

SHAKTI

— BY SARVAM FOUNDATION —

THE POWER OF SELF-WORTH

PERFORMING ARTS

ACADEMICS

NUTRITION



Activity Report'20-2021

Educate a girl. Educate a community.

Unleash a girl. Unleash Shakti.

A Message From The Founder



I come from a family where performing arts, such as Bharatanatyam, were considered to be just hobbies from one's days in school, which in my case stretched till the end of my university degree. It was only after my university that I began to study the form more seriously and travel with it. I realised how much exposure and confidence it gave me, but at the same time, how poorly supported it was. I have witnessed firsthand how, given half a chance, arts can flourish and help flourish. It was only the affluent people from strong artistic lineages that flourished in their respective 'gharanas' and had a monopoly over the knowledge of classical dance. I wanted more people to have access to this and I wanted artistes to get the respect they deserved instead of empty auditoriums and zero publicity. The performing arts of India deserved 'glamour' and interest akin to that of the film industry. This is the reason I started Sarvam Foundation. I began by teaching Bharatnatyam under a tree to marginalized and underprivileged girls from slums in Kishangarh, Rangpuri Pahadi and Mehrauli region of New Delhi. When we give more than we receive-we give more than we take-we share rather than keeping it to ourselves. These girls had no individual identities, they were just a statistic for our politicians and bureaucrats to use as they pleased. Classical Arts would be the last thing to reach them. I knew that giving these girls whatever knowledge I had would keep me happier, for I realized early in life that the greatest form of happiness is when we provided means of self-worth to those that need it the most. And thus began the journey of empowerment.

Through our intensive training in world-class Indian Classical Arts, the girls got the opportunity to learn teamwork, hard-work, discipline, responsibility, hygiene and cleanliness. They got to chance to appreciate their health and take care of their physical health through dance, Yoga, Chhau and various folk dances. They learnt mental agility as their memory improved due to the tough calisthenics of our ancient arts, learnt stories on India's mythology and got deeper in touch with their traditions and culture and began to value their connections as Indians. Through their international travels they became little ambassadors of India's culture on the world stage. They learnt to appreciate diversity and became celebrities in their communities! Through remedial academics their academic foundations improved and they started doing well in school. They were already choreographing in school for the school's cultural competitions but now they were also doing well in their studies! Through the nutrition provided at Shakti, their health improved as they became less anaemic, their energy levels were on track. Their parents were counselled on not to bring white sugar, fried food or 'dead' foods but instead were taught to budget their resources for the maximum nutrition possible.

I have seen such immense change; it is quite hard to put it across in such few words. Most Sarvam Shakti girls came from houses where women don't have a voice, much less an identity. They had the spark in them to do something, be something-they just needed someone to fan the flame. They needed to feel that they matter and their life too is of value. They needed someone to believe that girls can become anything they wish to be, just like their male siblings are made to believe. As I always say, educate a girl, educate a community, but unleash a girl, unleash Shakti!

Nehha B

Nehha Bhatnagar

Founder and Managing Trustee
Sarvam Foundation



About Sarvam Foundation

Sarvam Foundation is a unique initiative for bringing self-worth through performing arts, primarily Classical and Folk. It has through its multiple events, brought dignity and respect to the often sidelined field of ancient arts by empowering artistes, both emerging and established and newer audiences. The special project of the Foundation is SARVAM SHAKTI, through which underprivileged girls in urban slums receive professional training in arts and remedial academic education and nutrition. Sarvam Foundation created a wave in the field of performing arts, primarily Classical arts, through its unique curations and promotions of artistes and art forms. It created new technicians in the field of art and also mentored young dancers to become organizers and impresarios in the field. Hundreds of artistes received platforms for showcasing their work in ways that would resonate with the newer audiences and the younger generations thereby leading them to the perpetuation, preservation and propagation of the field in Toto. **The special project of Sarvam Foundation is called Sarvam Shakti** through which we provide the **'Power of Self-Worth' to underprivileged girls** in urban slums. We do this through a progressive syllabus of professional training in one Classical dance form each be it Odissi, Katha, Bharatanatyam or Kuchipudi. Each girl also learns ancillary forms like Chhau, Garba, Bhangra, Yoga asanas, Hindustani Semi-Classical music and/or Western light music. To aid them in their academic education, we also provide free remedial tuitions and a nutritious plan of fortified food and vegetable juices. Our girls are multifaceted manifestations of Shakti who are changing the stereotype of what it means to be underprivileged and what it means to be a girl. We give them opportunities for performances nationally and internationally and through the multiple channels of exposure we are making these girls leaders in their own right. Cultural ambassadors of their country, our vision is to take this project from the 75 girls we have at present to 220 girls by 2020.

