AKSHARADAAN
Digital Platform for voluntary educational services

Annual
Report

2019-2020

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educational services

Aksharadaan Charitable Trust

Dr. M.S.R. Murthy, Ph.D., FNIE
Hon. Chairman

Chairman's Message

During my school days, we often used to listen proverb *'pen is mightier than the sword'*. It is this proverb always used to prompt me to believe that education stand as the best and foremost solution to the development of rural India. My personal lifetime experiences and professional field visits across length and breadth of rural India also used to taunt me to explore what best we can give back to rural India.

It is with this pretext, myself, and my better half along with a few of our like minded friends brainstormed on enhancing systems to provide free, accessible, and quality school education for rural students. Towards this, we embarked on idea of establishing open access, transparent digital frame works which can extend (i) direct contact between students/schools in need and prospective donors,(ii) rendering direct transfer of services to beneficiaries by donors (iii) provide free multi-disciplinary online learning facilities and (iv) develop operational digital network models to enhance rural academic excellence.

I am with immense pleasure to mention here that our idea has taken birth as Aksharadaan – Digital Platform for Educational Services during the middle of 2019. We received over pouring support from our near and dear to build the digital platform and test our concepts for operational applicability across the country. The Department of School Education, Sangareddy has provided full support and guidance to launch our pilot studies in Zilla Parishad schools of Munipally Mandal, Sangareddy, Telanagana.

It is with great pride that we are presenting our first annual report (2019-20) detailing the remarkable progress made towards developing transparent digital systems to strengthen rural education in India.

25-08-2020   (MSR Murthy)

Executive Summary

Free, accessible, and quality education stand as primary essentials to uplift rural education systems in India. Despite enormous efforts from governmental and non-governmental systems, huge gap exists to fulfill the aspirations of millions of rural students. Digital systems serving educational services with ease of use, free, transparent, efficient monitoring and evaluation tools extend greater outreach.

Against this background, Aksharadaan Charitable trust has taken an initiative during June 2019 to develop Aksharadaan digital platform with with following three digital interfaces to render voluntary educational services.

> **Akshara Sahaya** - Efficient digital interface serving simple, small, many multipurpose needs of the students and schools
> **Aksharamaala** - Open access multi-disciplinary digital learning interface
> **Akshara Dweepam** – Model for developing digital islands of rural academic excellence

During 2019-20 efforts were made to develop Akshara Sahaya , cost free digital interface to connect dots of needs (thousands of aspiring schools and students) and drops of charities and render direct transfer of services (no cash transfers) involving easy functional, transparent, cost and time effective, robust monitoring and evaluation tools.

प्रेरणा Pilot Study is planned for three years in coordination with Dept. of School Education, Sangareddy across seven Zilla Parishad schools and 400 students of Munipally Mandal to test and bring out operational protocols to offer services through Akshara Sahaya. Additionally, 850 students from 13 schools from Sangareddy served motivational service. Aksharadaan do not receive donations to render services but connects concerned schools with donors through Akshara Sahaya for direct transfer of services (No cash transfers).

During 2019-20, under Aksharadaan- Donor - School interactive model, rendering of 12 types of services as direct transfer of services was successfully done involving 60 individual donors and school principals. GITAM University, Hyderabad, MNR Group of Educational Institutions have supported our activities with student volunteers. IIT(H) has promised to extend necessary support.

OUTREACH

20 schools
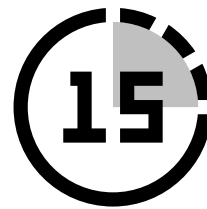
15 Hundred students

3 Thousand services

100 contributors

SERVICES TESTED & RENDERED

Curriculum Services

- Special coaching for under performing female students.
- Special Coaching for intelligent students to enhance excellence in Mathematics.
- Establishing computer facilities for availing online learning knowledge.

