



Rotary  
India Literacy Mission

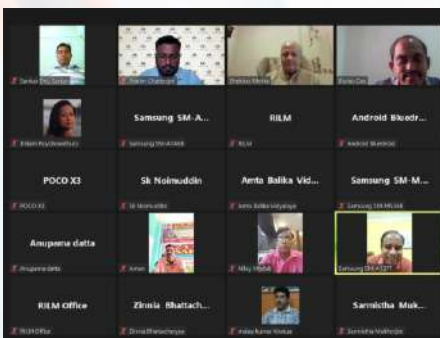
# Literacy Times

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www.rotaryteach.org

## RILM and Howrah Municipal Corporation Connects to Extend Adult Literacy Program



**R**otary India Literacy Mission and Howrah Municipal Corporation joined hands to ensure Total Literacy in the Howrah District. As a part of this initiative recently, Rotary India Literacy Mission organized a virtual orientation program with Head-Masters and Teacher Coordinators from 20 Govt. Senior Secondary

schools of Howrah district (West Bengal), on the implementation of Adult Literacy program, through its 'Diksha' Model, where Student-Volunteers will teach Adult Learners and make them functionally literate.

The event, graced by eminent dignitaries, witnessed insightful contributions from notable figures such as Shekhar Mehta, the past president of Rotary International, and the Chief Advisor of RILM. Additionally, elected leaders from the Howrah Municipal Corporation, alongside government officials including the Mayor, the District Inspector of Schools, the Assistant District

Inspector, and representatives from Samagra Shiksha Mission, shared their perspectives and extended their support towards this noble cause.

By harnessing the potential of student-volunteers and leveraging collaborative efforts between educational institutions and government bodies, the 'Diksha' initiative is poised to bring about a positive transformation in the educational landscape of the Howrah district. As the initiative progresses, it is expected to not only enhance literacy rates but also foster a culture of lifelong learning and empowerment within the community.

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## Supporting others can bring Happiness into your Life!

**T**he Rotary India Literacy Mission, in association with the India Food Banking Network, has taken an inspirational step towards making the world a better place. We have launched the 'Annapurna' Food Project, a free ration support program for 450 underprivileged children. By providing essential food items (4 kg of rice, 1 kg of masoor dal, 1 kg of salt, 1 kg of oil, and 100 gm of turmeric powder) to these children



for an entire year, Rotary aims to make a significant impact on their lives. This program is set to bring a ray of hope to those in need. You too can participate and experience the joy of giving back to society.

# Message from PRIP Shekhar Mehta on Behalf of Team RILM



Dear readers

Greetings from Rotary India Literacy Mission!

Welcome to this latest edition of Literacy Times, where we proudly showcase the impactful endeavors of our 'Vidya' and 'Diksha' initiatives, operating within the Adult Literacy program. Our mission is simple yet profound: to ensure equitable access to education and learning resources for every Adult Non-Literate individual across our nation, thereby empowering them to become literate, giving back their dignity to become contributing citizens.

Through the relentless efforts of the Rotary India Literacy Mission, we have already reached over 150,000 adult learners in India. Presently, 75,000 learners are actively engaged in various Adult Literacy centers nationwide, becoming literate.

The potential for impact is immense, and it hinges greatly on your support. By sponsoring at least one adult learner for Rs. 350 at a 'Vidya' center or Rs. 100 per adult learner through the 'Diksha' program, you can contribute to this transformative cause and help these numbers grow exponentially.

In this version, be ready to read some of the incredible stories from the ground of the various initiatives of Rotary India Literacy Mission. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all my fellow Rotarians, Rotary Clubs, Individuals, and Partner organizations across the country who have united with us in the Rotary India Literacy Mission. Together, let us strive to make India Totally Literate. You may visit [www.rotaryteach.org](http://www.rotaryteach.org) to get involved and learn more about Rotary India Literacy Mission.

With Warm Regards

*Shekhar Mehta.*

Shekhar Mehta  
(President, Rotary International, 2021-22)  
Chief Advisor of RILM





# What's New!

## New Partnership to save more children from drop-outs through Asha Kiran

**O**n March 21st, 2024, RILM entered into an MOU with the Sundarban Social Development Center (SSDC) to establish 5 Asha Kiran centers in Kolkata and its surrounding areas. The primary objective of these centers is to mainstream 200 children who have never been to school, dropped out, or are lagging behind in their studies in government and government-aided schools. The Rotary Club



of Calcutta Mahanagar will be partnering with RILM to achieve this goal.

