

The Veerni Project



Newsletter

July - September 2021

October 07th, 2021.

Dear Friends,

This quarter brings some good news regarding the infection of Covid-19. The cases started to decrease in Rajasthan and in India. The State government lifted some of the restrictions imposed in the second Covid wave, but schools and other educational institute weren't allowed to open.

During this quarter, Veerni continued to provide education through Veerni's unique educational programs called "School at Doorsteps and Digital Education Program" to all the 110 Veerni girls.

The team has been visiting villages to provide education to the Veerni girls. Veerni established the digital classrooms at the Veerni institute under the ITC Program (Information, Communication and Technology). Also under Veerni's digital education program, Veerni distributed "Tablets" with education contained to the Veerni girls of classes of 6 to 8.

The results of board classes have also been announced in this quarter, Veerni girls achieved a remarkable feat, and all the girls cleared their board exams with a good percentage.

In the month of September, owing to the dip in the Covid cases, the Rajasthan Government allowed the re-opening of schools for classes 9 to 12 with 50 percent capacity. The Veerni Institute reopened for Classes 9 to 12.

At Veerni, we feel fortunate to have been able to reach out to the all the Veerni girls, their families and villagers of the previously Veerni's adopted villages with essential services catering to their basic needs like food, education, healthcare.

We are grateful to all the supporters to undertaking this journey with us. It was not an easy year for anyone, there are still many loose ends, many unanswered questions, many unresolved issues. It will take time and dedication to move forward, take up the challenges and start solving them, and we will need more support than ever from our supporters in coming years.

In this edition of the newsletter, we bring you the news of the Veerni Project from the period of July 01st to September 30th, 2021.



(Mahendra Sharma)
Director
Veerni Project

ACTIVITIES OF THE VEERNI PROJECT

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2021

From July to September, the Veerni team has been visiting villages to provide education to the Veerni girls. The programs called “School at Doorstep and Digital Education” have been continuously carried on by the Veerni team.

110 Veerni girls have been learning through the **School at Doorstep program**, on a daily basis, Veerni matrons, nurse and teachers have been carrying out Veerni girls' home visit to provide learning materials and worksheets.

Under **Veerni's Digital Education Program**, Veerni distributed “Tablets to girls from classes 6 to 8. The school management has developed the study materials for the Tablets, the materials have been installed in the “Tablets”. The best part of these tablets is that the girls can now learn online also as these “Tablets are connected with the internet; schools are conducted online classes for the Veerni girls on daily basis. It is worth mentioning that last year, Veerni had distributed “Tablets to girls from classes 9 to 12. With the help of these Hi-tech Tablets, Veerni students will be able to stay connected with online studies from school. They will also be able to do their board exam preparation more effectively with the help of Tablets. To provide Tablets to the Veerni girls is one of the historic decisions of the Veerni Project.

Result of Board Examination – Academic year 2020-2021

Veerni girls have done it again... Keeping the record of last five years, student of the board classes again achieved 100 percent pass percentage in the Rajasthan State Board Examinations year 2020-2021.

Result of Class 10th

S.No	Name	Father Name	Section	Division	Percentage
1	Mamta	BhanwarLal	All Subject	1 st division	95.00
2	DurgaKanwar	Inder Singh	All Subject	1 st division	93.83
3	HemaKanwar	Dalpat Singh	All Subject	1 st division	93.00
4	Varsha	Kailashchandar	All Subject	1 st division	92.00
5	Anamika	Doolat Ram	All Subject	1 st division	91.50
6	Khushaboo	Durgaram	All Subject	1 st division	91.00
7	NeetuKanwar	Mahendrasingh	All Subject	1 st division	91.00
8	Bhagwati	Motiram	All Subject	1 st division	90.00
9	Bhawna	Bajrang Singh	All Subject	1 st division	89.83
10	JyotiKanwar	Sher Singh	All Subject	1 st division	87.00
11	Kareena	Bhiyaram	All Subject	1 st division	86.50
12	Gouri	Manish Shakhla	All Subject	1 st division	85.83
13	SoniyaKanwar	Sharwan Singh	All Subject	1 st division	84.00
14	Amita	Raju Ram	All Subject	1 st division	83.00
15	DilkhushKanwar	Bhawani Singh	All Subject	1 st division	81.00
16	Nisha	Sajjan Singh	All Subject	1 st division	81.00
17	Sarita	Rajuram	All Subject	1 st division	81.00