Co-curricular Services

- Establishing school libraries
- Distribution of dictionaries to students
- Support student educational tours to centers of excellence

Extracurricular Services

- Establishing Sports facility in schools
- Ignite scholarships for cultural activities
- Spark Awards for special talents

Motivational Services

- Personality Development Lecture
- Orientation Lecture for SSC Students appearing for board exams
- Spoorthi motivational gifts

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Our Origin

Enhancing literacy and education is realized as one of the critical elements of developmental strategies of central and state governments of India. Both aspects have a defining role in achieving SDGs nationally and Globally and align with the Indian Public Programme of "Beti Bachao, Beti Padao". In view of the vastness and diversity of challenges in the sector, the complementary role of non-state initiativess realised as very critical.

The lack of effective and direct connectivity between schools and philanthropic ventures, often inefficient implementation processes, institutional settings, proportionately a smaller number of non-state initiatives, fragmented academic approaches and disaggregated contributions are found limiting the role and scalability of non-state initiatives.

Larger community participation systems informally networked through digital technologies as Self-Initiative Citizen models having mutually agreed standards and adhesion could help to scale up non- state initiatives in India and achieve goals of SDG 4 by 2030. This thought process has led to the development of Aksharadaan digital platform to extend voluntary online educational services.

Vision

Empower disadvantaged especially female students with transformed thought process of 'I can't' into 'I will' and all-purpose education.

Mission

Build digital platform providing online educational services through self initiative citizen models.

Goals

Akshara Sahaya

Efficient digital interface serving simple, small, many multipurpose needs of students and schools.

Develop cost free digital interface to connect dots of needs (thousands of aspiring schools and students) and drops of charities and render direct transfer of services (no cash transfers) involving easy functional, transparent, cost and time effective, robust monitoring and evaluation tools.
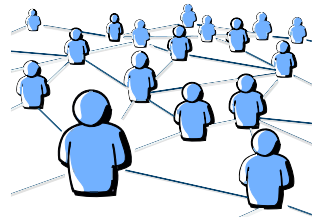
Aksharamaala

Open access, multi-disciplinary digital learning interface.

Develop digital connect for rural students to provide free of cost wider curriculum knowledge, co and extracurricular subjects, innovation, skill imparting and careers through online books, videos, coaching, mentoring and webinars.

Akshara Dweepam

Model for digital islands of rural academic excellence

Build an operational model involving digital network of schools, individuals, academic institutions, charities and corporates over an optimal rural working unit to render need based holistic online and onsite services using Akshara sahaya and Aksharamaala interfaces for creating digital islands of rural academic excellence.

Inception

Aksharadaan Charitable Trust:

Aksharadaan digital platform is implemented under the aegis of Aksharadaan Charitable Trust,registered under Govt.of Telangana Vide Doc No.387/IV/2017 dt 07.06.2017 of Hyderabad (RO). Dr.M.SR. Murthy and Smt. M. Rajyalakshmi are the Management Trustees of the trust.
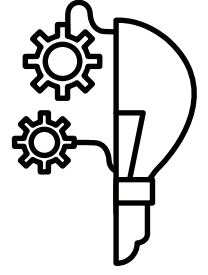
Aksharadaan Team:

A team of like-minded people who have interest to contribute on voluntary basis is formed as a Core Team (8 members) and technical team (6 members) with a sole objective to develop scalable digital frameworks to support rural student education. An advisory board with eminent personalities (12 members) from different walks of life is also made to advise the core team on strategic direction and future path.

Inaugural Function:

Aksharadaan digital platform is inaugurated on November 5th 2019 by Dr.B.V. Pattabhi Ram, Renowned Motivational Expert; Prof. B.S. Murty, Director, IIT(H) and Smt. E.Vijaya Lakshmi, then DEO, Sangareddy District., Telangana.

Our Principles of working

- Pilot studies are conducted for 3 year to test and develop operational guidelines for different goals.
- Aksharadaan do not receive donations.
- Core team will support cost of pilot study in terms of software development, platform maintenance, logistics and other incidentals.
- Cost towards supporting pilot services for students and schools will be sought from invited donors as direct transfer of benefits using the Aksharadaan platform.
- Platform services will be offered at free of cost.
- Academic support will be sought from educational institutions nearby pilot area.
- Integration with Corporates will be worked out for Scalability and Sustainability.