About the Founder

Nehha Bhatnagar is a force for change for culture in India. An internationally renowned young Bharatanatyam danseuse, she has performed across 19 state in India and 16 countries internationally. Through her organization, Sarvam Foundation, she has curated and organized over 20 massive arts festivals and collaborations in the country. She is also a speaker at TEDx and is herself a TEDx Curator and Organizer of TEDxTughlaqRd Conferences. She is invited to speak at conferences on arts, mentorship, entrepreneurship and leadership both in India and abroad. Hailing from a family of first generation



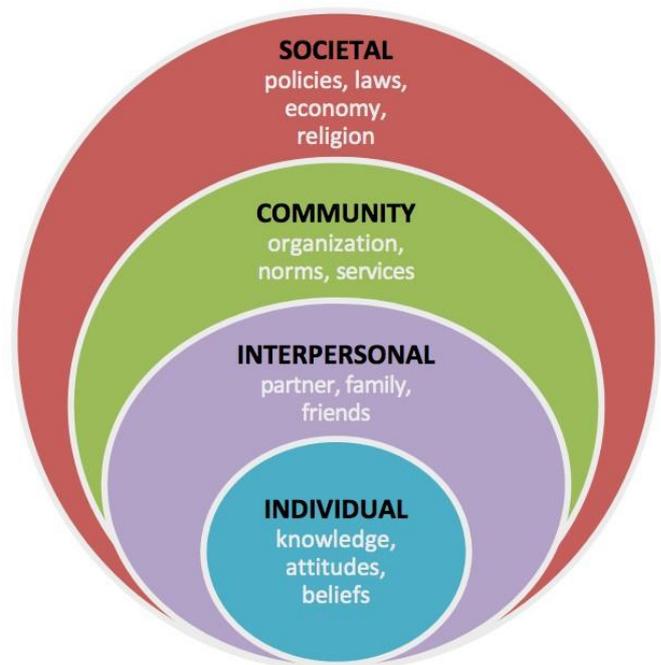
entrepreneurs, she has always believed that with hard work and honesty, doing good in the world is a possibility. For her work in the arts she has been selected a Fellow and Delegate at many international scholarships and programs such as UNLEASH Denmark, Australia-India Youth Dialogue, Rotary Scholar Exchange, India-China Youth Exchange, TEDActive and Milap Fest.

Behavioural Change

The Socio-Ecological Model

Behaviour is the outcome of the intricate relationships and interdependency of a person with their social surroundings. It is also determined by a range of personal and external factors.¹ Personal factors represents out knowledge, skills, desires, attitudes, beliefs etc and external factors represents entities from our immediate social surroundings (friends, family & local community) and from wider social surroundings (social norms, political, economic and environmental conditions).

In order to change a behavioural trait of an individual, one needs to target their social surroundings as well. People often tend to be averse to change for fear of being ridiculed or in extreme cases, being exiled by their communities and their societies. Another major blockade on the road to behavioural change is the economic environment surrounding an individual. For eg, child marriage, a heinous crime still prevalent in Rajasthan, is more often a necessity due to poor economic status of the families involved rather than being an intentional or unintentional act towards the suppression of women in the region.



