



Rotary
India Literacy Mission

Literacy Times

Issue : 30 • March, 2024

Chief Advisor : Shekhar Mehta

www.rotaryteach.org

Empowering non-literate women, particularly those part of the Beedi Workers Community!



Rotary India Literacy Mission has become a cornerstone in making India Totally Literate and working in the different pockets across the country. In this area, we have launched 10 'Vidya' centers in partnership with the Community Research and Social Development Foundation (CRSDF), a local NGO. Now through these centers, more than 350 non-literate adults will be transformed into literate individuals in this area.

Banu Mondal, a 60-year-old woman, is one such aspirant among the identified more than 350 adult non-literates from Bena village in Hasnabad Block, North 24 Parganas, who dreamt of being a literate citizen. Due to a challenging financial condition, she wasn't able to attend school and at the age of 14, she got married.

"I can now do my financial transactions on my own. For you, it may be a normal thing, but for me, it is a lifetime achievement that now I can read and write. Even while I am occupied with my Beedi-making work, I do also practice writing and reading in between that..", Banu shared with a child-

like smile.

When we started a discussion about the 'Vidya' program at a local place with a group of adult non-literates mostly from the Beedi workers community, Banu shared her story very spontaneously. Soon after, one by one, each one of them started sharing their own stories and raised their hands to join this program under our Adult Literacy initiative.



Message from PRIP Shekhar Mehta on Behalf of Team RILM

Detailed report on Page 2

What's New!

Detailed report on Page 3

'Diksha' - Updates

Detailed report on Page 4

'Vidya' - Updates

Detailed report on Page 4

Empowering non-literate women

Detailed report on Page 5

Padho Bharat

Detailed report on Page 7

Skill Development Initiative

Detailed report on Page 7

Our Media Section

Detailed report on Page 8

Smiling Faces: Reveal Joy of Being Neo-Literates

Currently, around 1,000 non-literate adults are being transformed into literate citizens through 25 'Vidya' centers located in the Canning II block of South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. The local NGO partner for this initiative is the South Iswaripur Korania Hafijiya Madrasa.

The number of participants is rapidly increasing and we are making great strides towards our mission to make India a Totally Literate!



They all are neo-literates and completed almost 60 sessions under the Adult Literacy Program of Rotary India Literacy Mission.

Message from PRIP Shekhar Mehta on Behalf of Team RILM



Hello Everyone,

Greetings!

How are you? I hope you all are doing good and everything is fine with you. As you are quite aware that Rotary India Literacy Mission has been playing a commendable role to Make India Totally Literate.

We are pleased to share with you our latest initiatives towards achieving our mission to Make India Totally Literate.

We are proud to announce the launch of numerous 'Asha Kiran' and 'Vidya' centers under our Adult Literacy program. These centers aim to provide functional literacy to adults and children who have limited access to education. Furthermore, we have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the District Administration of Balasore to achieve a 100% functional literacy rate.

We have included comprehensive information on these efforts and ground stories in our newsletter. We invite you to join us in commemorating this significant milestone in our collective expedition.

As we reflect on this incredible journey, we gratefully acknowledge the steadfast support of our well-wishers, volunteers, contributors, and partners. It is your unwavering commitment to our work that has been the driving force behind our success.

We implore you to participate in our mission by donating or volunteering. Your support will help us to provide access to quality education to those who need it the most.

If you post anything on Social Media regarding Total Literacy in India, you can use #MakeIndiaTotallyLiterate to make this campaign for inclusive.

If you have any thoughts or ideas you would like to share with us, please email us at info@rotaryteach.org.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to further collaboration.

All the best

With Warm Regards



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



What's New!

Asha Kiran Center Launch Event at Kolkata

At the Rotary International District 3291 Conference in Kolkata, Chief Advisor of Rotary India Literacy Mission, Shekhar Mehta (Rotary International president, 2021-22) along with other notable dignitaries launched 5 'Asha Kiran' centers in West Bengal, India in association with Rotary Club of Calcutta Mahanagar.

Through these newly launched centers, 200 out-of-school, laggard, and drop-out school children will receive specialized training over the next 9 to 12 months to acquire essential knowledge and skills.

