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## Introduction



Nirantar, is a non-profit, feminist organisation that is an integral part of the autonomous women's movement in India. We are an organisation firmly rooted in community-based work and have a presence both at the national and international level in the areas of training, research and advocacy.

Our work has considerably evolved over the last 23 years, with expansion both in terms of geographical coverage as well as new areas of engagement. The issues of adolescents, early and child marriage, education concerns in urban resettlement colonies, are some of the work areas that have been added to Nirantar's scope of work in the recent past. Main areas of our focus currently are; Early and Child Marriage, Adult Women's Literacy & Empowerment, Adolescent and Mainstream Education strategies, along with building linkages of these areas with gender, sexuality, caste, class, and religion.

Nirantar has always strived to address important and contemporary development issues through its research and advocacy efforts. We have made important connections of popular



development issues with gender and sexuality to bring a different lens to the understanding around that issue.

Nirantar as a resource organisation has played an important role in developing the capacities of peer and grassroots organisations. Whether it is about enabling organisations to implement women's literacy programmes, or helping organisations engage with adolescent boys and girls from a gender and sexuality perspective, we have tried to reach out to a variety of organisations and created opportunities for learning and capacity building to facilitate a more effective implementation of their work at the community level. We have engaged with different stake holders through training material development, and by creating spaces for constructive and critical thinking around issues pertinent to women and young girls.

Nirantar has also witnessed a change into leadership and organisational structure in the past one year. The effort has been to bring more young people in leadership roles and enable them to feel ownership in the organisation.

## **Highlights of Our Work**



Our work lies not just in our various projects but in organisational advocacy as well. This year, we have not just made progress in our projects and new initiatives, but have also been able to participate in many advocacy platforms, bringing our findings and learnings to national and global discourses and expanding the boundaries of popular perspectives.

### **Dissemination of knowledge and information for Advocacy**

We believe that there is a need to enable access to information and knowledge in ways that simplify and demystify information and ideas and to present them with a gender and equity perspective. We also believe that the production of information and knowledge should be democratised and decentralised. In this process, it is not just important to enable the access of information and skills to marginalised groups, but also build capacities of organisations working in direct intervention with these groups.



We participated in the **IX world assembly of International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)**, in Montreal, Canada, from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015. This is an international forum for adult education of which Nirantar is an active member. We were invited as one of the panellists at the opening session, and also organised a workshop on the theme – *"Revisiting empowerment: Different approaches and challenges"*. In the opening panel of the assembly, we shared our understanding of language politics, and the importance of local languages and its linkages with mainstream or official languages as an important strategy of our adult literacy programme. We also emphasised the need for contextualising literacy programmes during the opening session. At the event, we organised two workshops - one on women's literacy and empowerment and another on linkages of adult education with early and child marriage. These workshops were important spaces to discuss some of the crucial issues we had identified, our findings, and learnings related to adult education and its approach.

We were a part of ASPBAE's Panel at **Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED) Conference** in Bangkok, Thailand, which was a convening of state representatives, UN bodies, private organisations and civil society organisations from across Asia Pacific. The conference was organised from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015, with the purpose of discussing the education priorities of the SDGs. The panel we participated in was for civil society groups, to highlight the role of non-formal education spaces for young people who are unable to access formal education spaces for various reasons, including early marriage.

### **Building Capacities and Engendering Learning**

Education is a feminist issue. We believe that structured teaching-learning spaces – both formal and non-formal – are vital arenas through which gender equality can be promoted. There is a need to explore and engage with content and pedagogy from a feminist perspective to transform these learning spaces and the experiences of both boys and girls.

To this effect, we organise an **Annual Literacy Training** every year, and in 2016, it was organised in January. The 6-day long training was attended by 40 participants from 15 organisations across 7 states. During the training, we established linkages of women's



education to empowerment. A field visit to Sahjani Shiksha Kendra, Lalitpur district (U.P.) was also organised for the participants to build a ground-level understanding and for them to learn about the challenges of working with women from marginalised communities.

We convened the first part of Yuva Yaunikta aur Adhikar course in February 2016, where we covered issues related to gender, sexuality, 'age as an axis of power', and 'marriage as an institution'. 30 field level *karyakartas*, belonging to 12 organisations across India, namely Mumbai, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Rajasmand, Lucknow, Bhopal and Delhi participated in the course. Our objective was both to help field/case workers in reflecting upon their own experiences of gender, sexuality, and marriage, as well as find the language to articulate them. We also explored some tools that could assist them in taking forth some of these debates in the communities that they work in.