Sarvam Shakti aims to target behavioural *The Socio-Ecological Model* change by targeting both - the individual person and their social surroundings. In particular, we aim to target the social stigma attached to the empowerment of adolescent girls as it is often seen as a gateway to a host of 'problems' by their communities.

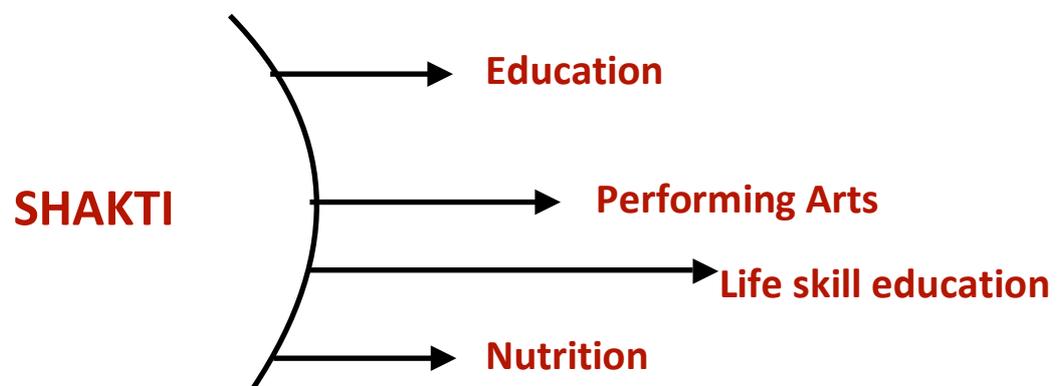
¹ 1.6, Pg 5, Behaviour Change Toolkit, People In Need, Petr Schmied; May 2017



Behavioural change is known to take years if not decades of constant precisely targeted efforts and perseverance. Our Shakti Programme reflects these principles required to achieve the same.

The SHAKTI Programme

The SHAKTI Programme is a three pronged approach to tackle the systemic suppression of young girls with the ultimate objective of raising their self-esteem and self-worth.



All classes in **performing arts** are taught, under the mentorship of eminent Gurus, by their senior disciples. Dance forms of BHARATANATYAM, KATHAK, KUCHIPUDI, ODISSI and CHHAU are some of the arts taught to the girls. Each girl learns one art form very seriously and learns ancillary forms like Garba, Bhangra, Ghoomar, Western light music, Hindustani Semi-Classical music, Tabla, Sanskrit Shlokas, Yoga Asanas, Self-Defense classes and more. We have a wide network of tie-ups with various programs for which we train the girls. For example, some girls go every year to Poland for Brave Kids Festival. We will be sending a few to Milapfest in UK and Singapore for further training under a Guru for a month. We send them for recitals as and when we get invited from various organizations like WHO in their Vishakapatnam conference or ROAR by Feministaa in their Mumbai conference and so on.

We also consider quality **education** to be of paramount importance in the current times of a globalised and hyper connected world. As such we have a wide network of teachers who volunteer their time for teaching the girls their weak subjects in academics. We wish to include more teachers on a payroll to be able to have a wider impact.



A holistic approach to any social issue requires the addressal of improper **nutrition**. Nutritional meal plans include food three times a week but for a healthier body, we aim to make this a 6 day a week plan. Post school meals provided comprising of a wholesome and nourishing diet, freshly juiced vegetables, fruits and herbs provided to fortify mind and body. We also conduct regular counselling for the families and the children on nutrition and hygiene by `experts.

The senior girls are leaders in their own right. They conduct classes and training for the junior batches of Shakti too in ancillary activities like Yoga asanas and self-defence. We wish to be able to create more mentorship programs within Shakti where we focus on creating teachers from within the students.

Facts and Figures

Total No. Of Beneficiaries

On 1st April'20:220

On 31st March'2021: 300

Project location: Vasant Kunj (Delhi), DLF phase 1 (Gurgaon, Haryana)

Areas of Intervention: Indian Classical Dance training, Remedial Education, Supplementary Nutrition, Yoga and Life Skill Education.