## Books are Weapons to Encourage Development!



**I**nternational Children's Book Day is a yearly celebration held on April 2nd to encourage and honor the importance of reading among children all over the world. This event has had a significant impact on children's lives, promoting their creativity, imagination, and love of learning.

The Rotary India Literacy Mission has recently established a 'Padho Bharat Library' in Garden Reach Mudiali Girls' High School, Kolkata, one of the hundreds of such libraries created across India. The library has more than 1,50,000 books, including 1100 books, and is a great resource for students to expand their knowledge and understanding of the world.

If you are enthusiastic about promoting literacy and want to be part of this noble initiative, you can visit [www.rotaryteach.org](http://www.rotaryteach.org) to learn more about how you can contribute. The book partner for this initiative is Orient Blackswan, and the Rotary Club of Calcutta is the coordination partner.

## Power Packed Meeting Leads to Future Collaboration

**O**ur Chief Advisor, Shekhar Mehta (President of Rotary International for 2021-22), recently had a meeting with Dr. Nitin Karmalkar, the former Vice-Chancellor of Pune University and current Chairman (Maharashtra) of the National Education Policy (NEP) in India. The meeting was attended by other members of Rotary International as well.

The aim of the meeting was to discuss the #MakingMaharashtraTotallyLiterate initiative, which is a part of the Rotary India Literacy Mission's goal to achieve



#MakeIndiaTotallyLiterate under the NEP. The Rotarians present at the meeting were gearing up to work towards this goal.





# ‘Vidya’ (Each One Teach Many) - Updates

## Local NGO and RILM Join Forces to Empower Adults in South 24 Parganas

In a transformative initiative, Shyamnagar Kadambini Sewa Samity, a grassroots NGO, has partnered with Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM) to bring the light of literacy to the unreached community of Nalgara in South 24 Parganas. Through the establishment of 20 'Vidya' centers, 800 non-literate adults are being equipped with the invaluable skills of reading and writing.

Khudiram, a 55-year-old resident of Nalgara, is among the many individuals whose lives have been touched by this initiative. With a child-like smile illuminating his face, Khudiram shared his journey from illiteracy to newfound literacy. "Nobody provided us any opportunity to learn how to read and write," he recounted. "But I will never forget the moment when Team RILM came to me and told me about the Adult Literacy program... I can now read and write on my own."

The collaboration exemplifies the power of partnerships in driving positive change at the



grassroots level. By combining their resources, expertise, and passion for education, they have been able to make a tangible difference in the lives of hundreds of individuals in Nalgara.

With each success story like Khudiram's, the impact of this initiative reverberates throughout Nalgara, inspiring others to embrace the opportunity for learning and transformation.

## Significant Progress Towards Making India Totally Literate!



In a significant stride towards achieving total literacy in India, another 1000 non-literate adults are currently undergoing transformative education through 25 'Vidya' centers in South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. This initiative is part of the RILM-Adult Literacy 'Vidya'

program, conducted in collaboration with the esteemed Rotary Club of Calcutta Mahanagar.

In association with a local NGO partner South Iswaripur Kadriya Siddikia Hefjul Qurania Eathimkhana Madrasa, these centers have become hubs of learning, offering a pathway to literacy for adults who have long been denied access to education. Through a comprehensive curriculum and the dedicated efforts of teachers and volunteers, participants are gradually mastering the fundamental skills of reading and writing.

From farmers to homemakers, individuals from diverse backgrounds have seized this opportunity to enrich their lives and expand their horizons. With each adult gaining the power of literacy, the vision of a fully literate India draws closer to realization, one step at a time.





## Empowering Lives:

### RILM's Adult Literacy Program Transforms Communities in Howrah

**H**azara Khatoon, a 24-year-old resident of Tikia Para, Howrah, West Bengal, beams with pride as she shares her journey from illiteracy to literacy. "For you, it might be a simple thing... but for me, it's a lifetime achievement," she expresses with heartfelt gratitude. "Trust me... the RILM-Adult Literacy program has given me a pathbreaking opportunity to reveal my life in a better way... you can't imagine how happy I am now! I can read... write everything on my own."