### **Promoting Empowering Literacy**

Literacy is a right that must be guaranteed to women and socio-economically disadvantaged communities - not simply to get information but also for their entertainment and for them to critically engage with their lived realities as well as with the larger world. We believe that literacy and education processes should connect with the lived realities of marginalised women, enabling them to take control of their lives by developing and sustaining skills of critical reflection.

**Women's Literacy, Education, and Empowerment team** provided inputs and support to 11 grassroots partner organisations, among which work with 5 partner organisations had begun in 2013. 6 partner organisations came on board in June-July 2015 and became part of a three-year process of implementation of women's literacy programme.

In the year 2015-16, we reached out to 10,463 women and built capacities of 369 women teachers through our literacy interventions across 4 states.



Nirantar participated in the **workshop on Leadership and Lifelong Learning** in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, from 14th to 23rd November 2015. This ten-day long workshop was a good opportunity for us to learn more about the contexts of various participating organisations and their specific challenges pertaining to their work on empowerment through literacy.

In the learning centres run by **Parvaaz Adolescent Centre for Education (PACE) team**, we have been able to create safe spaces for girls to share their feelings and experiences. Direct linkages of the classroom discussions with their lived realities have helped the girls to critically think about their daily life experiences and challenges. From the time that they have been a part of these learning centres, they are able to fill out necessary forms and check the balance in their bank passbooks. For few learners, reading the calendar and newspaper have also been empowering practices, and for many it was their visit to a hospital. The girls have started to negotiate with their family members and have felt confident enough at times in trying to convince their family of their view points. However, the centres are not a cure-all, and the girls still continue to struggle with their lived realities and their socio-economic conditions, but what seems to have changed, is that now the girls feel like they are part of a collective and have a support system, where they can share their concerns.

The PACE Centres are running in Trilokpuri and Khanpur. In Trilokpuri, 14 girls have completed the course, whereas, in Khanpur, 18 girls have been coming regularly for the classes and have completed the course in June 2016. Within the centres, these girls have developed their own group and also support each other in case of any need.

### **Impacting Discourse Around Early and Child Marriage**

Our approach to sexuality is positive and political - A positive approach seeks to understand sexuality beyond sexual violence and expands it to include an exploration and



expression of desires, while our political approach seeks to build an in-depth understanding of sexual and gender norms, how they impact lived realities, and why.

Over the past year, we have engaged with different methodologies through which we want to generate dialogues around gender, sexuality, caste and marriage. The spaces for these dialogues were created in very diverse settings, from village level meetings with girls and boys to meetings organised with *karyakartas* (case workers) from diverse backgrounds in Delhi. These have taken the shape of workshops, consultations, courses and presentations. We have also understood the different ways in which people respond to different methods, what enables and disables engagement with these questions, and what are the barriers and opportunities to have these conversations.

Over the past few years, there has been a growing awareness amongst numerous organisations, nationally and globally, working on child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) that sexuality matters in terms of understanding both the complex causes and the diverse solutions to the practice. To further our learnings and experience in the area of sexuality, we engaged in the **Global Convention of Girls not Brides (GNB)**, the largest network of organisations at the moment on early and child marriage, in Morocco, from 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> May 2015. At the convention, we made a presentation on our landscape analysis report, which focuses on young people and sexuality. We also lobbied for recognising gender and sexuality as an important perspective in the articulation of both the cause and the impact of early and child marriage (at the level of theoretical framework as well strategic planning).

We were also invited by the Global Fund for Women to make a presentation based on our landscape analysis study at the **South Asian Workshop on Women's Groups and Early Marriage**, organised in Sri Lanka from 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015. This was a great opportunity to interact with the women's organisations and feminists from neighbouring countries and present to them our learnings and findings from the study. This led to many lively discussions and also to the recognition of our shared experiences with other South Asian countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, etc.



In March 2016, American Jewish World Service (AJWS), Care International, and the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC) held the **Expert Committee Meeting on Sexuality and Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM)** in New York. This coalition has been playing an active role in promoting issues of gender and sexuality as part of work on early and child marriage. The main objectives of the meeting were to establish a common framework for understanding sexuality as a central driver of CEFM, to discuss why sexuality is traditionally missing from the CEFM discourse and also to discuss the challenges and capacity building needs in addressing sexuality in the context of CEFM.

