strong girl child had replaced the timid girl of yesterday. Nisha's confidence speaks volumes of her progress and paves a direct path to her dream of running a successful business venture in the future.

Story contributed by:
Ms. Manisha Sharma, Teacher &
Ms. Jasbir Kaur, Class Teacher

SATYA BHARTI SCHOOL AMONG TOP 500 SCHOOLS OF INDIA (2017)



Bharti Foundation was honoured at the 4th National Conference on School Education Leadership organised by *Brainfeed*, a monthly educational magazine. During the event, the Foundation led Satya Bharti Adarsh Senior Secondary School, Chogawan, Amritsar (Punjab) won under the category of 'Best Innovative Practice Among Top Punjab Schools', as part of the Brainfeed School Excellence Awards for the top 500 schools of India 2017.

The Satya Bharti School Program, a flagship initiative of Bharti Foundation is one of the largest end-to-end education initiatives by any corporate group in the country and has won several accolades for providing free quality education to underprivileged children, with a special focus on the girl child. Under the program, which has now been operational for more than 10 years, 254 schools are reaching out to over 43,000 underprivileged children in the rural areas of six states of India.

Editorial team: Sherry Bhawsar-Malhotra, Samreen Ghauri, Nikita Noronha; **Stories Contributed by:** Bharti Foundation Field team from Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand

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You can also write to us at:

Bharti Foundation, Plot No. 16, Airtel NCR Campus, Wing 'B' (1st Floor), Udyog Vihar, Phase IV, Gurgaon - 122 015 (Haryana)
Telephone: +91-124-4823500