Hazara's story is just one of many unfolding in the interior parts of Tikia Para through the commendable efforts of Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM) and Kajla Janakalyan Samity, a local NGO. Together, they are working tirelessly to bring the gift of literacy to those who have been deprived of it since their childhood.

In this remote area of Howrah, where access to education is limited, RILM and Kajla Janakalyan Samity have established 10 'Vidya' centers, serving as hubs of learning and empowerment. Through these centers, more than 280 non-literate adults, like Hazara Khatoon, have already embarked on their journey toward literacy and self-discovery.



The impact of the Adult Literacy program extends far beyond the ability to read and write; it is about restoring dignity, building confidence, and opening doors to a world of opportunities previously out of reach. As Hazara's testimonial illustrates, the transformation brought about by the Adult Literacy program is profound and life-changing. It is a testament to the power of education to break the cycle of poverty and empower individuals to take control of their destinies.

Let us stand together in solidarity with individuals like Hazara Khatoon, as they rewrite their stories and chart a new course towards a brighter future.

## 'Vidya' arrives Mumbai, India to Transform Non-Literate Adults into Literate Citizens



**T**he newly launched 60 'Vidya' Adult Literacy centers in Dharavi, Mumbai have achieved a remarkable breakthrough. Rotary India Literacy Mission and Rotary Club of Bombay have come together to help 1500 adults who did not have the chance to learn how to read and write. This is a significant achievement, and we are thrilled to have a local NGO partner, The Overlooked FAM, working alongside us. We believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to learn and grow, and we're honored to be a part of this mission to help Make India Totally Literate. Would you like to join us in this noble cause?





# Alipurduar NGO Empowers Non-Literate Adults Through 'Vidya' Program

Despite her eagerness to learn, Sharmila never had the opportunity to attend school and become literate due to her family's financial constraints. As a result, she became a non-literate adult. Sharmila's dreams of attending school were dashed early on in life. Lacking basic literacy skills, she found herself unable to read, write, or perform simple arithmetic tasks. One of our dedicated Akshar Sathis (a person who teaches a group of adult non-literates) spoke with her and encouraged her to join our 'Vidya' center in her village, organized by DAMRI, a local NGO in Alipurduar.

Initially, it was difficult for Sharmila to overcome her shyness and age-related challenges and acquire learning skills. However, our team members were there to offer her the best support and motivation she needed. After a series of enriching 60 sessions, Sharmila, a 25-year-old homemaker, is now a member of a local SHG (Self Help Group) and is learning a few words, letters, and arithmetic. We couldn't be more thrilled to support her on this journey towards literacy and education.



Our goal is to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, has access to education and the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

The impact of the Adult Literacy program extends beyond the individual participants, reaching into families, neighborhoods, and the broader community. As more individuals gain the ability to read, write, and engage with the world around them, the ripple effects of empowerment and transformation are felt far and wide.

## Rotary Club of Delhi Janak Expands Adult Literacy Reach with New Center in Nangloi



The Rotary Club of Delhi Janak has inaugurated its second Adult Literacy center, this time in Nangloi. The initiative,

spearheaded by the Adult Literacy National Committee Chair, Mr. Ramesh Chander, underscores a concerted effort to accelerate the mission to #MakeIndiaTotallyLiterate.

The newly opened center stands as a new opportunity for adults in Nangloi who have long yearned for the platform to learn and grow. With access to educational resources and dedicated support, individuals from diverse backgrounds now have a chance to enhance their literacy skills and expand their horizons.

Through collaborative efforts and collective action, they aim to pave the way for a more literate and prosperous future for all.





## Rotary India Literacy Mission and Local NGO Partner to Empower Adults with Literacy in South 24 Parganas, West Bengal

**R**otary India Literacy Mission has joined hands with the Sondalia Minority & Backward Social Welfare, a local NGO, in Dakshin Barasat, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. Their collaborative efforts have successfully transformed over 950 non-literate adults into literate citizens.

The initiative, aimed at fostering a more literate society, has deployed Akshar Sathis, individuals dedicated to teaching groups of adult non-literates within communities. Presently, these Akshar Sathis are actively operating from 25 centers in the region, providing adults with the



opportunity to lead lives with greater dignity and empowerment.