## **Women's Literacy, Education, and Empowerment**



Our work involves literacy as well as education - defined more broadly as structured learning that empowers the learner. Our literacy programme involves intensively building capacities and developing materials for organisations, who want to provide empowering literacy opportunities to women.

In this past year, we provided inputs and support to our 11 partner organisations. Amongst the 11 partner organisations, 5 organisations were those with whom work had begun in 2013 (Second phase), and who are currently in the advance phase of the literacy programme. Work with the other 6 partner organisations began in June-July 2015 and (Third phase) with whom work has just begun on the basic phase of the literacy programme. We also supported other field-based organisations working on literacy and issues around it. The team conducted the Annual Literacy Training 2016 and various other need-based trainings during the year.



### **Work with Second Phase Partners –**

- **Orientation Workshop** –An orientation workshop was conducted in May 2015 to provide inputs for starting the advance phase of literacy programme.
- **Teachers' Training** –A teachers' training was conducted in the month of June 2015 with 24 participants, including coordinators, supervisors along with teachers from the centres. The objective of the training was to build perspective on the advance literacy centres and introduce materials like *Bolti hai Bhasha*, *Bhasha ka Tana Bana*, the Numeracy Workbook, the Panchayat Module, etc.
- **Material Creation** –A three-day workshop was organised for Second Phase partner organisations in October 2015 to build their perspective and skills for creating materials in local languages for neo-literate women. During the workshop, material was developed in the following languages - Surjapuri, Awadhi, Sadri, Panch Parganiya, and Hindi.
- **Baseline, Endline, and MIS Process** –Organizations were oriented on the endline format as they were about to complete the basic literacy phase in April 2015. Consolidation of the baseline-endline and the quarterly MIS was done at Nirantar's level.

### **Work with Third Phase Partners**

- **Orientation Workshop** –An orientation of the women's literacy programme was conducted in July 2015 with heads of the partner organisations and programme coordinators. Field visits were also conducted to provide participants with a first-hand experience of functional literacy centres.



- **Teachers' Training** – A 6-day training was conducted in August 2015 for teachers, programme supervisors and coordinators. The major objectives of the training were to build perspective on empowering literacy approaches as well as introduce women-centric adult pedagogy, literacy materials, centre records/MIS, etc. The training also helped the Nirantar team to reflect on the content of the primers and its usefulness in various contexts (used for teaching at the centres), especially keeping in mind the aspects of gender, identity and their rights.
- **MIS Orientation** – The Women's Literacy programme is backed by a robust MIS system that is a mandatory part of programme implementation. Organisations were oriented on the various MIS systems and formats. In addition to this, some modules were also developed to track the learning levels of the learners which have been shared with each organisation. Continuous support is provided to the organisations to help in filling and analysing the modules and formats at their level.

### **Work with Other Organizations**

- **Technology Communications and Livelihoods (TCL) Bahraich, UP** wanted to start a literacy programme for women as part of their livelihood intervention. Nirantar conducted a field visit to understand their context and work, and provided inputs for strategizing their literacy programme and budget according to their requirements.
- **Pararth** is an organisation working with tribal communities on the issues of health, education and livelihood. They have clusters and federations of women who raised the demand for literacy during one of their cluster meetings. Nirantar provided Pararth support in developing a holistic understanding of adult women's literacy. Over a two-day meeting in Sep. 2015 PRA tools were shared with Pararth to help them better understand the women's needs based on which they developed a literacy programme.



