

NEWSLETTER

Quarterly Report
April to June 2021



No Veerni Girl will be left behind

Ensuring Continued Access to Education During the Time of Covid-19

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the Veerni Project!

Hope everyone and their families are safe and healthy.

The challenges that started from March 2020 have followed us all into the current year. The 2nd wave of COVID-19 across India has hit us harder than the first one. The entire health system of the country was in a state of shock and panic due to the large number of patients needing treatment and hospitalization. Indeed, as we moved through the town we felt that Hell was on display all around us. It was utterly heartbreaking to see so much helpless suffering on such a large scale.

During the quarter of April 2021 to June 2021, we largely remained under lockdown. In terms of Covid-19, April and May were the most deadly months as the infection spread rapidly and out of control with over 400,000 cases being reported on a daily basis throughout India. However, in the month of June the infection finally started to decline and the government has now begun the slow process of “unlocking” the country. But as per the government guidelines, schools and other educational institutions will remain closed. As a result, we are not allowed to bring girls back to the Veerni Institute.

These are indeed challenging times but we shall emerge from them strengthened and together.

In this edition of the newsletter, we bring you the news of the Veerni Project from the period of April 01st to June 30th.



(Mahendra Sharma)
Director
Veerni Project

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ACTIVITIES OF THE VEERNI PROJECT

APRIL TO JUNE 2021

Departure of the girls:

In the month of April 2021, amidst a sudden surge in Corona-virus cases, the Rajasthan government issued new guidelines to curb the virus spread in the state. On April 10th the state government ordered an immediate shutdown of all schools and educational institutional in the state.

At Veerni, we were very aware of the situation and notified all parents well in advance that they would need to come to the Institute to pick up the girls. On April 11th all Veerni girls were safely sent back home with their parents. In certain instances where parents could not reach the Institute on time, a member of the Veerni staff together with our driver went to each village to safely drop off the girls.



Distribution of essential items provided all girls on departure:

The Veerni team prepared packages and distributed them to the girls before their departure. These parcels included the following:

- Digital Tablets with preloaded study material
- Food packets
- Sanitary Napkin and Medicines
- Sanitizer
- Face Masks
- Uniforms



Academic Results 2020-2021

During the last week of April, the Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education announced it would promote all students of classes 1 to 9 and 11 to the next class due to the Covid-19 infection. This means that all Veerni girls of classes from 6 to 9 and class 11 have been promoted to the next level. As regards classes 10 and 12 - the state government decided to postpone their board examinations.

Following this, on June 23rd, the Minister of Education cancelled the board examinations for classes 10 and 12. It was decided that students' results will be based on their performance over the past two years.

Students who will not be satisfied with the average results they have been given will be offered the chance to sit for an optional exam to improve their scores. These exams will only be held once the Covid situation improves in Rajasthan State. For candidates who take the optional exam, their performance in that exam will be considered final. The results of classes 10 and 12 will be announced within the next 45 days.

Veerni Helpline Number

The Veerni team has remained in touch on a regular basis with all the girls and their families during the time of summer vacation and lockdown. A helpline number has been issued so that whenever the girls need any kind of assistance or support they can contact us on this number. In addition, a WhatsApp group (based on age groups and classes) was formed by the Veerni team to circulate any news that might interest or be important for the girls. Our girls all know that if they need any help, they can easily approach Veerni and the team will provide them with whatever is needed.

It is our pleasure to be able to assure you that at present all Veerni girls and their parents are doing well.

Summer Vacation

On April 20th, the state government announced the summer vacation from April 22 to June 26.



State “Unlocking” process






On June 11th, the State Government relaxed some of the lockdown regulations. On the very day that the “phase-wise unlocking process” began the Veerni staff resumed their work at the office. It is worth mentioning that throughout the lockdown period, four security guards stayed at the Veerni Institute to protect the building. Also, the Director of the Veerni project visited the institute on a weekly basis during those long weeks of lockdown.



Distribution of School Kits the Veerni Girls:

From June 15th onwards, the Veerni staff started visiting villages to distribute school kits to the girls of classes 6 to 12.

School kits comprised the following items: -

-  School bag
-  Books
-  Notebooks
-  Stationery
-  Study material prepared by the school



School kits were distributed by the two Veerni teams which included both our matrons, our nurse and two other staff members. They left every morning to visit the villages. A total number of 63 villages were visited by the Veerni team to distribute the school kits to all our girls.