Mobiles donated: 50 (100% beneficiaries were connected to online classes either by provide a mobile or with internet packages to the families of children)

Capacity building Workshops during the reporting period (April'20-March'2021): 12

2020 was a year like none other. As the world was pushed indoors in the "year of the Pandemic", Sarvam Foundation was on the frontline responding to the most glaring needs of their beneficiaries amid an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. We reached them with immediate aid, connected the beneficiaries with online education (academic and performing arts), distributed dry rations, psycho-social support and equipped them to be more resilient and aware.

Shakti during Pandemic

On 24 March 2020, the Government of India, ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, limiting movement of the entire nation as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic in India. As the end of the first lockdown period approached, state governments and other advisory committees recommended extending the lockdown till 3rd May. On 1 May, the Government of India extended the nationwide lockdown



further by two weeks until 17 May. The Government divided all the districts into three zones based on the spread of the virus—green, red and orange—with relaxations applied accordingly. On 17 May, the lockdown was further extended till 31 May by the National Disaster Management Authority.

On 30 May, it was announced that lockdown restrictions were to be lifted from then onwards, while the ongoing lockdown would be further extended till 30 June for only the containment zones. Services would be resumed in a phased manner starting from 8 June. It was termed as "Unlock 1.0".

This means that kids, who typically spend between three and seven hours in a structured learning environment away from home, are now stuck indoors for weeks. "Schools were shut. All out-of-home activities and social interactions have stopped, too. Initial few days were a joyful ride for all as no one imagined the seriousness of the pandemic but as the time graduates everyone start realising that it is not going to end soon.

But Our Shakti's did not let the spirit vanish in them; they not only kept themselves busy but also involve their families and siblings involved with the mindful activities so that they can deal with the challenges of Pandemic positively. They have participated in various webinars both locally and internationally, engaged in online learning, helped each other with both academics and non- academic subjects, make new friends via volunteer programs and a lot more. In such times, keeping kids engaged with creative activities that they find interesting is tough" but Sarvam Shakti has been able to manage it all with the support of generous donors and the family members of the beneficiaries.

After the five months of nationwide lockdown India started to unlock and people of the country slowly started to adjust themselves with the newly developed skills of hygiene, hand washing, face masks and social distancing. But for children of under privileged section the situation worsen at every level be it education, family resources, recreation, nutrition or health. Most of children remained unconnected with the schools and developmental because of mass migrations.

With the unlocking Shakti team reached out the beneficiaries who were unconnected for some time and gathered them back with new zeal., connected them to online schooling, performing arts classes, nutrition program and in one time all our children were back to routine.

Our Shaktis are packed with talent and are unstoppable. They have utilised the Pandemic time to the fullest and nurtured their inner abilities to outshine in every field.

Highlights of the year 2020-21

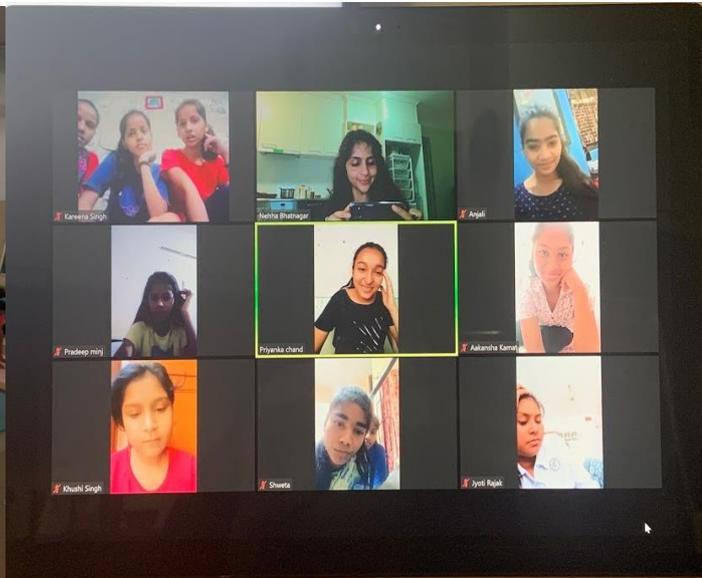
- ❑ **Expansion of Project** - Induction of new chapter in Bangalore- to be functional in the month of May'2021.