- Nirantar provided inputs to **Disha, an organisation based in UP** for a 3-day teacher's refresher training in which ten teachers and five supervisors participated. During the training, word pedagogy, new capacities in language and numeracy, were discussed and inputs on how to carry out issue-based discussions were provided.
- **Samaj Pragati Sahyog (SPS)** has been working in partnership with Nirantar since 2015. Nirantar conducted a two-day orientation training on Literacy Camps, in which strategies on organising literacy camps, their planning, preparation and material creation were discussed.
- **Work with Sahajani Shiksha Kendra** -During the period between April 2015 and March 2016, Nirantar assisted SSK in planning and monitoring their work by facilitating meetings every three months. Other activities that have been conducted with the SSK team were:
  - A Baseline survey was designed and implemented in the field with the help of IMPACT, an organisation which was supporting us with tools and methods to conduct the survey. During this exercise village and Gram Panchayats were selected for launching the Literacy Centres and Information Centres.
  - Organising a 10-day Block-level camp from June 21 to 30, 2015 to mobilise the community before opening the Literacy centres and Information centres.
  - Designed the training module and facilitated a staff training for 6 days from July 7 to 12, 2015, in which 22 new staff members (including field supervisor and coordinators) were oriented towards SSK, staff responsibilities along with the perspective building on women's literacy and empowerment.
  - Designed and conducted a 7 day Teachers' training in the month of October 2015. In this training issues related to pedagogy and issues like violence against women, the burden of work, and the gendered division of roles and responsibilities were discussed.



- Set the MIS system in place along with Impact and helped in outlining the details of the quarterly test papers for the centre learners.
- Organised a 3-day material creation workshop in which 3 posters featuring case studies were developed. A book, '*Geet*' was compiled which covered topics such as literacy, awareness about women empowerment, rights, information, and slogans. A '*Jani Patrika*' was also published, containing issues, information, and perspectives on early and child marriage.
- Developed curriculums on Language, Geography, and Science for the 10-days bridge course programme for adolescent girls.
- Conducted meetings with the Panchayat Pradhaans of Mehrauni, Birdha, and Mandawara blocks on 8th March 2016 to share information about the entire SSK program and simultaneously planned literacy program activities with the female Pradhaan members.

## **Early Marriage, Young People, and Empowerment**



While in our work with women and girls over the years, we have been confronted by issues related to early and child marriage regularly and dealt with it usually on a “case by case” basis, it was only with the “Landscape Analysis on Early and Child Marriage”, a research through which we mapped the discourses and interventions around the issue in India, that we built a holistic perspective for our own engagement with the issue.

Through our study, we found that the discourse around the issue of “child marriage” has often been from a “protectionist” perspective that focuses on increasing the age of marriage without addressing other issues relating to consent, choice and the desires of young people, including the structural issues that make marriage a disempowering institution for women regardless of their age. Analysing the issue from a feminist lens, we found that the existing discourse on early and child marriage, and interventions based on it, are often unable to engage with the complex contexts within which child marriage takes place. Focusing on the agency and empowerment of young people, we found, is central to taking a political



approach to the issue of “early and child marriage”. Within this, we felt the need to highlight issues of gender, sexuality, the centrality of marriage in our lives and the ways in which these issues intersect with the structures of caste, class, religion and patriarchy.

Over the past year, following the publication of the Landscape Analysis of Early and Child Marriage report in English and Hindi, our work has primarily focused on dissemination and advocacy based on our findings, at diverse forums including those for grassroots organisations, international donors and the development community, international coalitions and at the United Nations.

Alongside dissemination efforts, we felt an urgent need to find strategies that would help us take the “political” approach to interventions on early and child marriage. To explore this further, we started an Action Research Project to take forward the learnings and questions that emerged from the Landscape Analysis. In the action research, we focused on trying to understand the struggles and issues of young people around gender, sexuality and marriage, using theatre as a research method. The idea was to explore the possibilities of enabling youth-centric, empowering initiatives where young people can build a shared understanding around issues of gender, sexuality, and marriage as it relates to structures of caste, class, religion etc.

Another learning from the landscape analysis was that grassroots organisations working on early and child marriage often need to build their own capacities to understand issues of gender and sexuality in their own lives, as well as in their work. This capacity building was undertaken through the two-week long course called “Yuva, Yaunikta aur Adhikar”, during which we worked with field level workers of grassroots organisations to find a language that could help us address issues of gender and sexuality and the ways in which it plays out in the lives of young people. During the course, we also worked to help participants develop their understanding of other issues such as labour rights, education, health, disability and how age plays out as an axis of power, especially in the context of young people.

