



Project Nanhi Kali

GŖOMING TENDER MINDS

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”

*– Dr. A. P. J
Abdul Kalam*

The term ‘Nanhi Kali’ means a ‘budding flower’. Just like buds, children too are tender and they grow into beautiful flowers when nurtured with care and provided access to the right opportunities. As per the Census data of 2011 the literacy rate of tribal girls is 50% and scheduled caste women is 56.5% which is lower than that of the national women’s literacy rate of 65.6%. HPCL through its CSR initiatives has worked for gender equality in the country especially in tribal areas and urban slum areas. It is determined to work for better lives of girls and women through education and access to equal opportunities to girls that will bring a ray of hope in their lives. In order to achieve this goal, HPCL has worked hand in hand with the Project Nanhi Kali so that hundreds of girls can fulfil their dreams.



Project Nanhi Kali

Project Nanhi Kali was started in the year 2005 by HPCL in collaboration with K.C Mahindra Foundation in order to shorten the gender gap and bring gender equality. Nanhi Kali is one of the very few educational projects running in several remote tribal areas of Araku region, many of which are affected



A confident Nanhi Kali

by Naxal violence and in the Gawan Pada area of Mumbai. The schools are mostly located near the HPCL factories and refineries.

It is often seen that little girls cannot go to school because they have to work at home, take care of siblings or sometimes even work in the fields in rural areas or work as domestic helps in the urban areas to help their families financially. This project gives free education to the girls that take the burden off their parents. First the girls are academically tested and then are given extra academic classes and trained in various activities after which they are evaluated again to see the difference. The teachers and community associates of Nanhi Kali project convince and encourage the parents to allow their girl child to attend its academic support classes after school hours. The material support in the form of school bags, books, shoes, socks, undergarments, sanitary pads and stationery items has immensely helped in motivating these girls to not just attend the school but actively participate in the learning process within the school as well as outside. For the children, such kind of material support has started to encourage them to come to school and with dignity. The students show a lot of enthusiasm and have won several prizes in different competitions in extracurricular activities like drawing, dancing and singing. Such initiatives have encouraged the girls to come out of the houses and go to school.

Impact

As per an impact assessment report published by Delhi University, the grades of the girls who are under this project have improved to a great extent after they started attending the Nanhi Kali academic support classes. There has always been a concern about the high rate of dropout for girls in the country. Project Nanhi Kali has helped to check the dropout rate amongst the girls as it takes off the economic burden off their parents' shoulders. This project has shown considerable impact as after the project was started there has been significant drop in the number of child marriages, dropout rates, child labour etc. The daily contact with each parents of



Scholars in the making

each child also ensures the safety and well-being of the girls and also helps in preventing child marriages and child labour. Project Nanhi Kali is not only empowering but is also emancipating. Often such initiatives do not reach the girls and women from small dalit communities or tribal villages. Project Nanhi Kali is a path breaking attempt in bringing gender equality in tribal areas, areas that are conflicted or inflicted by violence or Naxal movements.

The projects have been designed in a way that it makes an overall impact on all sectors that include education, health, livelihood and gender. Project Nanhi Kali is a fast growing project and has impacted several lives. It has a great potential and the people involved with the project have great aspirations as well. The project has only been limited to the areas it is working in. In the year 2009 The Right to Education Act was passed by the Indian Parliament and education for all had become a fundamental right. This project ensured that more and more children especially girl children received education as it was their basic right. The project is aligned with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan started by the government of India according to which all children below the age of 14 must get compulsory education. The project has a potential of growing to a greater extent and impact a larger number of people so that the girls who have been deprived of education in this country can break the shackles and fly high. ■

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