Result of Class 12th – Science Stream

S.No	Name	Father Name	Section	Division	Percentage
01	Kiran	Hanuman Ram	Sc. Maths	1 st division	94.60
02	Deepika	Balkishen	Sc. Bio	1 st division	93.40
03	SanayLata	Surender Singh	Bio	1 st division	89.60
04	Shilpha	Shaitan Ram	Bio	1 st division	88.20

Result of Class 12th – Arts Stream

S.No	Name	Father Name	Section	Division	Percentage
1	Krishna kanwar	Ridmal Singh	Arts	1 st division	91.80
2	Nandani	Suresh	Arts	1 st division	87.80
3	Seema	BhanwarLal	Arts	1 st division	85.80
4	Laxmi Vijay	Surender Singh	Arts	1 st division	85.80
5	Baby	Bhunda Ram	Arts	1 st division	79.40
6	Baby	Khumbha Ram	Arts	1 st division	77.60
7	Dhapu	kana Ram	Arts	1 st division	75.20

Overall Results – 2020-2021

The class-wise result is given below:-

Veerni Institute		
Class Details	Number of Girls	Passed
Class 6th	7	7
Class 7th	13	13
Class 8th	13	13
Class 9th	16	16
Class 10th	16	16
Class 11th	14	14
Class 12th	11	11
Total Girls	90	90

The Veerni Balika Program		
Class Details	Number of Girls	Passed
Class 6th	1	1
Class 7th	7	7
Class 8th	5	5
Class 9th	6	6
Class 10 th	1	1
Total Girls	20	20



Result of Board Examination

**11 Girls Appeared
in class 12th board
exam**

**17 Girls Appeared
in class 10th board
exam**



**11 Girls passed
with
first division**

**17 Girls passed
with
first division**

Reopening the Veerni Institute

On September 1st, a decision was taken by the State of Rajasthan to reopen all schools for classes 9 to 12 with 50 percent capacity throughout Rajasthan. Certain mandatory restrictions and ground rules have been established which include a written consent form that all parents are obligated to sign taking responsibility upon themselves when allowing their children to return to school. On August 25th, Veerni Matrons, nurse and other in-house Veerni staff joined the institute.

Preparation at the Veerni Institute:

Sanitization of the entire building, furniture, equipment, kitchen, toilets, water tanks was performed by the Veerni staff. Veerni ensured that there is a continuous supply of available sanitizers. Covid awareness posters were displayed in the Veerni Institute. It was decided that no social events, prayers, or other activities will be held.

Arrival of the Veerni girls

In accordance with the State announcement to re-open schools, Veerni invited girls as per below mentioned schedule: -

Date	Class	No of girls
Oct 2, 2021	9 th	17
Oct 5, 2021	10 th	23
Oct 9, 2021	11 th and 12 th	31
		71

We housed 61 girls in the main Veerni building and 10 girls housed at Veerni Balika Centre.



The following procedures have been done on the arrival of the Veerni girls: -

- The outside grounds at the entrance were marked with large well-spaced white circles showing each family where to stand.
- The girls were invited to arrive accompanied by a parent at specific times so as to avoid crowding.
- Counselling Tents manned by our staff were set up to receive girls.
- Each girl has been provided hand sanitizers and a new water bottle.
- Parents and students first had their temperatures taken on arrival.
- Explanations and briefings were given in great detail as to how each girl needs to conduct herself under the strict Covid rules and regulations inside and outside the buildings.

Health Check-up on Arrival:

Each Veerni girl underwent a complete health check-up as instructed by Dr. Deora. If there was the slightest suspicion of Covid the girls were sent for testing.