### Dissemination and Advocacy

- **National Dissemination**—The launch of the “Landscape Analysis” report in New Delhi on 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> May marked the start of our dissemination activities. The launch, attended by funders, grassroots organisations from across the country, academics, activists and development practitioners, was the first space where we presented the findings of our study. At the launch, we organised a panel comprised of activists from different movements such as labour rights groups, sex workers’ unions, queer collectives, and women’s movements with an attempt to start a dialogue on how we may come to an integrated political approach to work on early and child marriage, which also connects with the issues of wider social justice. Following this, we invited participants to identify the gaps and challenges within their existing work that may need to be filled, to work with such a political and empowering approach. Organisations highlighted the challenges of working with young people, and the need to work with newly married brides, boys and men and the need to collectivise them in order to deal with the issue at a structural level. Many organisations also identified the need for capacity building inputs to work on issues of gender and sexuality with young people.

Following the launch, we partnered with organisations across four states, namely Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Rajasthan, which are all states with ‘high incidence’ of early and child marriage, to disseminate the findings of the study as well as understand state-specific realities of the issue, and the ways in which our findings resonate with them. Within each state, the broad theme of the consultation was defined by the partner organisation based on what they felt most relevant to their work. In Uttar Pradesh, through our partnership with Sanatkada, we focused largely on age as an axis of power and understanding young people’s struggles around marriage. In Andhra Pradesh, the discussion focused on laws around marriage, particularly the issues of personal laws and the struggles of navigating difficult political realities to continue working on the issue. The discussion in West Bengal and Rajasthan similarly



focused on issues most pertinent to their state realities such as relationship of women's movement with young girl's collective and how they relate those to our findings and articulations of the problem of "early and child marriage".

Additionally, we presented the findings at various forums convened by other organisations, such as UNICEF India (New Delhi), Vikalp (Jaipur), Akshara (Mumbai), and Human Rights Law Network (Jaipur).

- **International Advocacy** – Early and Child Marriage was articulated as a harmful practice that is a form of "violence against women and girls" in the Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted internationally in September 2015. At Nirantar, we found this as a problematic articulation, that invisibilises young people and their desires, and the complex root causes of early and child marriage as they relate to caste, class, race, patriarchy, religion etc. We found that the articulation to "end child marriage" focuses on age at marriage and not at gender inequalities that underline the issue. For this reason, we have been active in attending international spaces that are shaping this discourse to voice the need to include issues of gender, sexuality and young people's empowerment. Presentations made at Commission on Status of Women (New York), Girls Not Brides international meeting (Morocco), and Global Fund for Women meeting (Sri Lanka) have been part of this effort.

Strategically, we also wanted to bring this discourse to international coalitions that do not directly work on the issue, such as International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education. Connecting to the core element of Nirantar's work, we felt that adult education could be an important strategy when working on early and child marriage, particularly to reach out to young married brides, and to use non-formal spaces of learning as a space for dialogue within the community around the structural root causes that lead to early marriage. We organised a panel at the general assembly of ICAE in Montreal, and



represented the issue at an ASPBAE workshop on gender and work. At the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education (APMED 2030) organised by UNESCO in Bangkok, we spoke on the need for investment in non-formal and civil society initiatives in education as a way to mitigate the challenges of young people as they relate to early marriage.

### **Action Research**

There were several ideas and questions from the Landscape Analysis that we hoped to take forward through our action research project. At its core was the question of how we could create spaces for young people to engage with issues of gender, sexuality, caste, marriage and others in a way that would help them create their own language to understand and articulate the ways in which these issues play out in their lives. We also hoped to create a space where they may be able to collectively create strategies to negotiate these issues within their everyday lives. Within this context, we partnered with Akshay Khanna and Effie Makepeace who were developing theatre as a research method at the Institute of Development Studies, to explore the possibilities of using this method within the action research.

The objectives of this action research are multi-fold. At its most basic, the idea is to understand what methods may help us facilitate such conversations with young people, and whether and in what ways can such conversations be empowering. We believe that theatre enables us to talk about knowledge that sometimes is difficult to express with words and is more embodied than verbal. We wanted to experiment with communicating with our bodies, and creating a collective space within which groups of young people make sense of their own experience and each other's experience. We also felt that knowledge thus created should first and foremost be 'disseminated' within the community where it is most relevant. It is not possible to track what different individuals may understand about their own lives and how structures of patriarchy, caste, class, religion play out in them, and how that may influence the way they engage in their everyday interactions. We felt that



there is a need to reach a collective understanding in the group, to find a voice within a community that the young people choose, in order to start a dialogue around some of their issues. This way, we felt that instead of the knowledge emerging from the research being “extracted” from its context and presented elsewhere, it could be performed within the community and thus help raise some critical questions collectively that may be difficult to raise individually.