This training will push them to enroll in government schools near their residences.



District Administration of Balasore Teams Up with RILM to Make the District Totally Literate

Rotary India Literacy Mission and the Rotary Club of Balasore, Odisha have recently entered into a partnership with the District Administration of Balasore with the aim of achieving a 100% functional literacy rate throughout the district. The memorandum of understanding was signed in the presence of the District Magistrate, Additional District Magistrate, District Education Officers, and other esteemed dignitaries from the state government and Rotary International District 3260.

The partnership between Rotary India Literacy Mission, the Rotary Club of Balasore, and the District Administration of Balasore signifies a



significant step towards achieving the shared goal of 100% functional literacy throughout the district.

Chief Advisor of RILM Meets National Commission for Scheduled Castes' Chairman



Shekhar Mehta (Rotary International president, 2021-22) has recently met with Shri Arun Halder, Chairman (In-Charge) of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), Govt. of India, to discuss our Adult Literacy initiative and the further expansion. Such discussion will reveal various opportunities to join hands with numerous stakeholders to Make India Totally Literate.



‘Diksha’ (Each One Teach One) - Updates

As International Day of Education is around the corner, Team RILM has been working in the far-flung pockets of our country to Make India Totally Literate over the years. Among many of our interventions, we have recently initiated the ‘Diksha’ program with 15 dedicated students of Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir, Bhubaneswar under our Adult Literacy initiative in association with Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar Flamingo.

Now, these student volunteers will dedicate their time to transforming 15 non-literate adults into literate individuals from and around their



neighboring communities.

Debasish Mishra, Past District Governor of Rotary International District 3262, along with other dignitaries has inaugurated this prosperous event. Since its inception, we have been reaching out to thousands of students to make them involved in this mission.

Our 'Diksha' program is running across 14 states, covering more than 65 schools. A total of 2,642 students have already been enrolled as volunteer teachers, and over 2,450 adult non-literates are being transformed into literate individuals.

‘Vidya’ (Each One Teach Many) - Updates



The Rotary India Literacy Mission's Adult Literacy program has recently launched 25 new 'Vidya' centers in the Jibantala region of Canning, South 24 Pgs, West Bengal. These centers are being operated in partnership with

the South Iswaripur Korania Hafijiya Madrasa, a local non-governmental organization. The primary objective of these centers is to provide basic literacy training to non-literate adults in the region, and the initiative has already proven to be successful, 1,000 adults having completed the program and transformed into literate citizens.

Through the program, participants are provided with education and training in reading, writing, and basic arithmetic. The success of the program is a cornerstone of the commitment of the Rotary India Literacy Mission and its partners in addressing the issue of illiteracy in the region.

Over 150,000 adult learners in India have been reached by the RILM-Adult Literacy program. At present, 75,000 learners are being transformed in different Adult Literacy centers across India.

Rotary India Literacy Mission in association with the Rotary Club of Calcutta Mahanagar has launched another 100 ‘Vidya’ centers in West Bengal, India at the Rotary International District 3291 Conference in Kolkata. Now through these 100 centres, more than 4,000 non-literate adults will be transformed into literate individuals in different interior pockets of the state under our Adult Literacy program.



The centers have been inaugurated by Shekhar Mehta, Chief Advisor of RILM, along with other dignitaries of Rotary International District 3291.





Rotary India Literacy Mission has partnered with Sondalia Minority Backward Social Welfare Society, a local NGO, to initiate an Adult Literacy program in Jayanagar, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. The program aims to educate 1,000 non-literate adults in the area by establishing 25 new 'Vidya' centers.

The main objective of this initiative is to provide an opportunity for non-literate adults to acquire

the essential skills that will help them lead a life of dignity. By becoming literate, they will gain access to better employment opportunities, be able to read important documents, and participate more actively in their communities.

Through this partnership, Rotary India Literacy Mission and Sondalia Minority Backward Social Welfare Society are working towards making a positive impact on the lives of individuals in Jayanagar, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal.



Stories from the Ground

Empowering non-literate women from North 24 Parganas, West Bengal!