New Admission:

For the upcoming academic year 2021-2022, we can accept only 11 new girls. Throughout the lockdown period, the Veerni team continued to receive calls from new parents asking to enroll their daughters in the Veerni Institute.

Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 Veerni always conducted entrance exams for potential new students requesting to be accepted to the Institute. However, due to the dangers of infection these exams have not been carried out for two years. Instead interviews of both the new parents and the girls were conducted by the Veerni team at the institute. Based on these interviews, 11 new girls, who were on the waiting list last year, have all been accepted this year.

We have enrolled these new girls in the modern senior secondary school and they have already received the complete school kits containing everything that they will need for their study activities.

It is worth mentioning, that once again this year, parents from lower-middle socio-economic backgrounds have also been approaching Veerni for admission of their girls as they cannot afford their daughters' education and are seeking help from Veerni.



Meeting with School Administration

On June 21st, the Director of the Veerni project, Mr. Mahendra Sharma, called a meeting with the administration of the Modern Senior Secondary School. The Directors of this school, Mr. Traun and Mr. Shakti Singh, attended the meeting which was held at the Veerni Institute.

Mr. Sharma opened the meeting by emphasizing the fact that the safety of all Veerni girls is the institute's top priority and that as soon as the government orders schools to be reopened, all classes for the girls must be conducted within the Veerni building. Only by doing this will we be able to protect our students from being infected by the Covid virus. The school management board has agreed to cooperate on this point.

The future planning of online education was discussed with the school management. The Veerni project will distribute "Tablets" with an internet connection to each and every girl allowing the girls to benefit from modern technology. Veerni is in touch with a tech company and by July 15th, we will be able to distribute "Tablets" to all the Veerni girls.



Discussions emphasized providing interesting, challenging and interactive lessons to the girls so that they would take more interest in digital education.

Mr. Tarun said that the digital contents of all the classes have been prepared by the school management and these will be made available to Veerni in the month of July.

The New Academic Year:

The new academic year started from June 26th, the Veerni team started online classes for class 10th and 12th with the help of the school management. Last year, Veerni distributed 32 Tablets to the Veerni girls. The same Tablets have been issued to the girls of classes 10th and 12th. Preloaded study material has been installed in all Tablets and the girls are presently benefiting from their Tablets. Online education for the rest of the classes will commence during the month of July.

Village visit under School at Doorsteps program

From June 26th, the Veerni staff accompanied by a teacher has started visiting students at their homes to distribute study material and lessons prepared by school management. The completed homework will be collected and new lessons distributed to the girls on a regular basis.





Veerni's Digital Education Programs

Every Veerni girl needs fair and equal access to education. We need to move ahead with the times and cannot expect to use the same old approaches towards learning. We must bridge these educational gaps using technology. That is exactly what our digital education programs are aimed to achieve.

Veerni has always been a pioneer and a forerunner for many new developments. Educational institutes have to change and adapt to the times or they will risk becoming obsolete. Learning is just a mouse click away today. Students nowadays do not like the traditional classroom setting with frontal lectures. Sitting in a classroom simply listening to a teacher is a “yawner”.

Thanks to last year initiative introducing e-classes for the Veerni girls, our students are now more motivated to learn and also have a far better understanding of concepts. These creative classes will surely be the right tool to build the future leaders of tomorrow.

Veerni has included the following digital education programs for the Veerni girls: -

1. Veerni Project Online Learning (VPOL):

This Corona pandemic has forced the teaching and learning process to shift to the online mode. To ensure Veerni's girls do not miss out on studies, we have started online classes alongside the traditional approach.

The Veerni Project Online Learning (VPOL) is a simple and personalized tool which will benefit all our students education. VPOL is a self-learning, students and teacher-supported program. Each girl will be provided with an internet connected TABLET in which all educational and supporting material will have been uploaded- online videos, worksheets, interaction videos and of course live support and problem solving from the teachers. We have seen impressive participation and learning growth in our students from last year's initiative of this VPOL project.

Features of **VPOL**

- **LEARN** - Supplement classroom learning with video lessons including 2D animations.
- **READ**- Read the chapters from the eBook, watch videos and simulation, to help bridge the gap between theory and application.
- **CLARIFY DOUBTS**-Just note down any doubts that you have. Teachers shall be in regular touch with our girls to assist.
- **SELF-TEST** - Take chapter-wise tests to know how much you have learnt.





2. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Program:

As soon as the government instructs the reopening of schools, Veerni will establish technology-friendly classrooms at the Institute.

The new technology will provide the girls with a far higher quality education. This program centers around the establishment of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) equipment with an interactive whiteboard in the classrooms. Our aim is to create Digital Classrooms by utilizing these interactive whiteboards, projectors, laptops and internet online learning resources. Our students will have increased access to technology and innovative learning programs. Clearly this new setup will further empower Veerni students and will provide them with individualized and student-centric learning.

We are very grateful to Butterfield Trust (Switzerland) and the Peters Family who have sponsored this program for the Veerni girls.

Covid-19 Relief Program

During this past quarter the State of Rajasthan was badly and tragically hit by the second wave of the Corona virus. The pandemic has been challenging and far more difficult to control compared to the previous year. However, Veerni continued without a break to work with and to support the marginalized communities of all the Veerni villages. Our girls once again witnessed how the Veerni project works tirelessly to extend support for all people in crisis and in need of care and protection.

Covid-19 relief in the first wave was centered on raising awareness, preventive treatment, providing meals, distributing dry ration kits. In the second wave, we continued with this important relief work to help people living in many of the far outlying Veerni villages.

The programs of the Veerni Project have been largely in the areas of feeding the hungry, providing food kits, providing hygiene kits to many villagers. In addition we also run health outreach programs based on generating awareness about Covid-19 and promoting the importance of vaccinations. The field teams of the project are fully professional and motivated to do everything in their power to serve these vulnerable groups by taking multiple steps to mitigate the sufferings brought by COVID 19.

Distribution of Food and Hygiene Kits

FOOD KIT ITEMS

Rice – 5 Kg
Oil – 1 (1.5 liter)
Green Pulses – 2 Kg
Indian Spices (3 types) – 3 Kg
Salt – 3 Kg
Jiggery – 2 Kg
Flour (Aata) – 5 Kg
Biscuits – 3 Pkt.



HYGIENE KIT ITEMS



Hand sanitizer – 1
Sanitary Napkin – 1 (Pkt.)
Washable Masks – 1
Bathing soap – 2
Laundry soap – 2
Information leaflet and carry bag – 1



Health Outreach Program

The Veerni team visited many villages to perform the health outreach work. Our in house nurse, Ms. Vimlesh, together with the Matrons, conducted Covid-19 awareness meetings in these villages. The following points were covered during these meetings by the team:-

- ☞ **Mask Up:** Mask Up: The team makes villagers aware about the importance of using masks. It was explained to the villagers that in the fight against Covid, masks have emerged as strong, protective armour for source control and prevention. Masks are here to stay and will become the norm even after many have been vaccinated. Masking up is not a choice, it is a necessity. It is our responsibility towards our families, the community and the country. Wearing a mask shouldn't be an imposition, but should become a habit that will eventually help to protect you and others around you.
- ☞ **Promotion of Covid-19 Vaccination:** The Veerni team appealed to all villagers to agree, without hesitation, to be vaccinated and not to get swayed by false rumors.
- ☞ **Personal Hygiene:** It is time to observe personal hygiene, social distancing and to avoid medium size or large gatherings until the virus subsides and the situation returns to normal.



Vaccination for the Veerni team

We are happy to inform you that the entire Veerni team has been vaccinated with the first dose of the Covid vaccine.



It is of prime importance, and the Veerni Project is proud of the fact that we have been able to reach out to all the Veerni girls throughout these difficult times and have succeeded in engaging them with educational projects. Had it not been the case Veerni may have been faced by parents who would prefer to stop their daughter's education by marrying them and sending them off to live with their in-laws. We are happy to inform you that there has not been a single dropout from the Veerni Institute during this pandemic.

We would like to thank very much the board members of the Global Foundation for Humanity and Fondation Veerni, also to all our associates for all the generous support. Special thanks to Ms. Jacqueline de Chollet for her valuable advice and moral support given to the Veerni Project.



VEERNI
EMPOWERING GIRLS

Published by:
Veerni Sansthan, Jodhpur

E-mail:
veerni.veerni@gmail.com
info@veerni.org

Visit us at:
www.veerni.org

REGISTERED ADDRESS
Veerni Sansthan

**5C - 26, Kudi Bhgtasni
Housing Board,
Jodhpur - 342001 (Rajsthan) - India**

ADDRESS
Veerni Institute

**Ramraj Nagar, Chokhan,
Jodhpur (Rajsthan) - India**