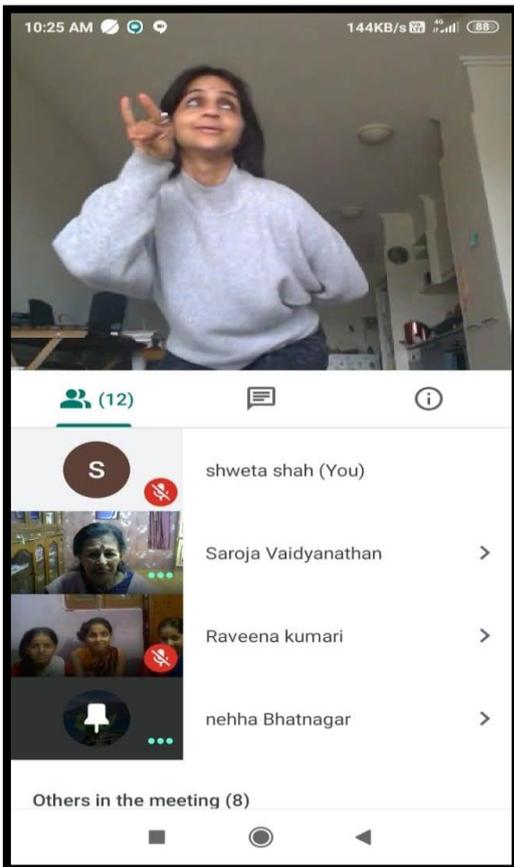


- ❑ Introduction of new vertical-Computer education in Gurgaon chapter (infrastructure successfully set up, classes to start in the month of May'2021).
- ❑ Successfully **achieved Our Vision set for 2021** (300 by 2021)
- ❑ Started new batches of Kathak (Drishtikon Dance Company) and Bharatnatyam (Snr. Student of Padmabhushan Dr. Saroja Vaidyanathan) along with yoga classes in DLF branch.
- ❑ Successful in **tying up with Cooperates** under CSR mandate for smooth functioning of Project namely- Max India Foundation, Brave Kids international, Cargill, BGL India etc.
- ❑ Remedial Education, Performing Arts classes, Supplementary Nutrition and Life Skill workshops continued throughout the year (with both online and offline medium).
- ❑ International tie-ups for continuous progress and exposure of children. Various online workshops and webinars have been conducted throughout the year.
- ❑ Successfully running classes though online medium even during strict lockdowns.
- ❑ Connected more than 50% of the beneficiaries to their formal online schooling by donating smart phones and internet connections.
- ❑ Supported 100% families by distributing dry ration kits, though out the Pandemic.
- ❑ **Zero dropout, class repetition** or poor attendance (online) case reported from school.
- ❑ **No case of Growth Retardation** or Malnutrition among Shakti beneficiaries.
- ❑ **Lesser incidences of children falling sick** indicative of raised immunity.
- ❑ Two Senior beneficiaries successfully completed schooling and got admission in DU and IP.