In-House Classes for the Veerni girls at the Institute

The safety of the Veerni girls is the priority of the Veerni project. This year again, we decided that it is in the best interest of the girls to continue their studies within the confines of the Institute instead of venturing out to mingle with other girls from their school, thereby endangering their own health and possibly being infected by Covid-19 virus.

School administration agreed to send their teachers to the Veerni institute to teach our girls. We experienced last year that because the classes are smaller in number, the girls are also receiving far greater personal attention boosting their studying capabilities and achievements.



Establishment of I.C.T. (Information, Communication and Technology) Program

Veerni established technology-friendly classrooms for the girls at the Veerni Institute. The idea is to setting-up an ICT (Information and Communication Technology) with an interactive whiteboard in the classrooms. The aim of this program is to create digital classrooms by utilizing interactive whiteboards, projectors, laptops, internet and online learning resources, so girls will have increased access to technology and innovative learning programs.

Four well furnished digital classrooms have been developed at the Veerni institute. The following components of a Digital Classroom are:-

- **Projector**
- **A laptop**
- **Interactive Device**
- **White Board (Matt finish)**
- **Speakers**

This new setup at the Veerni institute will empower Veerni students. Now, the Veerni students are receiving high quality education in the technology friendly classrooms and Veerni will be able to provide individualized and student-centric learning to the Veerni girls.

Establishing the digital classrooms at the Veerni institute is one of the historic decisions for the Veerni Project. There is a wave of enthusiasm among the Veerni girls about this digital education.

Veerni is very grateful to Butterfield Trust – Switzerland and the Peters family who have sponsored this program for the girls.



Feedback from Veerni students: -

- Harshita - class 10th: Veerni institute's digital classrooms make study enjoyable



- Neetu Kanwar - class 11th Science: The 3D animations and multiple chapter tests help a lot in study – I love it.



- Anamika - class 11th: The digital content helps me learn tough chapter very easily with the help of videos, animations and virtual lab experiments. Thank You – Veerni Sansthan.



Independence Day (Virtual Celebration)

This year's Independence Day celebration was also limited in the wake of the corona virus pandemic. Veerni celebrated online Independence Day on August 15th, Veerni girls performed the function under the guidance of the Veerni staff in the safety of their homes. Veerni staff gave the students a song and a dance number, and they sang/performed in the confines of their homes and sent us back the videos. Later, Veerni staff went to the villages to distribute gifts/prizes to the girls who have participated in the event.

Health Activities at the Veerni Institute

The Veerni Institute is visited once a week by Dr. A.S. Deora to provide medical services for the girls. In addition they receive daily medical care from Ms. Vimlesh (out in-house and permanent nurse). Health education lectures are given regularly by Ms. Vimlesh and the topics covered are seasonal diseases, eye care, use of sanitary napkins, and other important health related matters.



Girls' Daily routine at the Veerni Institute and Veerni Balika

Activity	Timing
Wake up alarm	05.30 am
Wash and Change	05.30 am-06.30 am
Morning Attendance and Pray in Rooms	06.35 am-07.00 am
Milk and Biscuits	07.00 am-08.00 am
Some free time	08.00 am-09.00 am
Breakfast	09.00 am-09.55 am
School (Classes held at the Veerni Institute)	10.00 am-01.35 pm
Lunch	02.00 pm-03.00 pm
Rest time	03.00 pm-04.00 pm
Study hours (at Smart classes)	04.00 pm-05.30 pm
Independent time	05.30 pm-06.00 pm
Home work and online study	06.00 pm-07.00 pm
Rest Time / Quality time with other girls	07.00 pm-07.30 pm
Dinner	07.00 pm-08.30 pm
Study periods	08.30 pm-09.30 pm
Personal time	09.30 pm-10.00 pm
Lights Out	10.00 pm
Note: Every Saturday and Sunday girls enjoy dance and music in their dormitories.	

Veerni girls have taken Covid fight to a different level in their villages:

With the help of the Veerni team, Veerni's girls have also taken charge to educate and protect their villages from the virus. Girls helped Veerni team to distribute masks, creating awareness about prevention while other played their role in busting myths.