While developing this method is an important part of the research, it is also aimed at getting a deeper understanding of the contexts within which the method is employed and at making sense of what emerges through theatre within the wider socio-political-economic realities of the community. As a resource organisation, Nirantar also views this as a process through which organisations can get a better understanding of the contexts within which they work, and for us to understand specific areas of capacity building required in order for organisations to make their work more responsive to the contexts and realities of the young people they work with. We are also using this method to understand the ways in which *karyakartas* of grassroots organisations may be able to reflect on their own experiences, and struggles with issues of gender, caste, class etc., which may enable them to then better engage with the young people.

Vikalp (Rajasthan), Vanangana (Uttar Pradesh), and Muskaan (Madhya Pradesh) are our partners in this action research project. Over the past year, we have collectively developed the research methodology and questions, and the organisations have then taken this to two youth groups in each of their fields. The contexts of each of the groups are diverse, ranging from girls' groups, boys' groups, mixed groups, groups belonging to certain bastis, tribes, religious backgrounds, as well as groups that are a mixture of different castes, locations etc. Over the past 6 months of the project, each organisation has facilitated 5-6 workshops with each of their groups and in February 2016 at a reflection meeting, we collectively processed some of the experiences emerging from the field.

### **Capacity Building**

As part of our partnership with AJWS, Nirantar has been identified as a resource organisation to help grassroots organisations implement programs on early and child marriage. Our mandate within this role is to build capacities and a language within which to understand and articulate the root causes of early and child marriage in partnership with grassroots organisations that we partner with. During this last year, we have partnered with 5 organisations, namely Bhartiya Grameen Adivasi Vikas Sangathan (Nagpur), Voices4Girls (Hyderabad), Bhumika (Hyderabad), Kislay (New Delhi) and Pravah (New Delhi and Jaipur). We have also created conversations around sexuality within the discourse of "early and child marriage". While this has been the most difficult to do within "development sector" spaces, compared to grassroots organisations and youth groups, we feel that making those inroads has and will continue to open up possibilities for engaging with issues of sexuality and marriage going forward.

## **Parvaaz Adolescent Centre for Education (PACE)**



After working with women and adolescent girls for more than twelve years in Lalitpur district, Uttar Pradesh, we realised a similar need for literacy and numeracy opportunities for adolescent girls living in the urban resettlement colonies of Delhi. The opportunities for continuing education are very rare for adolescent girls who have dropped out of the formal education system and fewer still for those who were never able to enrol to begin learning literacy and numeracy skills at an older age. This work was envisaged to understand the urban context of Delhi and the lives of adolescent girls in this context. An integral part of our work has also been material creation. We developed a comprehensive curriculum based on the issues and context of these adolescent girls through a gender and sexuality perspective.

### **Writing the Curriculum**

The curriculum has been written using existing resource material from Nirantar and other organisations like Eklavya and TARSHI. Since one of the objectives of this project is to



enable the learners to give their class 8<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> exam, the framework was built keeping in mind the curriculum of NCERT textbooks from class 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>. While the curriculum is written with a gender and sexuality perspective, underlying themes of development, class and caste run through each chapter.

### **Learning Centres**

- **Identification of partners and mobilisation** – We partnered with two community-based organisations, namely, CCSSD (Centre for Community Support and Social Development) in Khanpur and Josh in Trilokpuri, that work on education and youth. Mobilisation was done to identify adolescent girls in the age group of 15 to 23 years who were either never enrolled in school, had dropped out from school or were school going but with low literacy and numeracy levels. Several rounds of focused group discussions were then conducted to better understand their context.
- **Assessment of Learners** – Along with a detailed profile to map the social context of the learners, literacy and numeracy baseline assessments were conducted. At regular intervals, their learning progress was analysed through various written and verbal forms of assessments like tests, quiz, presentations, participation in discussions, and worksheets.
- **Teaching–Learning (TL) Pedagogy** – It was interactive and dynamic since it changed with the emerging needs of the learners (like monthly sports day, picnics, the celebration of festivals and regular parent-teacher meetings). The following were the key TL tools used:
  - **Historical Walks** – To add to the interactive teaching-learning pedagogy, we partnered with Darwesh, a Delhi-based organisation that conducts historical walks across the city. We decided to focus on the themes of water, market



and trade, agriculture, forests and farmer issues. The walks were designed in accordance with these themes, and incorporated activities and used storytelling as a method. We timed it with the facilitation of these chapters in the centres so the two could supplement each other. We went to Mehrauli to talk about water, Chandni Chowk to talk about market and trade and Yamuna to interact with the farmers and learn from the issues of agriculture and water.