Sri N.Ramesh,District Education Officer,Sangareddy Dist., Delivering his message to students

ఆత్మవిశ్వాసంతో పరీక్షలకు సిద్ధమవ్వండి: డీఈఓ

దిక్షనరీలతో విద్యార్థులు, డీఈఓ తదితరులు

సంగారెడ్డి మున్సిపాలిటీ, న్యూస్‌టుడే: విద్యార్థులు పరీక్షలకు ఆత్మవిశ్వాసంతో సిద్ధం కావాలని జిల్లా విద్యాధికారి రాజేశ్ పేర్కొన్నారు. బుధవారం స్థానిక వైఎంఆర్ గార్డెన్ ఆశ్రమంలో ప్రభుత్వ పాఠశాలలో చదివే పదోతరగతి విద్యార్థులకు అవగాహన సదస్సు నిర్వహించారు. ఈ సందర్భంగా ఆయన మాట్లాడుతూ పరీక్షలకు ఇంకా నెల రోజుల సమయం మాత్రమే ఉందని, ప్రతి విద్యార్థికి సమయం వృథా చేయకుండా ప్రణాళికతో చదువుకోవాలని సూచించారు. పదిలో మంచి మార్కులతో ఆత్మస్థైర్యంతో ఉన్నత చదువులతోపాటు ఉద్యోగాలకు ఉపయోగమన్నారు. వక్తృత్వ విభాగ నిపుణులు గంపా నాగేశ్వరరావు మాట్లాడుతూ చదువుతోనే ఉన్నత స్థానానికి చేరవచ్చన్నారు. పరీక్షలు రాసే సమయంలో భయపడవద్దని సూచించారు. అనంతరం వెయ్యి మంది విద్యార్థులకు డిక్షనరీలు అందించారు. ఈ సమావేశంలో ఎంఎస్ఆర్ ఎడ్యుకేషన్ ట్రస్ట్ ఉప చైర్మన్ రవివర్మ, జిల్లా సైన్స్ అధికారి విజయకుమార్ పాల్గొన్నారు.

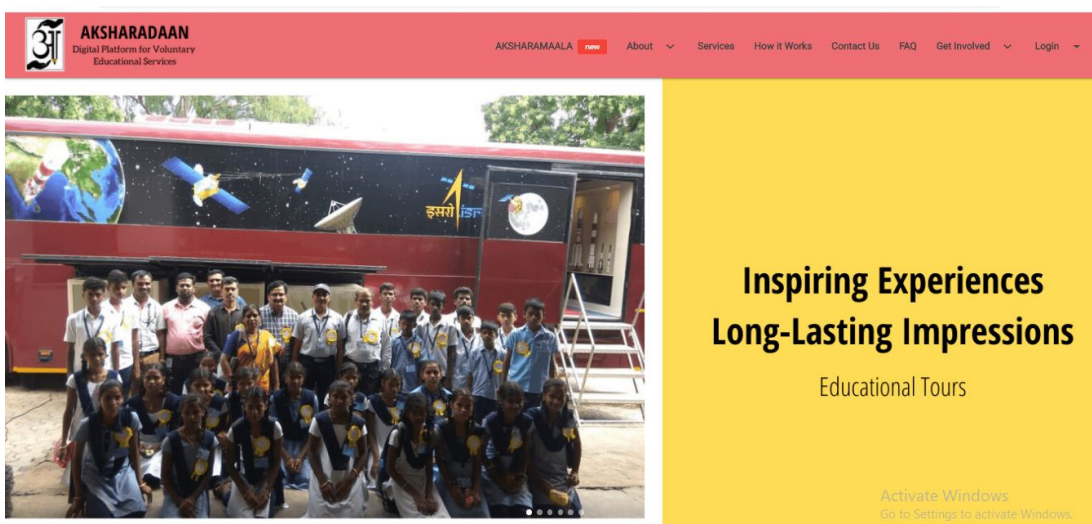Date : 06/02/2020 EditionName : TELANGANA(SANGAREDDY) PageNo : 03

Akshara Sahaya प्रेरणा Pilot Study

With an objective to develop, test and operationalise the concept of Akshara Sahaya, प्रेरणा pilot study was started during 2019-20 in close coordination with Dept. Of School Education Sangareddy district, Telangana. Seven Zilla Parishad schools and 400 high school students of Munipally mandal are chosen for the pilot study.