The initiative not only promotes education for all but also emphasizes the importance of adult literacy in building a more inclusive society.

## RILM and Rahul Seba Samity Joined hands to Transform Adult Learners in South 24 Parganas

**I**n a transformative initiative aimed at bridging the literacy gap, Rahul Seba Samity, a local NGO, in collaboration with Rotary India Literacy Mission, has joined the mission to empower adult learners in the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.

Among the 1000 learners who have never before had the opportunity to study are individuals like Achana Gayen, Kakali Karmakar, and Azizul Necha Kayel. These individuals, hailing from Narayanpur, Madhya Narayanpur, and various other areas in South 24 Parganas, are now on a journey towards literacy and empowerment.

Rahul Seba Samity has recently established 25 'Vidya' centers across the region, providing an enriching opportunity for those who have long been deprived of educational opportunities. From being non-literate adults, they are now on the path to becoming literate individuals, equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate and contribute to society.

In a world where access to education remains a fundamental right, initiatives like these stand as beacons of hope, illuminating the path toward a more inclusive and equitable society.

## Padho Bharat:

### RILM & Orient Blackswan Empower Students with Libraries

**W**e have inaugurated a new library at Sitarampur Vivekananda Seba Pratisthan in South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. This initiative aims to empower over 600 students with over 1,000 books. It will help to access a diverse collection of knowledge.

*From December 2023 to April of 2024, we supported over 80,000 books through partnerships with approximately 117 organizations, including NGOs and schools.*





# ‘Annapurna’

## Food Initiative Reaching the Unreachable



**R**otary India Literacy Mission (RILM), in partnership with several local NGOs, continues its commitment to uplift

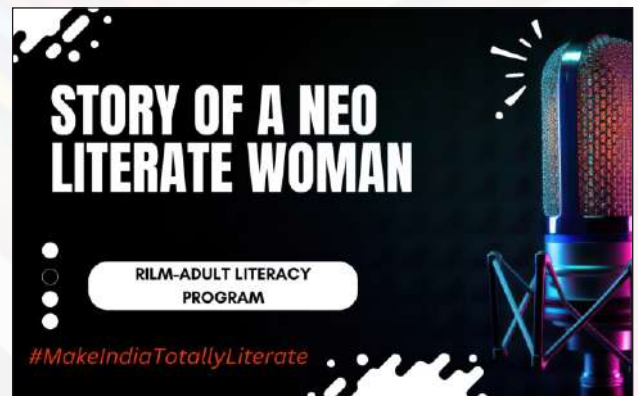
underprivileged communities across India through various initiatives. A recent endeavor by Team RILM has seen the launch of a regular food distribution program across Old-Age Homes, residential Orphanages, local communities, and schools.

Implemented through different Rotary Clubs under the ‘Annapurna’ Food program, this initiative aims to provide essential sustenance to those in need. With the support of the Indian Food Banking Network as the food partner, the program has been instrumental in benefiting around 5,000 individuals on average.

## Our Media Section

**I**nternational Women's Day holds far-reaching significance beyond just a single day of observance. It's a continuous journey toward women's empowerment, extending even to the remotest corners of our nation. In honor of this year's Women's Day, “Invest in women: Accelerate progress”, Team RILM is thrilled to unveil our latest video, symbolizing our ongoing commitment to this vital cause.

To watch the video, click [Story of a Neo-literate](#)



## Shekhar Mehta Meets Sourav Ganguly on Zee Bangla



[Dadagiri Season 10](#)

**S**hekhar Mehta, the (President of Rotary International for the year 2021-22) Chief Advisor of Rotary India Literacy Mission, was recently featured as a guest on the popular TV show "Dadagiri," hosted by none other than the legendary cricketer Sourav Ganguly. Shekhar Mehta shared insights into Rotary's initiatives and efforts to promote literacy across the country. Catch the action-packed discussion on the Zee5 App, Episode no. 59 & join the journey towards a more literate and empowered India.

**EDITORIAL TEAM** Jhilm RoyChowdhury, Senior Director - Programs & Soumyadip Chatterjee, Manager - Communications & Media

### Rotary India Literacy Mission

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