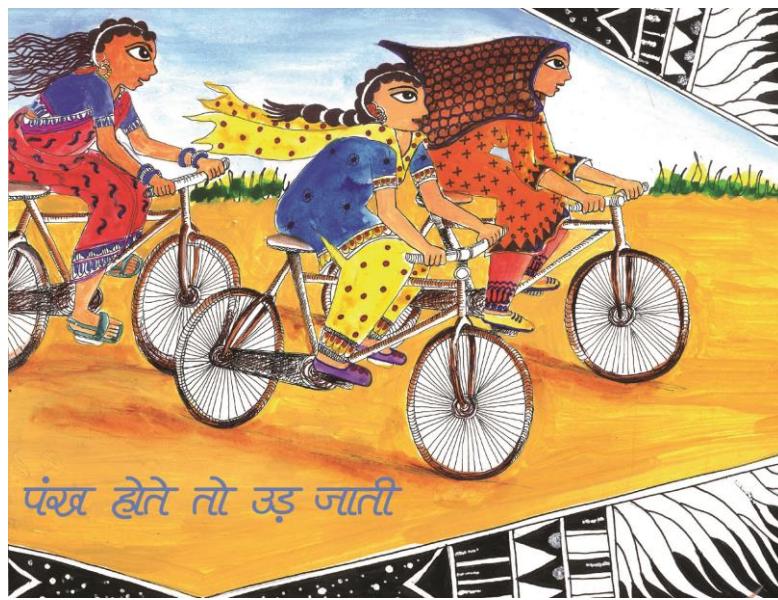
- **Broadsheets** – After working with the girls for several months we decided to work on creating theme based broadsheets. A total of three broadsheets were made on the following themes: how the girls understand Khanpur and Trilokpuri, their perspective towards the education of girls, and on friendship.
- **Theatre Sessions** – To engage more meaningfully and holistically on the theme of adolescence, we used theatre to talk about body, sexuality and relationships. The team working on early and child marriage from Nirantar, facilitated these sessions.
- **Letter Writing** – The learners were asked to write a letter daily to their teacher. This was done to track their literacy progress and to enable them to write about their lives and issues from their perspective. Similarly, the teachers wrote a monthly letter to us, sharing their concerns and experiences of teaching and regarding individual learners.
- **Use of Audio-Visual Aid** – Theme-based documentaries and videos were shown to supplement the written chapters and make the pedagogy more inclusive of different forms of learning.

- **Capacity Building of Teachers –**

- The **first phase** of capacity building was done in the month of July 2015. It covered areas of gender, education and pedagogy. Our Literacy team facilitated the sessions on literacy and pedagogy.
- **Phase two** of the training was in the form of a documentation workshop in December 2015. We collated the various forms of documentation that we had maintained – letters of learners and teachers, the assessment reports of the learners, the detailed documentation of the classroom processes and the planning registers. We chose the themes of violence, family, mobility and relationships, as these are the dominant issues in girls' lives, to compile all the documentation.
- For the **third phase** the teachers participated in Nirantar's annual Yuva, Yaunika aur Adhikar course; of which part 1 took place in February 2016.



## Publications



Nirantar develops and produces a range of gender-sensitive reading and teaching-learning material, making our work as a resource organisation more concrete. The wide range of our material includes curricula, study reports, analytic documents, booklets, and books. Nirantar's publications are produced in a language that is simple, yet not simplistic. The style is entertaining and informative and the material produced is interactive and developed through sustained field engagement.