The prototype platform developed and tested for direct delivery of 12 types of services across pilot schools and students. As a School-Aksharadaan-Donor model, around 60 invited donors, and school HMs have interacted through the platform under the guidance of the Aksharadaan team to test and offer direct transfer of services.

Akshara Sahaya – Digital Interface Development

A working level digital platform is developed providing basic information about Aksharadaan, school, students, and donor level modules, monitoring and evaluation interfaces. It facilitates schools/students register and furnish their requirements. Donors (Individual/ institutional) and volunteers can register, review school and student needs, select and render service of their choice to the selected student/school. Admin portal is also created to monitor registration, database, and service rendering process.

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Services Schema Development

Box 2– Salient Features of Pilot Schools

- Appreciable number of students exists who can be groomed to academic excellence.
- High number of female Students with low academic and economic status are present requiring over all support.
- Remedial coaching in Mathematics and English would improve academic performance in all schools.
- State and district level talents in sports and hidden skills in mimicry, music, dancing and story writing exists which needs to enhanced
- Basic amenities do exist and improvements in school infrastructure in terms of digital class rooms, better library, sports and educational tours are suggested for further excellence.
- Student motivational and mentoring programs form very critical part of overall school performance.
- Staff digital literacy and motivational support augments school performance.

Empowering students is the commitment to success.
Empowering students with diverse knowledge through quality teaching by right people at right time and right means with unstinting commitment goes a long way in bringing over all development and success to the students.

Based on the data collected over pilot schools (Box-2) four service categories addressing Curricular, Co-curricular, Extracurricular and Motivational aspects are taken up.

Our services rely on concept Inspire–Enable–Empower model.

Inspiring students is the key to success. It helps discover his/her talents, formation of good character, self management, self reflection, ambition to achieve and ensure that academic achievement is the result of internal persistence, rather than external pressure.

Enabling students is the fundamental to success.
Enabling environment and facilities in terms of strong healthy functioning families, personal conveniences to students and school infrastructure stands as fundamental needs to the student success.

Akshara Sahaya Curriculum Services

These are is intended to directly assist students in terms of onsite/online coaching to improve their academic performance. Under this category three type of services were rendered.

Rise & Shine Financial Assistance –Empowering Female Students.

This financial assistance is targeted to assist economically backward and academically underperforming 9th class girl students for 2 years. It covers supply of personal convenience material, motivational courses, and academic coaching (Maths and English). Eight girl students were supported with one-time tuition fee of Rs.5,000 at ZPHS, Kamkole. Coaching was successfully was held by specially appointed tutor for 5 months and tutor fee was paid online directly by donors.

Students of Rise & Shine Financial Assistance

> Students got motivated, improved their performance, one student got selected for Govt.of India scholarship, request to continue for next year. –Head Mistress, ZPHS Kamkole.

8 Student Beneficiaries

Rise & Shine Financial Assistance helped me get NMM Govt of India Merit Scholarship! I am thankful to the donors paying for my special coaching.

– G Veena, IX Class Student,
ZPHS Kamkole

Challenge Merit Scholarships – Enhancing excellence in Mathematics.

Challenge merit scholarships are intended to support special coaching fees for selected merit students with a challenge to secure 80 -100% in Mathematics in 10th class board exams. It is experimentally started in ZPHS Peddachelmeda covering eight students with a value of Rs.5000/student/yr as coaching fee. Special tutor was organised to give coaching after school hours to the selected students in focused topics to improve performance.While its originally planned for six months, due to non-availability of qualified tutor it was run for only two months.

8 Student Beneficiaries

Students of Challenge Merit Scholarship

Online Catalyse Coaching – Connecting with Knowledge.

Linking rural schools with a diversity of volunteers, experts willing to extend online curriculum support to rural students, extending online access to digital knowledge and libraries would help to improve overall performance of the rural students. By January 2019, an operational online facility is established in all seven pilot schools of Aksharadaan. Institutions of repute like GITAM university, IIT(H), MNR group of Educational Institutions are kind enough to agree in principle to provide online academic support.

