



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2017-18**

**S a m v e d n a** works to combat caste-based commercial sexual exploitation and human sex trafficking specifically in the Bedia community. The organisation has a two-pronged approach – working with the victims for their rehabilitation and reintegration, and prioritize prevention for the vulnerable members of the community through advocacy.

We emphasize on education of Bedia children, and community development to challenge and change patriarchal mind-set.

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## Chairperson's Message

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Dear friends,

It is always a pleasure to greet you all here every year!

This sense of happiness comes from the strong conviction that I have in Samvedna's work, our ideology, and our strategies. More than that, this feeling is deeply embedded in a sense of satisfaction with which I look upon the past year, remember moments of joy and distress, and cherish the fruits that our hard work has borne.

The mention of Samvedna and its hard work remains incomplete without the mention of the people who are Samvedna, who embody the very spirit that Samvedna is. I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate our committed team, which ensures that we stand tall beyond all the challenges and complexities that Samvedna combats. I would also like to thank all our board members, and donors for their guidance, kindness, and all the support that comes from them at the times when we need it most.

Our road is long and arduous – caste hierarchies, and entrenched patriarchal attitudes are two of the major problems that the Indian society is combatting; the plight of the Bedia Community can be seen as a direct manifestation of these two issues.

The journey might be hard, but our spirits are of steel. We believe that by providing access to education, and a simultaneous effort on alternate sources of income generation, we can break the vicious cycle of caste-based prostitution.

With unmitigated courage, boundless energy, fearless attitude, and relentless effort, we take a flight towards our stories of change.

This is that story.

Best wishes,

Trupti Jhaveri

Chairperson, Samvedna

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## Highlights

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0 new girls entered the profession this year

190 children enrolled in schools and colleges

92 children getting direct benefit of [Education Aid](#)

24 participants in TIE 2017

4 different villages represented by different community members at a [Community Meeting](#)

7 school drop-out children [reconnected](#) to the education system

3 active Children's Groups

29 Children's application for Caste Certificate submitted

2 RTIs filed

1 Memorandum filed

1 Operating Procedure standardized for our Educators in [Hindi and English](#)

## Unmitigated

Education stands at the forefront of Samvedna's strategies to combat caste-based prostitution that plagues the Bedia community. With our Education Drive, and Education Aid, we aim to promote education, especially for girls, and connect Bedia children to mainstream systems of formal education. We earnestly believe that it is only through education that Bedia children and youth can build a future of dignity and self-respect.

### Education Drive

Samvedna's Education Drive brings together various stakeholders such as parents, teachers, Block Resource Officers, and District Education Officers to ensure an uninterrupted access to quality education for Bedia children. The Education Drive stands on the two pillars of **Education in Bhopal**, and **Admission in Open School**. Through home-visits and counselling, Samvedna members identify vulnerable children, and motivate parents to continue their child's education. These home-visits also cement the relationship between us and the village for fruitful future engagement.

In 2017, we organised a **Parent-Teacher Meeting in every village** to make sure that parents walk through each step of the process with us. In these meetings, parents were encouraged to ensure that their child pursues education.

- We organized **Education Drive Rallies** in every village that saw enthusiastic participation of children, teachers, and parents.



Education Drive Rally in Kolukhedi

All of this churning-around in the villages also helped in reviving School Management Committees (SMC) in four of our project villages.

Out of the four, **3 SMCs** have **13** members from the Bedia Community.



- We gave a facelift to the Kolukhedi Primary School



**2** murals painted to create an upbeat and vibrant environment for children!



Kolukhedi Primary School

- We succeeded in connecting a total of 190 children to education systems this year



**146** children now in schools!

**16** children now accessing higher education!



**93** girls a part of the formal education system!

**97** boys accessing formal education!





## Education in Bhopal

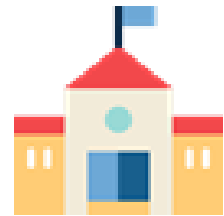
Children in the Bedia community are faced with multitudes of vulnerabilities – being pushed into prostitution, facing caste discrimination in schools, etc. are a few of them. For these children to be able to imagine a reality that is not characterised by experiences of marginalization, it is imperative that they be removed from their prevailing environment and be placed in a setting that is replete with possibilities and opportunities.

In Bhopal, children are enrolled in schools and government-run hostels. These hostels give children the metaphorical and physical distance they require from their village. Also, when living in hostels, children have time to dedicate to their studies unlike their home-villages where they're engaged in household chores, and other tasks.