From April 2015 to March 2016, Nirantar has published following documents:

- **Early and Child Marriage Reports (in Hindi and English)** - The reports provide an analytic overview of the landscape of early and child marriage in India, based on a study conducted in 2014 by Nirantar. These reports are:
  - *Early and Child Marriage In India: A Landscape Analysis*
  - *Bharat Me Kam Umr Me Vivaah Aur Baal Vivah: Paridrishya Ka Vishleshan*



- *Early and Child Marriage in India: A Summary Report*
- *Bharat Me Kam Umr Me Vivaah Aur Baal Vivah: Saransh*
- **Pankh Hote To Udd Jati** - A booklet on early and child marriage in India. This is an important documentation in terms of understanding the various concerns around early and child marriage in India, and raising important questions to the reader on various related issues like the question of agency, age, consent, caste, etc.
- **Wings to Fly, In My Own Sky** – This is a Hindi translation of our booklet on early and child marriage in India ‘Pankh Hote To Udd Jati’.
- **Nirantar Catalogue**—We redesigned our existing catalogue and updated it with our latest publications.
- **Nirantar Brochure** – We redesigned our previous brochure and updated it with our latest initiatives.
- **Nirantar Notebook** – On popular demand, we reprinted our notebook, which is based on our organisational journey and contains experiences of neo-literate women as well.
- **Nirantar Calendar** –This calendar is based on experiences of field workers in feminist organisations specifically about the ‘cycle’.

## **Organisational Development Processes**



Strengthening our organisational processes is an essential part of Nirantar. We do this through various activities around the year which help us in looking back at the work we have done and also help us with planning for the future. These processes include periodic reviews that happen twice a year, capacity building training and organisation development workshops which help us in, strengthening the functioning of teams, creating democratic values for the organisation's functioning and in building capacities of people working in Nirantar to be more effective in achieving organisational objectives.

- **Six Monthly Review, 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

Six monthly reviews are part of the organisational process, where all the teams meet to present their work of the last six months and to plan for the upcoming six months. This is also a time when teams can reflect on the quality of their work. All the team members are encouraged to critically observe and question the work presented by each team so that the respective teams can sharpen their work.

The five teams – Women's Literacy, Sahajani Shiksha Kendra (SSK), PACE, Early and Child Marriage and Accounts and Administration – presented their work, achievements,



challenges, of the last six months, and the planning for the upcoming six months as well. Along with this, the Thursday meeting forum was discussed as a helpful addition to the structure, making the organisational sharing and other processes easier.

- **Organisational Development Workshop, 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

The Organisational development process is an integral part of any organisational structure, where the team is able to look at the organisational processes and reflect on its working during the year. This includes not just reviewing the processes and policies, but also critically analysing the systems which the team are a part of.

In October 2015, we reviewed last year's structure and the additions that were made the previous year, a process facilitated by Dipta Bhog, Gagan Sethi, and Jaya Sharma.

The broad objectives of the OD workshop were –

- 1) to discuss the team dynamics and promote team building practices.
- 2) to discuss and decide the decision-making structure of Nirantar.

The outcome of this process was discussed and finalised during the OD meeting. Regarding the decision-making procedure, a process was undertaken where the team was given the responsibility of working out a new or modified system of decision-making, which is collective and more democratic in nature.

In the last few years, Nirantar's organisational structure has undergone several big and small changes. Each such workshop entails looking back at these processes and structures and how well these have worked out for the organisation and the team.

- **Training of Trainers, 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

Training of trainers is a process in Nirantar where experienced trainers, who have been a part of the organisation, conduct a demonstrative workshop on training skills and capacity building with the organisation's team. One of the primary aspects of our work



is to build capacities and train various kinds of organisations regarding their programs around literacy, gender, and sexuality. Therefore, it is important for us to equip our own trainers at Nirantar with the latest perspectives, reflect on techniques, and brush up skills as well.

A 3-day training of trainers was organised in January 2016 to strengthen the training skills of various project team members at Nirantar. Resource persons invited participants to explore their ideas, perceptions and value judgments upon themes of feminism, gender, and sexuality and sought to question them through games and discussions. The facilitator also tried to build perspective on the inter-sectionality of gender, caste, sexuality, class, and how in varying kinds of training (on literacy, education, etc.) linkages with the theme of gender are made. Participants observed the style in which the activities and discussions are being conducted to develop their own training skills and strategies.

- **Annual Review, 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

The Annual review is an organisational tool used to reflect back on team and overall organisational work and also to lay out planning for the upcoming year. It is an important feature of our collective working and accountability.

The review in 2016 took place in Darjeeling for three days. The annual review design focused more on discussions on the quality of work and the challenges faced by teams during the past year. The teams also utilised this time to brainstorm strategies for making their work more effective in their respective fields. This review was a great opportunity to not only discuss problems faced by teams in their work, but also address some organisational issues and come up with a solution-mechanism as well.