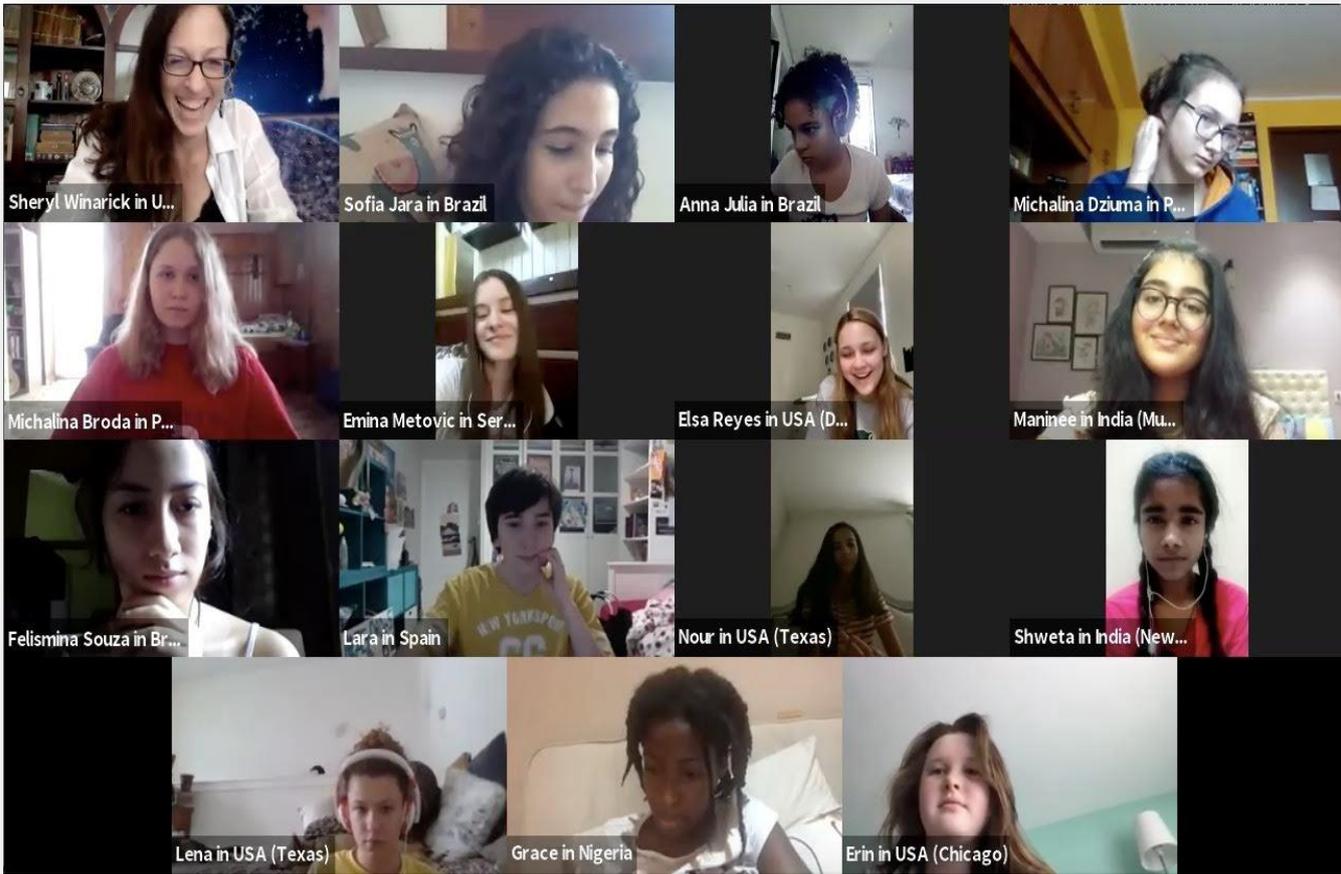
Glossary

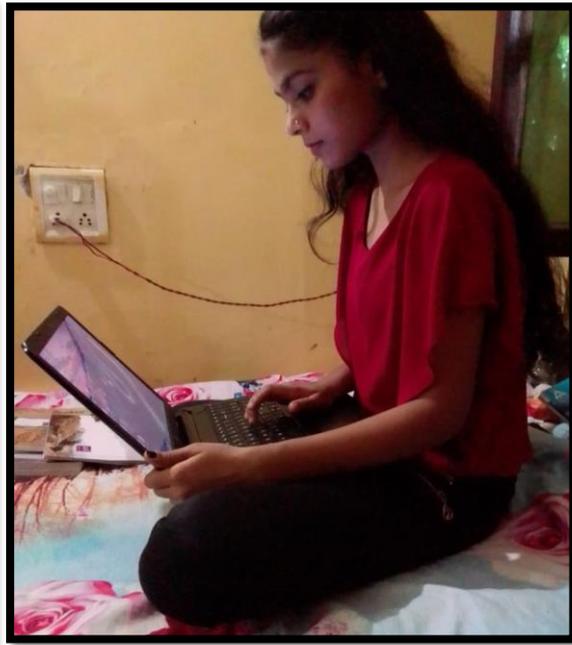