Tahomina Bibi, a 55-year-old woman, is another aspirant among 350 non-literate adults, identified from Tangra village in Hasnabad Block, North 24 Parganas, who dreamt of being a literate citizen. As she was born into a financially unstable family, she wasn't able to attend school and got married at a very early age.

Since Rotary India Literacy Mission has started working to Make India Totally Literate, we have met with women like Tahorima across the country, who never got an opportunity to be a part of the school education system.

As of now, we are operating in 10 'Vidya' centers in partnership with the Community Research and Social Development Foundation (CRSDF), a local NGO.

Now through these centers, more than 350 non-literate adults are being transformed into literate individuals in this area.

"I can read newspapers now...and, I don't need anyone's help to make me aware of the current stories... For you, it may be a phenomenon, but for me, it is a milestone that I achieved at this

age.. Also, I can write too. Even while I am occupied with Beedi-making work, I do also practice writing and reading in between that..", Tahoriam shared with an open-mouthed smile.

Beedi making is one of the low-paying earnings in India and when we initiated our discussion about the 'Vidya' program at a local place with a group of adult non-literates mostly from the Beedi workers community, Tahoriam shared her story very voluntarily and inspired others to join the program.



Achievement Lies in Dedication: A Story of Buridhi Bothi inspires others

Buridhi Bothi is a 46-year-old agricultural laborer who lives in Athimala Village, Ananthagiri Mandal, ASR district, Andhra Pradesh. She and her husband adopted their grandson because they did not have a male family member. Buridhi is the leader of the KAMALA DEVI SHG and has faced many challenges in banking transactions, such as signatures, form filling, and thumb impressions, due to being non-literate. Buridhi has attended the Athimala 'Vidya' Center, which is part of the Rotary India Literacy Mission's Adult Literacy program. She completed the entire 60 sessions and learned how to manage her group account and other banking tasks. Her commitment to learning impressed the bank manager.

In Ananthagiri, Visakhapatnam, RILM has partnered with SAMIDA (Sanga Mitra Development Association), a local NGO, to

identify and transform non-literate adults into literate citizens. So far, over 3,200 non-literate adults have transformed into literate individuals through 80 centers.

And Buridhi can now navigate her financial matters with confidence. She has transformed challenges into opportunities for personal and community growth.



A Dream Come True

Trishna, the coordinator for Bithari Disha, a local NGO partner, recently shared her childhood aspiration of educating her community. However, she was not able to fulfill this dream until she became a part of the 'Vidya' program. She is now grateful for the changes the program has brought about.

Rotary India Literacy Mission, in collaboration with this local NGO, has been working in various

parts of North 24 Pgs, West Bengal. Through our Adult Literacy initiative, we have established 35 'Vidya' centers. Recently, more than 1,000 illiterate adults participated in the program and completed 60 sessions, thereby qualifying for the examination.

Our Rotary Club partner, the Rotary Club of Calcutta, has played a crucial role in making this program a success. We are proud to have been able to provide educational opportunities to those who had been deprived of them for so long. We hope to continue this important work and make a difference in the lives of even more people in the future.

As many women like Trishna are willing to be a part of this mission, we are providing an opportunity to the local people who can work as an Akshar Sathi to make literate individuals. It will not only help us but also giving them a platform to nurture their skills and expertise.



Padho Bharat:

An initiative to establish libraries for underprivileged children

Our efforts to establish multiple Padho Bharat libraries in remote areas throughout India, as part of Rotary India Literacy Mission's initiative, are progressing rapidly. Recently, we partnered with the local NGO Vivekananda Seva Pratishthan to set up a library in Kantakhali, South 24 PGS, West Bengal. With the support of our trusted partner, Orient



Blackswan, we have provided over 1,000 books to more than 600 underprivileged children, offering them the opportunity to study and expand their knowledge. Rotary India Literacy Mission remains committed to making a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve, and we look forward to continuing our efforts in creating a more literate India.

During January and February of 2024, we supported over 58,000 books through partnerships with approximately 90 organizations, including NGOs and schools.