**Indicators for children vulnerable to enter caste-based prostitution identified!**

**We identified and networked with 6 new schools and hostels in the city.**



- We shared details of the National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education<sup>1</sup> (NSIGSE) scholarship with girls residing in two hostels.



**2 girls enrolled in the NSIGSE!**

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<sup>1</sup>NSIGSE – National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme according to which a sum of Rs.3,000/- is deposited in the name of eligible unmarried girls as fixed deposit on enrolment in class IX, who are entitled to withdraw it along with interest thereon on passing X Class and attaining 18 years of age.

## Admission in Open School

To reconnect the children who have dropped out of school, to the formal education system, Samvedna gets them enrolled in Open School.

The reasons for dropping out of school can be many, and complex – access to school in terms of distance, or road connectivity leads to children dropping out of middle school (for which they generally have to travel to farther areas); under the present provisions of the RTE Act, students are automatically promoted to higher classes up to the 8<sup>th</sup> standard. When students enter the 9<sup>th</sup> standard, they generally cannot cope with the system that demands them to clear exams to get promoted to the next class. Thus, they lose interest or are forced to leave education by their parents. In case of girls, if they fail their exams, their parents pull them out of school, without giving them a second chance.

Once children clear their exams through Open School<sup>2</sup>, they're reintroduced to the regular system of schooling. This year, we successfully **reconnected 7 children to the education system** by enrolling them in Open School.



**4 girls** now a part of Open Schools!

**3 boys** reconnected to education system through Open Schools!



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<sup>2</sup> Open School: National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) is a system of schooling aimed at providing quality education up to pre-degree level through Open and Distance Learning system. It offers courses at Elementary, Secondary, and Senior Secondary levels.

## Education Aid

Education Aid classes, conceived to address a variety of concerns, are classes guided by Educators appointed by Samvedna in each of our project villages. Not only do these classes act as a supplement to children's regular school education, they also provide children with a platform where they can voice their opinions, and express themselves. Through these classes, children remain in steady contact with Samvedna, in a positive and conducive environment.

The classes are conducted in the community itself. The entire community comes together to select an appropriate place that is accessible to all children, for the classes. Thus, from the very first step, parents and other community members are involved with Samvedna, and their children's education.

Basic learning capacity of all children is evaluated and they're subsequently grouped into "beginner", "intermediate", and "advanced". This evaluation is done using the **tracking module developed at Samvedna**. Based on the evaluation report, **individualized weekly, monthly and quarterly plans** are prepared for each child. This plan also takes into account the child's interests, ambitions, strengths, and weaknesses. These plans along with the child's progress is shared with her/his parents once in a month, through home-visits. These home-visits also allow for building stronger relationships within the community, thereby strengthening Samvedna's foundation in its project villages.



The curriculum for the classes comprises of not just academic syllabus but has ample room for creativity to bloom. These classes become a platform for identifying students who are inclined towards creative arts and give us the opportunity to promote them. Activities that instil good habits in children are consciously practiced and made a part of the everyday routine. Through

group activities such as drama, dance, and song, the Educators also ensure that constructive peer-interaction and peer-learning happens. This ultimately strengthens the children's group, which is competent enough to raise their voice.

Education Aid classes provide an alternate path to vulnerable children through the medium of education. They also help in creating a support system for each child in the form of peers, members of children's group, Educators and Balmitras.



**We translated the Children's Profile format in Hindi!**

**Profile of **all** Bedia children between the ages of 6 and 18 completed!**



## B o u n d l e s s

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Samvedna's work is grounded in the belief that only children and youth of the Bedia community can change its future. Bedia children are the fulcrum of all our efforts and programmes. Therefore, a large part of the activities undertaken at Samvedna are devoted to making children aware of their rights and therefore inculcating an unwavering sense of dignity, self-respect, and confidence.

### Child Rights Centre

Child Rights Centre (CRC) is a unique non-formal education module that focuses on children's holistic development by blending education, enlightenment, and entertainment. It exposes children to a rights-perspective for their own lives, and makes them aware of themselves as equal citizens of the nation. The programme ensure that children feel heard, and therefore learn to articulate their concerns and issues as civic beings, not just as children. More than being a programme, CRC is a space where children can be children.



## Objectives of CRC

- ▲ CRC aims to provide knowledge with the help of various activities to children
- ▲ Make learning fun by introducing subject matter through mediums such as presentations, skits, games, drawing, painting, collage-making, etc.
- ▲ CRC aims to create a safe and positive environment where all children can collect together, learn, and grow. The programme makes sure that no barriers – internal or external, or physical or emotional – affect children’s will to participate.
- ▲ CRC aims to bring positivity to children’s lives by making them feel heard, and by valuing their opinions.



