



Girls Education Program

Improving Access to Education for Girls

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Supported by Macquarie Group Foundation
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Introduction

The Girls Education Program was initiated by Humana People to People India in March 2021 with the support of the Macquarie Group Foundation. The program was launched to address the abject disruption in education of adolescent girls and young women who have borne the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic rather disproportionately. Girls and women education has been disrupted, their mental health has suffered, and they have experienced significant gender-based violence.¹

School closures and overstretched health care systems had acute effects on young women and girls. By the end of March 2020, UNESCO estimated that over 89% of the world's student population were out of school or university because of COVID-19 school closures and forced many learners online. Consequently, it put large parts of the population in low-tech or no-internet environments at a severe disadvantage. Young women and girls living in poverty are more likely to be pulled out of school first to compensate for increased care and domestic work at home. They are also more prone to child marriage and other forms of violence as families find ways to alleviate economic burdens. In India, this disparity has been starker according to some reports.

1. The Shadow Pandemic – Violence against women during COVID-19: UN Women

Even with the pandemic years behind us, it was found fewer females (28.1%) enrolled in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) stream compared to males (36.3%). Close to 90% of all youth have a smartphone in the household, and 43.7% of males have their own smartphone compared to 19.8% of females.²

In order to mitigate the damage done by the historic disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic in education of young girls, the Program comprehensively focused on the holistic development of girls in the age group of 6–17 years. The Program provided remedial education to girls aged 12–17 years who were in grade 6–9 in schools. By addressing academic needs in core subjects like Mathematics, Science and English, the Program empowered girls to excel in areas they previously found challenging. Facilitating extracurricular activities like sports, cultural events and exposure visits while also building life skills provided comprehensive education to them. Many of the girls were first generation learners and belong to the most vulnerable sections of the society. The Program's remedial classes to school-going girls ensured that they did not drop out of formal schools due to the hardships brought about by the pandemic. The project, simultaneously, helped enroll identified out-of-school girls into a bridge education program that brings them to their age-appropriate learning levels before enrolling them in formal schools. These girls were 6–11 years old. The Program was started in three states with five different locations, namely, Mumbai in Maharashtra, Nuh and Gurugram in Haryana and Patna and Vaishali in Bihar. The project benefitted 1,582 girls with remedial education support and 500 girls with bridge education over the period of 2 years.

In February 2023, a no-cost extension of the project was agreed with the Macquarie Group Foundation to continue providing remedial education

support to 151 girls enrolled in the Program who were in grade 9 and supported them into completing their grade 10 level school education to appear in Board Examinations in 2024 in the states of Haryana and Maharashtra.

Of the 151 girls supported by the Girls Education Program, 52 girls were enrolled in Nuh, 53 girls in Gurugram and 46 girls in Mumbai. In the second phase of the Program, a total of 13 centres were running in three locations of which, 7 centres were running in Nuh, 2 centres in Mumbai and 4 centres in Gurugram. The remedial class education aided the girls to improve their learning levels and enhance their quality of education. Achieving exceptional results academically has instilled a deep sense of confidence and self-belief among them.

However, the impact extended far beyond the classroom. Through activities like group discussions, presentations, and career counseling, the program nurtured essential life skills. Girls who once hesitated to express themselves now confidently voice their opinions and dreams. This newfound confidence translated into a powerful sense of agency, preparing them to navigate future challenges and pursue their aspirations with unwavering determination.

Girls Education Program proved to be a catalyst for the holistic development of girls. By fostering academic excellence, self-confidence and equipping girls with life skills, the Program enabled them to reach their full potential and become well-rounded individuals ready to shape their own futures and positively impact the world around them. Here are a few inspiring stories of those who were part of the Program.

2. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2023, 'Beyond Basics'



Transformational Education

Neha

Ferozpur Jhirka, Nuh, Haryana

Sixteen-year-old Neha is nurturing her dream to become an IPS officer. But not so long ago, when schools were shut due to the pandemic, things didn't look so optimistic. Neha is a resident of Shiv Colony, Ferozpur Jhirka in Nuh, Haryana. Sharing its border with IT hub Gurugram, Nuh is an aspirational district with poor health, poor literacy rate and the water crisis worsening the economic conditions.

A student of Girls Senior Secondary School Ferozpur Jhirka, Neha was not a regular student



and would mostly keep to herself. Neha's father, a car driver, is the sole earning member for a family of five. With the pandemic-induced lockdowns, he lost his source of income and Neha's education ceased to be a priority.

Neha decided to visit the tuition centre where classes were being offered under the Girls Education Program in 2021. She had heard about it when one of the teachers from the program had visited her home. For the first time Neha's interest for education was piqued. In the tuition classes, she observed interactive sessions which were engaging her through activities. Soon, she started enjoying them. She started taking part in group activities. According to Neha, "I started going to tuition classes regularly as I was eager to learn and be there. I understood more through class activities and my confidence increased. I even urged my friends to join the classes.

To inculcate all round development, students enrolled in the program were encouraged to learn about the environment and sustainable practices to protect it.

Neha explains, “We were given some shade-loving and flowering plants along with the information on the importance of planting trees to decrease global warming. I planted them in my home and I take care of them regularly. Gardening has brought a sense of control and purpose in my life, and I love marigolds!”

Many first-generation learners do not find a conducive environment to study and grow. The nurturing environment of the Girls Education Program centres were safe havens for students, a place where they could understand themselves, express and grow. The centres did not only propel the students, but even broadened their parents’ and community’s understanding at large. Krishna, Neha’s mother, agrees with this sentiment, “We were thinking of marrying Neha since we did not see any benefit of her pursuing higher education. But since she joined the program’s remedial classes for three years, her personality has changed. She is interested in things, confident and is doing better at school. I went to the Parent-Teacher meetings held at the centres regularly where I was informed about her progress. I learnt about the scope of education and what Neha can do with her interests. I am uneducated, but now I want my daughter to study and do whatever she wants.” Neha scored 85% marks in 10th grade in Haryana State Board Examination, 2024.

Neha, along with other students were counselled about the career options, where they could understand the different possibilities and what they needed to achieve their goals. It is during one of these sessions Neha realised she wants to be an Indian Police Officer (IPS) and has started working towards it.

“I want to bring a positive change in the community, especially from where I come. I want to do good work and inspire other girls like me.”



Run for Victory

Doli

Firozpur Jhirka, Nuh, Haryana

“During COVID 19, my learning level and interest in education was depleting as my school was shut and we were having online classes. Lekha maam, a teacher from the Girls Education Program, contacted me and informed me about the free tuition classes provided by the Girls Education Program. I started going to the classes and liking the vibrant atmosphere there,” explains Doli, a spritely tall girl living in Firozpur Jhirka.

Doli lives in an economically disadvantaged household with her parents and two elder sisters and a brother. Bridled with limited means, her older siblings are not pursuing education. Her father Gulab Chand and mother Bimala Devi, rare goat and cow, and barely make the ends meet.

Activity-based learning at the centre helps students understand better. “Our teacher explained us using models and through drawings on chart paper. This made me grasp complex concepts easily. Earlier, I used to be intimidated by the text book, but with increased understanding I could retain fundamentals and books became my friends. This increased interest in education led me to start scoring well at school exams. English is my favourite subject now as I score much better in it,” reflects Doli.

Besides academics, the program centres focus on students complete all round education. The students are taken for excursion trips to broaden their world view. As Doli explains, “We went to Alwar in Rajasthan on two occasions. It was an exciting experience to step out of my usual world. With these different experiences my identity grew, I saw a world outside of home and locality, it enriched me. I try new things now; I like to cook so I look up new recipes and make them at home for my family.”