> Looking forward to prospective online interactions to improve students exposure and performance,it is an unique opportunity for us – HM, ZPHS Peddachelmeda

400 Student Beneficiaries

During installation of computers at ZPHS, Budhera

Co-curricular Services

Co-curricular services promote activities, programs, and learning experiences which could complement in some way what students are learning in school.

Establishing Library Facility – Imparting Knowledge and Wisdom.

This is intended to augment subject based knowledge and enriching students with science and mathematics based analytical and logic materials, motivational story books, subscription for monthly periodicals, life histories/autobiographies of famous personalities, career guidance. On an experimental basis around 100 book library was established at ZPHS Munipally and dictionaries were provided to 1000 students of government schools in Sangareddy.

Distribution of Dictionaries

> "Noble concept for the cause for educating the village students and can be implemented to larger area in due course of time. – MC Porwal, Donor."

1 Thousand Student Beneficiaries

Educational Tours – Creating experiences and Long-lasting impressions

One day visit to centers of excellence/industries/nature parks provide academic, inspiring exposure and long-lasting impressions on students. The students from remote and rural schools seldom have such opportunities. This is implemented with ZPHS Budhera to visit Vikram Sarabhai Centenary Celebrations at National Remote sensing Center, ISRO, Hyderabad.

30 Student Beneficiaries

In classrooms we only heard about rockets, satellites. Now we have seen models and demos. I want to become scientist!
– Student Participant, ZPHS Budhera.

Extra-curricular Services

The extra circular services are intended to support and enhance the limited and hidden talents in sports and cultural activities and three types of services are to be covered under this category.

Establishing Sports Facility – All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy
The provision of sports facilities in the schools especially in rural areas extends a recreating atmosphere to build up team spirit, competitive skills and ignite hidden talents. An optimally designed sports facility comprising sports kits and material is needed to be provided to many of the schools,which is otherwise not available in most of the rural government schools. Six schools provided with sports facility through online direct delivery process.

" Facility improving physical and mental fitness, improving school attendance,developing sports clubs to encourage focus.
 –HM, ZPHS, P.Gopularam "

2
Hundred
Student
Beneficiaries

Students availing sports facility at ZPHS, Kamkole

Ignite Scholarships – Enhancing Extra Curricular Talents

The scholarships are to encourage talented students in culture, sports and other allied activities and help them to excel in their respective fields. The scholarships could be used for special coaching, cost for attending events or material required for the activity. On experimental basis one student from ZPHS Pedda Chelmeda who is good in playing Tabla is supported with new instrument. The Tabla instrument is provided through online purchase and direct delivery to the concerned school HM.
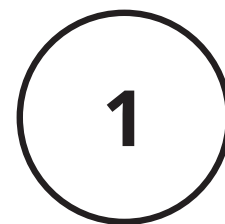
1
Student Beneficiary

Spark Awards – Identifying Talents

These awards in kind are intended to identify and encourage sparks of talents in co-curricular activities. The school principal conducts quizzes, debates, essay writings–based competitions among students on Teachers Day, Environment Day, Independence Day, National science day to select the students. This was implemented in three schools ZPHS Kamkole, ZPHS Pedda Gopularam, KGBV Residential school.The awards were distributed on Children's day and Republic day.

> " Helped to identify new talents and inculcated competitive spirits, we need this support to do on regular basis
> – HM, ZPHS, P.Gopularam

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Student Beneficiaries

Spark Awards Distribution– Republic Day, at ZPHS Kamkole

Distribution of Sports items by Gram Sarpanch at ZPHS Thatipally

Spark Awards Distribution, ZPHS Peddagopularam

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Motivational Services

This service aims to strengthen the role of parental hood, family support, putting forth the different prospects, opportunities and challenges, and live examples of achieving success to high school students. This is expected to ignite individual aspirations of the students and motivate them towards a successful path.

Motivational Lectures

Personality development lecture was organised by renowned Inspirational Speaker Dr BV Pattabhi Ram was held on Nov 5th 2019 for 250 students. Orientation Lecture by renowned inspirational speaker Sri Gampa Nageswara Rao was held on Feb 5th 2020 for 1000 students appearing for SSC board exam.