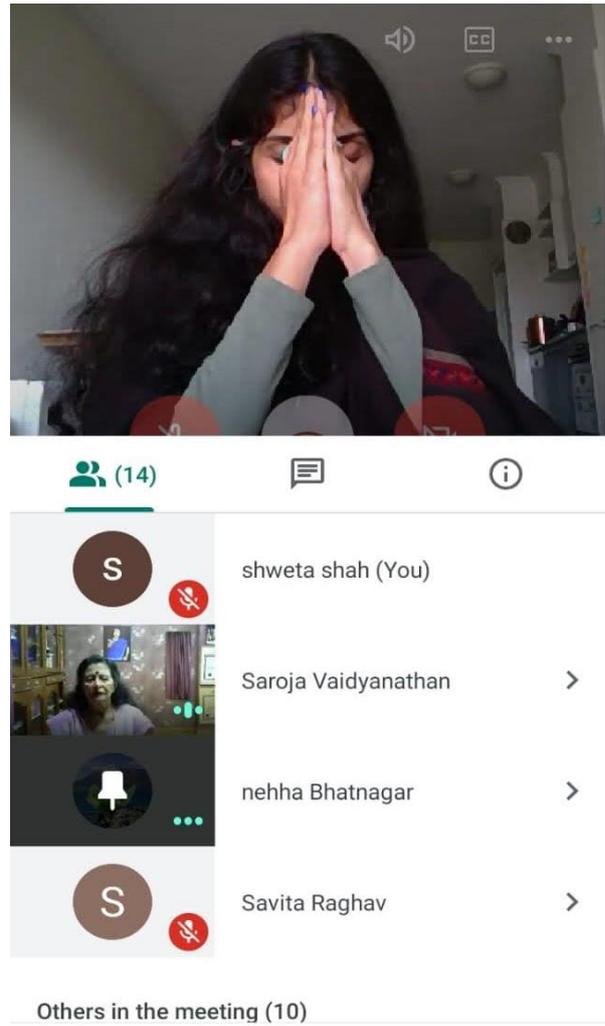
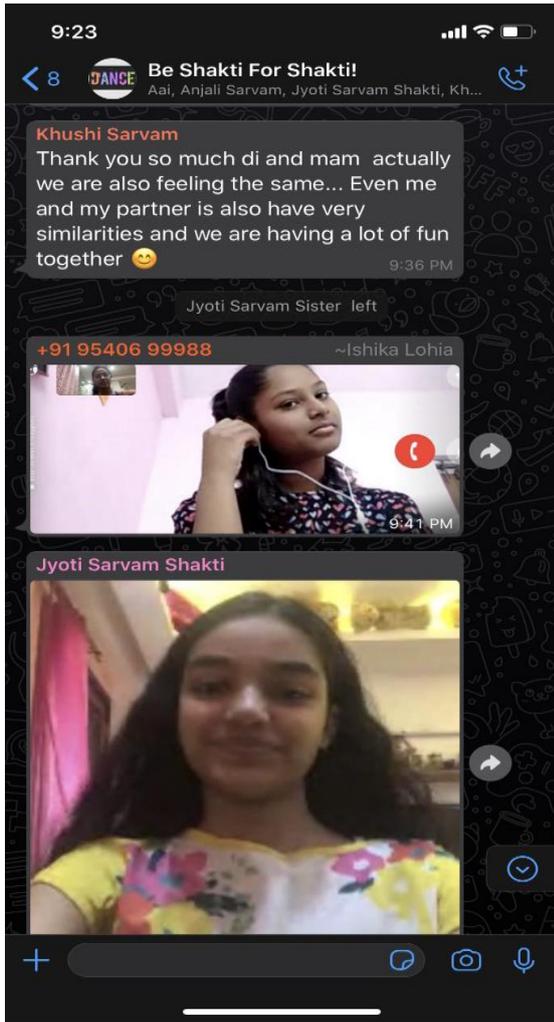