What really hooked Doli on to the program was playing games at the centre. “I love sports, but never got an opportunity to play earlier,” tells Doli. She adds, “Here we had separate time allocated for playing games like badminton, tug of war among others. I love to run!” Frequently held competitions at the centre fostered a healthy spirit of competition. Doli started winning these competitions, especially for running. Sportsmanship inculcates a set of values and behaviors that demonstrate respect, fairness and a sense of fellowship with competitors. These tools are helpful in life.



“I have represented my school at District level in running. These achievements have enthused me with a new vigour, sky is the limit!”



Courage to be Me

Komal

Firozpur Jhirka, Nuh, Haryana

Certain incidents, at times, can spur long lasting changes. It happened with Komal, a shy seventeen-year-old girl living in Nuh, Haryana. She lives with her parents, five sisters and a younger brother. Being the eldest child in an economically strained household, she helped with household chores and stitching clothes for the family members, besides going to the local government school.

“My father’s name is Hemraj and has studied till 8th grade. He works as a daily wage worker at construction sites and my mother, Kamla, is not educated. She is a homemaker. My interest towards education started dipping especially during the COVID time since I didn’t believe I could do much with education. Even my parents were not able to guide me in the right direction,” remembers Komal.

Around the same time when Komal was in the 8th grade, she was being constantly teased by a boy living in her neighbourhood. One day, while she was alone, he tried to barge into Komal’s home. She shouted calling others to help and the boy panicked and left. Later, she was also threatened by the boy to keep her mouth shut. But Komal refused to stay mum. “I was scared and I had stopped going to school. But I also felt that I should not accept this bad behaviour. I told my parents about it. They reported this incident to the police and the boy was arrested. He eventually apologised for his behaviour,” recounts Komal.

Even though the teasing stopped, Komal continued to be afraid to step out. She grew nervous and would seldom step out of her home alone. Subsequently, pandemic-induced lockdowns accentuated Komal’s isolation. “A teacher from the Girls Education Program visited our house, inquiring about my school and education. The teacher coaxed my parents and me to join the Program,” explains Komal. It took Komal some time to trust people outside her family. She gradually started attending the tuition classes being given at a centre nearby under the Girls Education Program. Soon, she started making friends and feeling comfortable in the environment. It was a home away from home.

According to Komal, “The teacher at the centre treated me as a friend. I could ask any number of questions. My understanding about my subjects started improving. Social Science is my favourite subject.” She started scoring better marks and engaging in extracurricular activities. Seeing Komal’s confidence and self-assuredness her parents started allowing her to step out of the house. Komal, along with her peers at the centre, was taken for visits to nearby places like Gurugram. It was for the first time Komal had travelled away from her home and it was exciting for her to experience a new world.



“After studying in the program for three years I have found my confidence and my voice.”

Komal shines with confidence as she says, “I have understood now that what happens to me cannot define me. I am what I do. I want to become an IPS officer and help others seek justice.”



Fostering Social Change

Principal

**Government Girls Senior Secondary School
Firozpur Jhirka**

Syed Mohammad Inam

“The Girls Education Program has benefitted our students. Mewat area has a need for special attention for girls’ education. After the 10th grade, most girls drop out, only 25–30% make it past grade 10. They are married off as their parents and society at large do not see any merit in their education,” says Syed Mohammad Inam, the Principal of Government Girls Senior Secondary School Firozpur Jhirka.

Nuh (formerly known as Mewat) has a low literacy rate. This region in the National Capital Region also has the largest gap between male and female literacy rate. This vicious cycle continues as many parents are not well educated; they are not equipped to build an environment conducive for education for their children.

“During the COVID pandemic-induced lockdowns the circumstances worsened, more girls started dropping out of schools. The students were unable to be physically present in schools. Many could not be part of online classes as they did not have electronic devices,” the Principal explains.