> **"**
> My ambition is to become a Bank Officer. After getting learning and motivation from Aksharadaan, I'm confident I will achieve my dream!
> – Vijaya Kumari, ZPHS Budhera
> **"**

1250
Student Beneficiaries

Sri Gampa Nageswara Rao giving motivational orientation to students on Annual Day Celebrations

Spoorthi Gifts – Inducting Positivity

125
Student Beneficiaries

These gifts are intended to motivate economically and academically most backward students towards the general concept of education or for academically bright students to further motivate them to reach greater heights. It could be a small gift on a student's birthday, certain material support, meeting any academic or non-academic genuine needs which are not covered in other services. 100 FOCUS students of Sangareddy were presented with stationary kits for SSC public exam.

Spoorthi gifts distribution by District Authorities, Sangareddy

Aksharadaan
Annual Plan: 2020–21

- Test and implement School–Donor model where Schools and Donors directly interact for services rendering using the **Akshara Sahaya** interface. Aksharadaan play only facilitating role.

- Undertake campaigns for individual and institutional donor registrations.

- Develop and launch **Aksharamaala** online learning interface across pilot schools.

- Mobilize support from educational institutions and corporates to launch model **Akshara Dweepam**.

Sri M Ravi Varma, Vice Chairman, MNR Group of Institutions, addressing the students on Aksharadaan Annual Day Celebrations.

Our Donors

Aksharadaan deem this as privilege to mention the following team members of our प्रेरणा Pilot Study who have both financially supported and stood all through with great encouragement and advice. We deeply thank them for their contribution and earnestly request to continue to be with this noble cause.

Curriculum based services:

Rise & Shine Financial Assistance:
Devaki O, Hyderabad; Ganesh G, Hyderabad; Kasturi Chakraborty, Shillong; Krishna Prasad E.S ,Hyderabad;   Rama Murthy,A R, Hyderabad; Raghupathi P,Hyderabad; Rajasri G, USA; Shivam Trivedi, Bangalore.

Online Catalysis Coaching– Establishing Computer facility:
Adilaxmi Ch, Chennai; Chandra Sekhar M, USA; Lakshmi Sarada G, Hyderabad; Ravi Shankar T, Hyderabad; Samhita Vishwas,Nepal;
Shiv Sankar E, Hyderabad; Shirish Ravan, China; Srinivas A,USA; Suneetha M, Vijayawada, Vinay Abhishek M, USA.

Challenge Merit Scholarships:
Ravi Kumar MV, Hyderabad; Subramanyam M, Hyderabad;
Vivek Manchiraju; Australia.

Co–Cirricular Support Services:

Establishing Library facilities:
Ekambarnath C, Chennai; Ramana YV, USA; Rathore BS, Nepal;   Sarnam Singh, Dehradun; Sridharan Nair ES, Hyderabad; Roy PS, Hyderabad; Porawal MC, Dehradun.

Educational Tours:
Ramana Ch, USA; Sivom M, USA.

Spark Awards:
Rajyalakshmi M, Hyderabad; Lakshmi M, Vijayawada; Uma M,Vijayawada.

Extra Cirricular services:

Ignite Scholarships:
Chowdary Ch, Vijayawada

Establishing Sports facility:
Amit Trivedi,Hyderabad; CS Jha, Hyderabad; Shijo Joseph, Trivandrum; Ramana Suryadevara, Hyderabad; PLN Raju, Shillong;
Vishwas Chitale,Nepal.

Motivational Services:

Personality Development Lectures:
Nand Kishore Agrawal, Nepal; Rajan Kotru, Himachal Pradesh;
Sivom M, USA.

Orientation Lecture for students:
Deoraj Gurung, Bhutan; Varalakshmi Achanta, USA.

Spoorthi Gifts:
Anurag B, USA; Rajasri G, USA.

Aksharadaan Inaugural Function:
Nand Kishore Agrawal, Nepal; Rajan Kotru, Himachal Pradesh; Sivom M, USA.

Aksharadaan First Annual Day Function:
Chandra Sekhar K, USA; Dileep J, Hyderabad; Rajan Kotru, Himachal Pradesh; Rama Nemani, USA; Rao CDN, Hyderabad; Rakesh Biswal, Hyderabad; Sridharan Nair ES, Hyderabad.

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and MNR Group of Educational Institutions, Hyderabad

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