Impact

OUR IMPACT WITH MINIMAL FUNDING SINCE 2014

220



Empowered young women

30,000+

AUDIENCES
Showcased to

200+

PERFORMANCES
Given by the Girls

6+

HOURS OF AIRTIME
National & International

200

FAMILIES
Impacted

25000+

SUPPLEMENTARY MEALS
Served

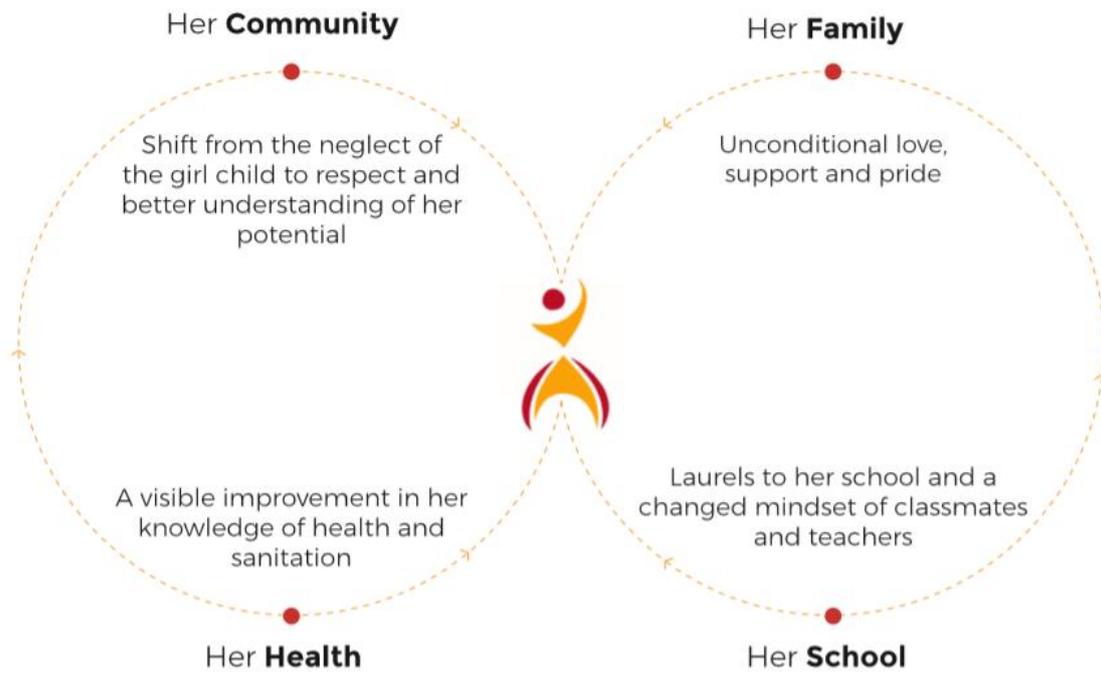
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REMEDIAL ACADEMIC SUBJECTS
Taught After School for Free

SELF-ESTEEM RAISED = PRICELESS



Impact Cycle



A SARVAM GIRL'S **IMPACT** CYCLE



*For videos of these events, please visit:
<https://medium.com/@sarvamshakti>*