While detailing the Program’s solutions, the Principal states, “The learning level and interest in education was waning. The students couldn’t afford extra tuition to cope with the learning gaps. This is where the Girls Education Program has been helpful. The extra learning hours after school has helped the students in bridging their learning gap and score better than before. Besides academic growth other extracurricular activities were also promoted. I have witnessed their teacher regularly conducting sports activities.”

“Doing well at school has made children motivated towards better learning. All the girls who were part of the Girls Education Program have almost a hundred per cent attendance in school now.”



Cognizant of the problems of the area, the program recruited graduate female teachers for the centres from the same region as their familiarity makes them approachable. Most of the parents work as daily-wage labourers or in the agriculture sector, making it difficult for them to attend the Parent-Teacher Meeting of the girls. The project team thus conducted the meetings at flexible timings or in the evenings.

The Principal concludes with what he feels is a long-term solution. He believes parents and society needs to be made aware on the benefits of education and career counselling. He says, “We need to support the parents, counsel and convince them to educate and support their girls to finish school education and get into universities. That’s the only way to break this cycle and educate our girls.”



Turning the Tide

Lekha

Girls Education Program Teacher

**Government Girls Senior Secondary School
Firozpur Jhirka**

Looking back over her time as a teacher, Lekha reflects, “During my door-to-door surveys and while convincing parents to send their daughters to the Girls Education Program, to come to the Parent-Teacher meetings and to school in general, I have felt there needs to be a shift in the mindset. People don’t want to educate their daughters as they don’t see any utility in it. This can only be achieved through consistent effort

during a long period of time. I have been teaching for 12–13 years and now I have gained trust of the people of the community.”

Working with the community and students through the program Lekha, by her own admission, has grown as a teaching professional. She states, “I have grown and learnt how to talk to parents for convincing them and work within this system. This deeper understanding has made me more empathetic and a better teacher.”

“I started my career as a teaching professional in a private school, but I wasn’t satisfied with my job. I left that job. Now, working in the Program with the girls I feel I am making a change. It makes me happy and satisfied; my work has a meaning. Parents get motivated when I as a woman go door-to-door for surveys and convincing parents. It makes them feel if I can do it, so can their daughters. I have almost become a part of their homes. No school teacher can do that,” narrates Lekha.

She adds, “After teaching them for three years under this Program I see now girls expressing themselves confidently, I have witnessed a community of girls deepen their friendship. They discuss their issues at the centre with each other and with me. There is healing power in a community that supports each other.”

Lekha informs that she too, like these girls, was from an economically disadvantaged home, “I didn’t get the right direction at the right time; the education that could have helped me reach my full potential. I had deep desires too, I wanted to join the police force, but I lacked the motivation to work towards achieving my goals. I didn’t know how to achieve it, by the time I realised how I should pursue my goals, it was too late.” Lekha putting the learnings of her life experiences into action, states “I now try to motivate these girls to know themselves and go for what they want. What if they achieve what I could not, that would make me very happy! I studied in this same school, I sat on these same benches,” remembers Lekha.



“Even if one girl succeeds in achieving her goal, I feel it’s my achievement. A teacher’s job goes beyond teaching, we are social mobilisers.”

Driven by her ambition, Lekha plans to continue her journey as an educator. “I see some improvement, more girls are getting enrolled, but a lot needs to be done. There are many girls who want to study, but are unable to; we need to reach them. Education is the only thing that can make a difference,” she concludes.



Sum Total of Life is Earning Respect

Payal

Mullahera Village, Gurugram, Haryana

On the outskirts of the upscale gated societies of shiny the satellite city Gurugram, are villages of helpers, servers and guards serving the privileged. Nowhere is the stark contrast between haves and the have-nots more evident. Mullahera is one such village where rapid population growth and poor infrastructure has led to a lack of basic amenities and safety concerns. Amidst the

uncertainties of everyday life, the Girls Education Program endeavours to make a difference by supporting girls' education in these aspirational households.

