

IMPACT STORIES FORMAT

Story Title	Sangeeta Salvi: A Beacon of Hope and Change in Her Community
Date	01/10/2024
Prepared by	Gayatri Seva Sansthan
Name of partner Organization	Gayatri Seva Sansthan
Name of Daksha/Daksh	Sangeeta Salvi
Name of SKB centre	Bheel Basti
Cluster	Gavdapal
Block	Salumber
District	Udaipur

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:

Sangeeta Salvi, the eldest of three siblings, was born into a family that faced severe financial difficulties after the untimely death of her father. With two younger brothers to support, her mother was left to take on the responsibility of raising the family. She worked as a cook in a local school's mid-day meal program to provide for her children. Despite the challenges, Sangeeta's mother always emphasized the importance of education. Sangeeta herself had always been determined to study, but financial constraints made it difficult to pursue her dreams.

In January 2023, Sangeeta joined the "Sakhion Ki Baadi" program as a Daksha (facilitator) at the Bhil Basti Methudi center, run by the Gayatri Seva Sansthan and supported by the IIFL Foundation. The program focuses on improving girls' education in underprivileged communities, particularly those with limited access to schooling.

CHALLENGES FACED:

Sangeeta faced multiple challenges, both personally and professionally. First, she had to travel 2 kilometers each day to reach the Bhil Basti center, where the community primarily engaged in fishing and labor work. The literacy levels were low, and education, especially for girls, was not a priority. Additionally, after a few months of working as a facilitator, Sangeeta encountered harassment from local troublemakers who tried to disrupt her work. This made her job not only physically exhausting but emotionally draining.

When the situation became unbearable, Sangeeta reported the issue to her Cluster Head and Block Head. In response, a village meeting was organized, where community leaders, including village representative Bhagwati Lal Bhil, teacher Banshi Lal Bhil, and parents, confronted the culprits. The community ultimately provided Sangeeta with a new house in the center of the village, closer to her work, ensuring her safety. The parents of the harassers were also counseled, and the entire community came together to show respect for Sangeeta's dedication to teaching their children.

INTERVENTIONS:

Through her role as a Daksha in the Sakhiyon Ki Baadi program, Sangeeta organized educational activities and celebrated special days like Girl Child Education Day. She also worked with the community to raise awareness about the importance of education, particularly for girls, and fought against harmful practices such as child marriage. The program had a consistent attendance of 24-25 children, and Sangeeta used teaching-learning materials (TLM) and engaging methods to make learning enjoyable for the children.

With the support of the community and program, Sangeeta not only improved the attendance and learning levels at the center but also became an advocate for women's education. She continued her own education, pursuing a B.A. degree, after joining the program.

OUTCOMES:

Sangeeta's impact as a resource teacher has been profound. She successfully enrolled two children from the center into formal schools, with proper verification conducted by the school authorities. Additionally, her efforts extended beyond education to broader social awareness—she actively educated women in the community about government schemes and the dangers of child marriage.

Thanks to her efforts, the value of girls' education is now being recognized in the Bhil Basti community, where literacy levels were previously low. Parents who had little or no education themselves now see the importance of sending their children, especially girls, to school. Sangeeta's own educational journey also continues, as she pursues her B.A. degree, becoming a role model for both the children she teaches and the broader community. Through her perseverance, Sangeeta is transforming not only her life but also the lives of many children and families in her village.