**We standardized our CRC Manual!**

**We conducted meeting with teachers and school authorities in every village to liaison with them for our CRC module.**



## Children's Groups

After the successful completion of TIE 2017, children's groups were formed in our project villages. Children's group can be seen as an extension of CRC and our Education Aid classes. These groups function independently with the assistance of their Educator in the village. We now have an actively functioning children's group in 3 of our villages, where they not only participate in the activities organized by Samvedna, but also initiate work for the benefit of their own community.



Children's Groups' activities in progress



**4** children's groups' meetings focused on maintaining personal hygiene were conducted.

Plantation drive initiated by Children's Group in Jamuniya in the village Anganwadi.



Children's Group from Chhapriyayi presents skits on caste-based discrimination, and water scarcity in the Gram Sabha.

## Relentless

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Sustainable involvement of people and their effort in any programme requires that communities be placed at the very heart of it. This not only ensure the longevity of the programme but also its effectiveness – when communities are a part of the effort from the beginning, programmes can be changed according to the needs of the community, and the benefits of the programme are shared by all. At Samvedna, our programmes address the Bedia Community as a whole, and our all our tools are geared to elicit maximum participation of the entire community.

Members of Samvedna’s ground staff team are residents of the respective villages, and in most cases, belong to the Bedia community.

### **Community Meeting**

Samvedna organized a community meeting in its Narsingarh field office where **members of different communities** participated. The objective was to understand the communities’ perception of our work and to set mutual future goals. This was also a preparatory meeting in anticipation of the Gram Sabha that was to be shortly held. Issues pertaining to their respective villages were discussed and all were encouraged to be an active part of the Gram Sabha.



Community meeting in progress in Samvedna’s Narsingarh Field Office

**For the first time, members from various communities from our project villages came together on one platform to work with Samvedna.**





## Flight

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As an organization, our major goal towards which all our efforts are aligned is to ensure betterment of the people we work with. To ensure the effectiveness of our efforts, we work with multiple stakeholders, and network with various organizations.

- With help from **State Resource Centre**<sup>3</sup>, we started a **library** in Kolukhedi with **more than 350** books. Members of the School Management Committee also became an eager part of the process.
- By working closely with Block and District level authorities, we were successful in smoothening out the school and hostel admission process for Bedia children.
- With cooperation from **Arushi**, we conducted an effective training session for our staff on learning disabilities and the different techniques that can be used to teach children more effectively.
- We enrolled 3 youths to the **skill-based training** course run by the **ICICI Foundation**.
- With cooperation from the **MPSACS** (Madhya Pradesh State AIDS Control Society), we were able to better assist members from our community with medical support. We could also provide Antara (Person affected with HIV) with better healthcare support.
- We conducted meetings with **SOCHARA** to conduct training for Samvedna staff members about **maternal health**.
- We participated in the **94.3 My FM's** campaign “*Maango Haq Se*” for creating **awareness** among women and adolescent girls for using sanitary napkins.
- We attended a one-day workshop on the abolition of child abuse organized by **Child Commission** and **World Vision India**.
- We acquired various learning material from **Eklavya** to help teach our children better.

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<sup>3</sup> State Resource Centre(s) SRC(s) provide academic and technical resource support to adult and continuing education through development and production of material and training modules. In addition, SRC is required to conduct motivational and environmental building, action research and evaluation and monitoring.

# Fearless

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## Collectivisation of Women

At Samvedna, we believe in the power of collective. This year, we began the process of collectivisation of women so as to be able to bring them together for a concerted effort.

With married women who want to find ways of earning a livelihood, one group was formed, while another two were formed with women who are in profession, or are now out of profession. Issues of health, and education were discussed with the latter group. The former group has helped in **lowering** the number of school dropouts among children of the Bedia Community.



The efforts of the married women's group has set in motion a prospective partnership with USHA for establishing tailoring schools in our project villages.



## Advocacy

Samvedna is a rights-based organisation and we constantly work with government authorities to make their rights accessible to our target groups.

This year we filed two RTIs and submitted a memorandum. The RTIs sought information about the Jabali Yojana of the Government of Madhya Pradesh, and about the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) scheme of the Government of India.

We also submitted a memorandum outlining the problems that students face while accessing the education system through the Open School.