"I love mathematics. I scored 91 marks in it in 10th grade. It is tangible and it gives me control. This sense of control gives me courage to dream," quips Payal with calm confidence. The seventeen-year-old lives in Mullahera in Gurugram with a family of eight which includes her parents, five sisters and a brother.

Singing melodiously, "*Bekhauf azaad hai jeena mujhe . . .*" Payal explains how she enjoys singing in her free time. The song translates to "I want to live free without fear . . ." Confidence helps in nurturing individuals in overcoming restrictive mindsets and coming into their own. According to her, "My parents are proud of me as I am the first girl in my family who is studying in a higher grade and scoring well. With me doing well they feel hopeful." Payal's parents migrated from Bihar to the National Capital Region searching for a better life. Back home they could not go beyond 10th grade due to difficult circumstances. Currently her father is a vegetable seller and her mother works as a daily wage worker.

Till the 7th grade, Payal used to score seventy per cent on an average. The improvement has been after grade 8. When asked how she managed to score well Payal credits the tuition classes held by the Girls Education Program. "Unlike school, the focus at the centre was to make me understand and not merely finish the syllabus. All lessons were explained in detail and a lot of emphasis was on clearing our doubts and making us practice. Regular tests kept us on our toes and we kept improving," details Payal. The learning was further accentuated by group activities. According to her, "Learning, discussing and repeating in groups drilled in the core concepts in our minds. Even during summer vacations, we had tuition classes where we built on our existing learning through different theme-based activities and making models."

The three years spent with the Program has also developed a new found respect for the teaching profession in Payal. She concludes, "I have personally witnessed the impact a good teacher can make. I want my work to be aligned to a larger goal. I want to make a difference."



"I want to become a good individual, whose work is tied to a bigger goal. Earning a living is essential, but I also seek respect. Respect is everything."



A Turning Point

Renu

**Mother of two students, Arpita and Arya,
enrolled under the Girls Education Program
Mullahera Village, Gurugram, Haryana**

Shy and nervous at first, Renu hesitantly opened up about her association and experience with the program. She states, “We faced a lot of difficulties during the lockdown due to the COVID pandemic. My husband is a daily wage worker and I don’t earn a living. During lockdown as there was no work, there was no source of income for us. There was a time we felt so helpless as a family that we had no food to eat, we were

worried of losing our home too as we could not pay rent.”

Renu also mentions, “Humana helped us in getting food supplies to tide through these difficult times. The helpless feeling was debilitating. That’s when I decided I don’t want a future like this for my children. That for things to change we need to educate our children to the point where we don’t have to depend on others.”

“Education is the fulcrum which can pivot my children’s future.”

Renu explains, “We also learnt about the Girls Education Program which provides free tuition classes. Since we did not have smart phones for our children, they were missing out on online classes that were the norm during the lockdowns in place of actual classes. I had heard good things about the program from other neighbouring girls. To be sure, I also visited the centre. After I was convinced, I started sending my daughters, Arpita and Arya, to the tuition classes.”

After the association with the program, Renu felt involved in her daughters’ education, “Regular Parent-Teacher Meetings every month kept me updated on their progress and I felt connected with their daily progress. I saw in real time how their learning level was improving and they started scoring better marks.”

Reflecting on her journey, Renu tells, “We came all the way from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh to the capital city in the hope that our children can do better and reach their full potential. I want my girls to study and become whatever they want to be. I have studied till 5th grade and was later married as no one saw any other potential in me. I was raised to believe that women are only supposed to make homes for others. I want my daughters to be independent and capable enough to make homes for themselves.”



Arpita

Fourteen-year-old Arpita joined the tuition classes with her elder Arya sister in 2020. Both of them showed improvement and started scoring well in their exams in school. According to Arpita, “My confidence level increased with my marks. Activities at the centre have made me explore new ways of expressing myself through dance performances among other things.”