- **Tanisha** from village Mortuka, make people aware about the Covid in her village; she said “When the Veerni team visited our village; we helped them in distribution of Hygiene Kits.
- Class 11th student **Sarita** from village Biradawas; puts her effort in generation awareness on spread of Covid and motivated community members to wear masks.
- **Varsha**, a 15 year old girl from village Mortuka has visited door to door with Veerni team to spread awareness about Covid appropriate protocol.
- **Priyanka** an 18 year old girl from Meghwalon ki Dhani village, who studied in class 12, facilitated distribution of hygiene products with the help of Veerni. She said “To address the paucity of sanitary napkins in our village, I contacted Vimlesh Ma'am (Veerni nurse) and facilitated of distribution of hygiene kits.
- **Pooja** class 12 girl from village Meghwalon ki Dhani has also motivated family members to overcome vaccine hesitancy.

Health Outreach Program

The Veerni team is continuously spreading awareness of Covid-19 amongst villagers so that people know how to keep themselves and their families safe.



Distribution of Food and Hygiene Kits

Veerni team has been continually distributing the Food and Hygiene Kits to the Veerni girls, their families and needy people of the villages.



Village Education for classes 6 to 8:

As per the state government directed schools have to promote the continuation of online learning for all the classes 6 to 8. For the girls of classes 6 to 8, the Veerni teams continue to visit the girls at their homes on a regular basis to monitor their progress. The team provides new lessons and collects the old ones also. Veerni team is monitoring their online classes which is conducted by the school on daily basis.

Media Coverage on the Veerni Project

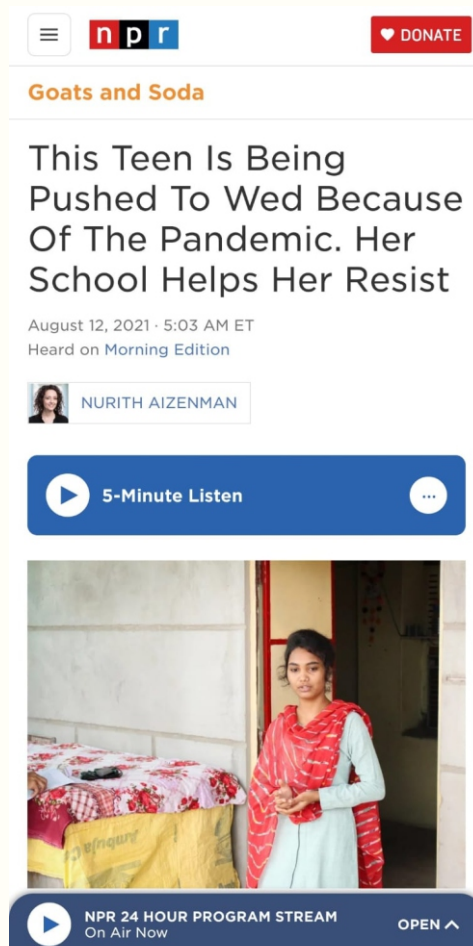
National Public Radio: In the month of August, National Public Radio (NPR) has approached Veerni for a story on the Veerni girl during the time of the pandemic. Ms. Nurith Aizenman a correspondent from NPR conducted a telephonic interview with the Director of the Veerni project to get to know about the recent work of the Veerni Project. She was impressed with the Veerni's work during the pandemic. She requested to do a story on a Veerni girl and wanted to do interview one of the Veerni girl. A Veerni girl called Komal was interviewed by Nurith and later it was published and broadcasted on NPR on August 11th.

The title of the article was "This Teen Is Being Pushed To Wed Because Of The Pandemic. Her School Helps Her Resist". This piece was appreciated by a lot of people. Many people approached Veerni for their support.

Link of the article is given below: -

"This Teen Is Being Pushed To Wed Because Of The Pandemic. Her School Helps Her Resist".

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2021/08/12/1026197305/this-teen-is-being-pushed-to-wed-because-of-the-pandemic-her-school-helps-her-re>



The Gendered Impact of COVID-19 on Education

India's ambitions for education are essentially captured in the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030. It is also committed to eliminate gender disparities in education, reaffirming the belief that education is a powerful tool in empowering women and enabling them to live a life of dignity.