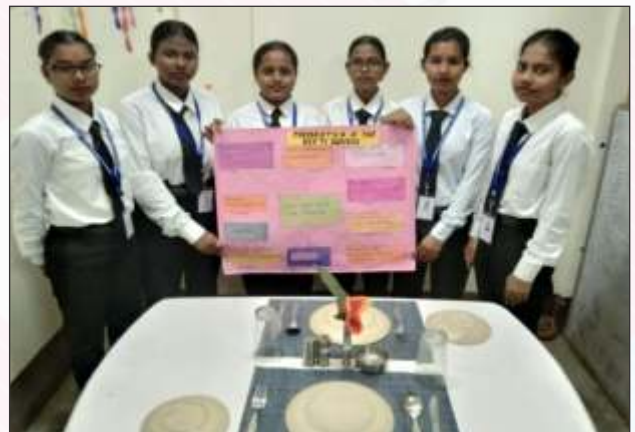
Our Skill Development Initiative

Unfolding Opportunities: Promoting Livelihood

Kolkata, the City of Joy, is a dreamland of many aspirants across India. And Manoshi is one among them. When Team Rotary India Literacy Mission met with this young girl and came to know about her challenging background, we offered her an opportunity to be skilled, so that she would stand on her own feet.

We enrolled her in the BPO domain course under our Skill Development program in association with the Bandhan Skill Development Centre (BSDC) at Malda. Her dedication and hard work during the training period paid off as she completed the program. Manoshi secured a placement in Tech Mahindra, Kolkata, with a monthly CTC (Cost to Company) of Rs. 13,000. Rotary India Literacy Mission has been playing a pivotal role in creating thousands of stories like

Manoshi who made their dream successful. This initiative has been running in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Calcutta Mahanagar, the Loomba Foundation, and the Rotary Foundation. You too can be a part of this!



Our Media Section

Since, podcasting has become one of the important avenues to engage a large audience, after a long R&D session, we have finally introduced our new podcast series, 'Let's Make India Totally Literate'. We have collaborated with Community Radio of Jadavpur University and initiated our new endeavor.

Chief Advisor of Rotary India Literacy Mission, Shekhar Mehta (President, Rotary International, 21-22), went to Jadavpur University Community Radio 90.8MHZ to discuss the journey of our T-E-A-C-H verticals journey and plans to Make India Totally Literate in English and Bengali language.

Ms. Jhilam Roychowdhury, Sr. Director - RILM, and Ms. Aparna Biyani, Founding member - MindEdge conducted the two interviews respectively.



[Audio Bengali Link](#)

[Audio English Link](#)

[Video Bengali Link](#)

[Video English Link](#)

A New Audio-Visual on RILM - Adult Literacy Tool Kit

Adult Literacy Toolkits, "Disha" and "Pathan" are crucial 'weapons' to Make India Totally Literate. The Rotary India Literacy Mission, in collaboration with the central and state governments, as well as other stakeholders, has been working tirelessly to



promote total literacy in India, especially in remote areas. These toolkits have been instrumental in transforming the lives of thousands of non-literate adults, giving them the gift of literacy.

We are grateful to our printing partner, CDC Printers, for their unwavering support.

We are committed to continuing this important work and making a positive impact on the lives of many more people in the future.

Check out this short audio-visual story about our Adult Literacy Tool kit printing.

[Printing Video Link](#)

Mirchi Plus Visit

At the beginning of 2024, Shekhar Mehta (Rotary International President, 21-22), Chief Advisor of Rotary India Literacy Mission was invited to Mirchi Plus for an interview.

You can click on the link to watch a thought-provoking podcast. Spread it... Enjoy the conversation...

[Video Link](#)



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

Rotary India Literacy Mission

Skyline House, 145, Sarat Bose Road, Kolkata - 700 026, Ph : 033-2486 3434/35 | E-mail : info@rotaryteach.org | www.rotaryteach.org

Follow us on :

[/RotaryIndiaLiteracyMission](#)

[/Rotaryteach](#)

[/rotary teach](#)

Literacy Helpline :

[+91 85850 38883](#)

Watch us on :

[www.youtube.com/rotaryteach](#)