“During one of the many our excursion trips organised by the Girls Education Program, we had gone to the Rail Museum. I enjoyed it the most as I am fascinated by trains. I look forward to travelling to our hometown village in Gorakhpur in train. The hustle and bustle of train travel has infectious energy. As we pass homes through and the landscape changes, I think of all the different lives people are living that I don’t know about. Maybe there is a different life we can live in the future.

“I think education is the ticket to the new life where my family and I can live without the fear of losing shelter, food and dignity.”

Arpita feels that uniforms command respect,” I want to be a police office in the railways after I finish my education,” Arpita concludes self-assuredly.



Going Places

Rakhi

Mullahera Village, Gurugram, Haryana

“I have scored 87.4% per cent in my grade 10 board exams,” smiles Rakhi with confidence. When Rakhi had joined the Girls Education Program’s tuition classes in 8th grade, she was not scoring well. “I was never a meritorious student and things worsened when the schools were closed during the lockdown. Our household had one smart phone and it was not sufficient to support the online classes for me and my two other

siblings in school. I had no option but to miss classes at times. My learning level started deteriorating,” reflects Rakhi.

“When I learnt about the Girls Education Program free tuition classes from the visiting field officer, I thought it was a good opportunity. Initially, I was hesitant. My baseline test was also low and therefore I was scared that this tuition class, like my school classroom, might become another place where I don’t perform well. Gradually, though, my depth of academic understanding increased. My comprehension of the Mathematics and English subjects started improving. Every concept was taught through real-life examples in a way I understood them. Consequently, my confidence also soared. I started talking more with my peers and also at events which were part of the program.” Rakhi’s favourite subject is English and improvement in the language has done wonders to her self-esteem and communications skills.

According to Rakhi, “Learning in groups of three or trios is also helpful. Groups of three students with different learning levels and talents are made. In these groups we support each other’s learning. I have even started explaining and teaching concepts to my peers in school and younger siblings whenever I can. Teaching sharpens our learning.”

Rakhi also credits the excursion trips to museums, farms, lakes etc. as being fun. “I enjoyed going out to museums, farms and lakes. I enjoy being in nature as in my daily life I don’t get many such experiences. As a family we only travel when we go back to our village in Bihar,” adds Rakhi.

Rakhi’s parents, both educated up to 10th grade, are migrants from Bihar. Her father works as a daily wage work and her mother works as a housekeeper in Gurugram, a satellite city of mass-produced apartment complexes in the National Capital Region of the country. “My parents and family are very proud of me. They had dreamed of us [their children] doing better after the sacrifices and hard work they have done uprooting their lives and trying to make a home in this new place.”

As part of the Program, the students received career counseling guiding them on their future career options. “I want to be financially independent



and travel. I enjoy watching a lot of travel Vlogs on YouTube, especially people who do a lot of nature exploration. I discussed my aspirations with the counselor and now I plan to work in a Multi-National Company to achieve my goals,” shares Rakhi.

“Travelling can open one’s mind and heart; it can make one grow as an individual and I want my learning to continue for life.”



Her Story

Samiya

Amobjwadi slums, Mumbai

Samiya is a nineteen-year-old girl living in Ambojwadi, Mumbai. During the pandemic years, while enrolled in the nearby municipality school, she had started losing interest in education as schools were shut and online classes were unable to hold her attention. Furthermore, due to family problems she was unable to focus. When people from the Girls Education Program visited her

home, her mother pushed Samiya to join the classes as Samiya had started becoming isolated from the outside world.