The challenge is with secondary education as the dropout rate of adolescent girls is higher at secondary level (19.8%) than primary (6.3%). Further, while the net enrolment ratio of girls in elementary schools is 91.58%, it declines as they grow older with 52.57% for secondary and 31.42% for higher secondary. Hence, though a large proportion of girls enroll in primary schools, very little transition to higher classes and complete their school education till class 12.

Adolescence, a period between the ages 10 – 19 years, is a critical stage in every girl's life marked by a decision to either transition to secondary school, enter into the labour market, or get married. Girls, especially from villages or poorer households, face multiple challenges in completing their education. These barriers are a combination of demand-side and supply-side factors including economic, household level, school level, and cultural reasons. Understanding and supporting this group is critical to closing the gap in secondary education.

There is now a growing concern that COVID-19 might amplify these barriers and increase the gender gap in education. Girls are at more risk than boys of being discriminated against in terms of access to technology, household chores, and child marriage. Before COVID-19, India had 30 million out-of-school children, out of which 40% were adolescent girls. It is projected that post COVID-19, close to 10 million secondary school girls might dropout and a large number of these can be from India.

The potential impacts of COVID-19 on girls' education are numerous. The most direct impact has been through the shutting down of schools to curb the spread of the virus. Since then, distance learning facilities have been adopted to facilitate children's learning during school closures. However, it has failed to reach all students due to the massive digital disparity across wealth, location, and gender.

In India, the poorest girls and those living in rural areas have much less access to technology than boys. There exists a 50% gender gap in mobile internet users in India where 21% of women and 42% of men use mobile internet. Moreover, an assessment on issues faced by adolescents during COVID-19 found that more boys than girls had access to digital infrastructures such as mobile phones, internet services, radio, and media. With such low access to technology, digital schooling will further disengage girls from education and widen the educational inequalities among learners.

Even if girls do have access to technology at home, they are more likely to be disproportionately burdened with domestic responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, sibling care, collecting water, especially since schools, anganwadi, and child care centers are closed. The burden of household responsibilities keeps girls away from education and limits their learning opportunities. Household chores is one of the most commonly cited reasons by women for discontinuing their education. Among the percentage of ever enrolled women (3-35 years) currently not attending education, 30.2% reported engagement in domestic activities as their reason for discontinuing education.

Besides school closures, the widespread loss of livelihoods due to COVID-19 will also impact girls' education. Many might dropout of the education system as the financial and opportunity cost of girls' education is higher than boys', especially for poor households. Thus, as families go through economic hardships, it is likely that they reconsider the above costs associated with their daughters' education. This becomes a bigger issue for adolescent girls since secondary education is not free of cost, unlike primary education. Further, there already exists a pro-male bias in the intra-household allocation of education expenditure, which gradually increases from primary up to the secondary stage. This can be through the non-enrolment of girls in schools or lower expenditures on her schooling.

Both, the lack of access to schools and economic hardships due to COVID-19 puts girls at a higher risk of gender-based violence and forced child marriage. Early marriage robs girls of their childhood and pulls them out of the education system.

In situations of a crisis, families often view marrying off their daughters as a measure to ensure the safety and well-being of the girl child's future. India already bears the world's largest share of child brides equalling 23 million and is predicted to rise due to the pandemic.

Furthermore, Rajasthan has the biggest gender divide of 23.2% in terms of literacy rate across the country, making it one of the most gender unequal states. The national statistical office report released in January 2021 says the literacy rate among male in survey year (2017-2018) was 80.08%, while for female it was 57.6%, in this pandemic, the number are even more alarming. The literacy rate of females in state is the second-worse in the country.

Veerni has taken measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on girls' education:

Though alarming, these facts and figures, reassert the importance of the Veerni Project. Veerni had put all its efforts to ensure that the Veerni girls stay connected with education and continue to be engaged in learning during the pandemic by providing access to technology such as Tablets with free data packs, also distributed learning materials like the textbooks and printed material so that Veerni girls can study at their convenience. Veerni also made sure that girls adopt good hygiene practices.





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