**We filed 2 RTIs this year – seeking information about the ICDS scheme, and for the Jabali Yojana.**



We also submitted a memorandum to the Madhya Pradesh State Open School Education Board, the State Education Board of Madhya Pradesh, the State Human Rights Commission of Madhya Pradesh, the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights of Madhya Pradesh, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and the National Human Rights Commission.

## Theatre in Education 2017

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The TIE workshop, along with providing a platform to the children to talk about their lives, also equips Samvedna's educators with unique tools to interact with children. The workshop facilitates peer-interaction among the children, which eventually leads to a stronger children's group in the villages. This in-turn prepares a strong foundation for Samvedna's cause in the villages.

TIE 2017 was a **four-day residential workshop** that was conducted in Bhopal by renowned theatre and stage artist Walter Peter – from June 13 to June 17 – **comprising 19 children from 4 different villages of 2 districts**. The workshop presented the students with a potpourri of activities that included drawing, painting, singing, theatre exercises, etc.

TIE 2017 was successful in kindling a sense of confidence and drive to bring about change from within in its participants. An intent towards wholesome growth was visible at the end of 4 days as children came out of their comfort zone to participate in various activities, lots of friendships bloomed and a *feeling of 'we'* blossomed.



## Stories of Change

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### Different Gods: The Reality in Chhapriyayi

Chhapriyayi, one of our project areas, is a small village situated about 55 kilometres from Bhopal. Out of the total, about 30 percent households are that of the Bedia Community. Samvedna runs Education Aid classes in the village with the help of our Educator, who also belongs to the community itself.

Of the 19 kids that attended TIE 2017, 7 belonged to Chhapriyayi. After the workshop, not only did the kids come back with new energy and ideas, the Educators too were motivated to harness the potential that all the children had displayed.

With this spirit, the Educator at Chhapriyayi introduced a drawing activity for every Saturday. She hoped to understand children's perspective, dreams, and ambitions better. The activity had unprecedented effects – not only did the children talk about their lives, they also talked about social issues.

Anubha and Ayushi (names changed) depicted the discrimination that the Bedia Community faces at the hands of the upper caste. Their drawing illustrates the prohibition imposed on Bedia by the upper caste on entering temples. Accompanying the drawing was a poem that questioned the discrimination in the society if God was the sole creator.

Not only are the children now conscious of their experiences, they also question their immediate social reality. It is this spirit, the spirit of questioning, the spirit of identifying right from wrong that we hope will change their future.

### Reaching for the Stars

A look at the little 13 year old Mansi (name changed) will never let you guess what her favourite game is – kabaddi! A resident of the village Jamuniya Johar, this little girl dreams of becoming a teacher and teaching the children of her community just like her Educator.

She was one of the 19 children who participated in TIE 2017. Though it was hard to convince her parents to let her come to Bhopal, our Educator was up to the task. Not only did she attend the workshop, she learned and performed brilliantly. After going back to her village, she took sessions with the children of her village and taught them the activities that she had learnt at the workshop.

Her mother wasn't convinced to let her study further, but with the combined efforts of Samvedna, Mansi will soon come to Bhopal to pursue her education.

In a nurturing environment, away from the vulnerabilities of her community's traditions, we hope she will find her wings.

## One Step Closer

Her parents wanted her to quit school and help with household chores when Jaanki got a supplementary in 9<sup>th</sup> standard. Adolescent age for Bedia girls brings with it unique vulnerabilities and hardships.

For us, it was imperative that Jaanki be reconnected to education without any delay.



The educator of Chhapriyayi conducted various home visits to Jaanki's home. Not only did our educator convince her parents to let her take her supplementary exams, our educator also managed to get permissions for Jaanki to attend the TIE workshop 2017.

Her enthusiasm during the workshop was infectious! Not only did she have lots of fun, she went back home as motivated as ever. Back in her village, she started teaching other children the art of *mehendi* making.

With the combined efforts of Samvedna's team, Jaanki was able to clear her supplementary exams. She is now going to school regularly, and wishes to complete her education. Samvedna will support her in her endeavours to fight for her right to education.

## Our Gratitude

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We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to CRY (Child Rights and You), and University of Nebraska for their financial support;  
and to all our individual donors – Mr Parag Harshad Shroff, Mr Harshwardhan Patil, Mr Sandesh Shetty, Mr Fazlur Rehman Siddiqui, Ms Rupa Yogesh Patel, Ms Rekha Paresh Khandhadia, Mr Reto Seeholzer, Ms Shefali Jhaveri, and Ms Rochelle Dalla.

“*Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness.*

*Kindness in giving creates love.*”

– Lao Tzu