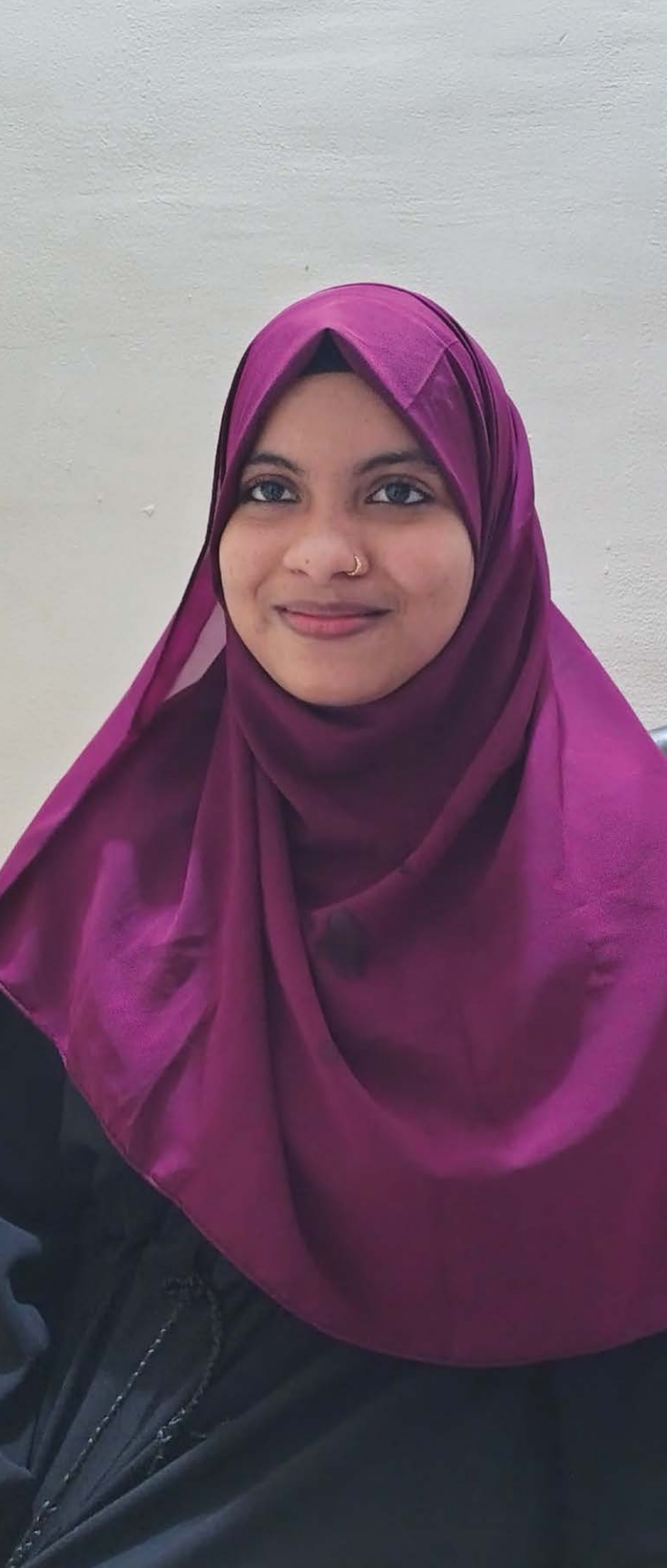
Samiya started going to the tuition classes and it instantly clicked for her. She was able to overcome her initial fear of being in a new environment easily. She exclaims, “I, for the first time, observed that education can be fun too. Our teacher would teach us in a playful manner where complex subjects would appear easy.” Being taught in this novel way, Samiya grasped concepts easily and her results in school exams improved. Earlier, Samiya would barely manage to pass in all the subjects, but after her tuition-teacher’s support and holistic approach towards education she scored 64% marks in grade 10 in 2024.

“What I fondly remember the most are our excursion trips. We visited a science centre and watched an Indian Premiere League cricket match! It was so exciting. I hadn’t stepped out like that before. I was delighted being at the science centre and gained immense learning. I was in awe of the solar system model there. Earlier, I had only seen it being represented as a two-dimensional drawing in text books. Observing the gigantic three-dimensional model of the solar system made me realise with wonderment how big the universe is. For the first time these concepts and information we learn from text books did not seem abstract, it seemed real. I felt part of something bigger,” remembers Samiya enthusiastically.

“After passing 10th grade, I am currently working with an e-commerce organisation to support my family financially. My father works in a courier company and his income is not enough to support our family of six: my parents, three younger siblings and me. My mother is not educated beyond middle school and my father studied till 12th grade. I got this job as I had passed 10th grade with decent marks. Since I have to support my family financially, I will pursue my education after my working hours and appear for 12th grade exams through open school. My education and experiences at the centre have opened up my worldview. Life has not dealt me with an ideal situation, but education has provided me with tools to navigate through hardships and the ability to build my own narrative,” reflects Samiya.



“Education has empowered me to become an independent woman.”



My Life, My Rules

Saajma

Amobjwadi slums, Mumbai

“My name means a precious flower and I also want make something precious out of my life,” says Saajma with poignant sincerity. She is currently studying commerce in 11th grade at St Teresa’s College. Saajma live in Ambojawadi, Mumbai with her maternal aunt and her family. Her mother, father and seven sisters live in Jharkhand. According to her, “I miss my family a lot, but I am living here in Mumbai to get better education.”

Saajma admits that she was not doing well in school earlier as she found it difficult to understand the advanced Hindi language used in the text books for all subjects. “When I joined the Girls Education Program textbooks became more approachable as I was explained concepts in colloquial Hindi. The curriculum now seemed much easier and I started doing well I scored 80% in my 8th grade school exams,” smiles Saajma.

Saajma explains in detail, “In the municipality school where I was studying, the classrooms were full and teachers would just talk at us. They would lecture the subjects and leave. It was up to us to understand and to figure out what was happening. There was no opportunity to ask clarifications for the queries we had. So, I usually remained disengaged in the school classrooms. In this tuition classes, however, the atmosphere was friendly and there was no limit to asking questions if I did not understand anything. The lessons were tailor-made for my understanding.”

A safe environment fostered at the centre makes it a second home for the girls. Saajma agrees, “We were made to study in trios or group of three and that also helped me increase my understanding of the subjects. There was sense of camaraderie that grew with group activities over the three years I was with the program. We went to parks, museums and even saw an Indian Premiere League cricket match live at the stadium! Beyond academics, the focus was on making balanced individuals through holistic education. We became aware of good touch and bad touch through an educational film played on the projector in the class.”

In Saajma’s extended and immediate family women have never stepped out of home to do a job. She explains, “My elder sister passed her 12th grade but then was married. Now she does some tailoring work in her free time. Usually, I have observed, it is frowned upon when women step out for work.”

Saajma states, “Now, in my current institution all my subjects are being taught in the English language. To cope with the change, I downloaded an app through which I regularly brush up my English language skills as I want to do good in my 11th and 12th grade.”



“My time with the Program has supported me to express my individuality, and has enabled be to go beyond what is expected of me. I want to be independent and I want respect; education with a good job is the way for it.”

New experiences in the tuition classes, excursion trips, career counselling sessions has stirred the desire in Saajma to explore the world of opportunities. She concludes, “I want to work in a bank as an accountant. I want to pursue higher education and realise my goal. I will convince my family. I know I will do it.”





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Humana People to People India (HPPI) is a development organisation registered as a not-for-profit company under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 as of 21st May 1998. It is a non-political, non-religious organisation working for the holistic development of the underprivileged and marginalised people in rural and urban India through social development and poverty alleviation interventions by coordinated and focused interventions in education, life skills, improved livelihoods, empowerment of women, health and environmental sustainability.



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About us

Humana People to People India is a development organisation registered since 21st May 1998 as a not-for-profit company under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956. It is a non-political, non-religious body that works as part of civil society to strengthen the capacities of underprivileged people and groups to create better lives.



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