

# Protsahan

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15







## MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER

*At Protsahan, our model combines Creativity, Empathy, and Sustainability to provide basic education through non-traditional means impacting 'harder to teach' children. We believe that in order to break extreme cycles of intergenerational poverty and abuse in the life of a woman, education of adolescent girls is most crucial. We have specifically devised a '5-pillar of creativity model' using simple approaches but in an extremely innovative way to bridge the gap in education as it exists today. Protsahan focuses on creative education for children and their subsequent mainstreaming through sustainable livelihoods through Art. We use the creativity of design, art, cinema, technology and digital stories to impact and empower underprivileged children to mainstream them and their communities inclusively on issues like Child Marriage, Gender Violence, Nutrition, Education and Livelihoods. We are happy to say that we have put 800 girls back to school this year and also monitored their performance at school.*

*We believe in synergy, and hence, we have constantly partnered with other non-governmental organisations like Toybank, Swechha, etc.; and various corporates like Google, Godrej, DP World, E&Y and SAP India in order to extend our reach across various geographies. Our projects have holistically led to magical transformations in little girls' lives and we are passionate to not let this fire die. All this had been possible due to huge efforts of our staff and the volunteers, as well as the donors and our partner organisations. We hope to receive valuable contributions from all, in years to come.*

*Warmly,*

*Sonal Kapoor*

*Founder CEO & Creative Director*

*PROTSAHAN India Foundation*

*Fellow: The World Bank, Vital Voices, Australia India Youth Dialogue*

*Goldman Sachs-ISB Woman Social Entrepreneur*



**P**rotsahan is experienced in leading systemic change by working at the grassroots with last mile-inch deep approach when working with children and simultaneously strengthening linkages with existing public institutions. Our focus in 2014-15 specifically stressed on working in partnership with girls' mothers, families and also local community infrastructure. We are glad that there is renewed focus of the Indian government too on adolescent girls' empowerment starting 2014. We hope that this serves as an opportunity for organizations like Protsahan that strive for systemic change in young lives of little children to scale its expertise to reach as many children to free them of abuse and channel their way into light and true empowerment.

## Why does Protsahan Invest in Systemic Transformation of Adolescent Girls?

**P**rotsahan invests in design based and art innovation led creative programs using the strength of cinema, films, photography, art and digital storytelling towards empowering adolescent girls for two essential reasons:

**i. Make People who are a Part of the Problem, a Part of the Solution:**

Protsahan believes that mere donation of funds for isolated programmes that aren't integrated well with the

existing mindsets and available infrastructure as an approach is not sustainable and will not serve the purpose of empowering the girls, in the truest sense. Hence, we believe the solution for real impact should include programmes that encourage direct involvement with the girls impacting their daily lives, their education, their way of thinking, and making them able to raise their voices. By developing their art of questioning through creative knowledge and by providing them safe learning spaces through life skills we





build both, their vocational and soft skills for personality enhancement, all integrated. Because only when we can enable the girl to fight for her rights without fear, is when we as an organization, would have succeeded.

**ii. Girls are essential agents of change in breaking the cycle of poverty and deprivation:**

Multiple issues such as maternal mortality, child survival, child sexual abuse and gender-based violence

can be resolved by investing in their economic potential through education and by delaying child marriage, and the cycle of poverty can be broken to a large extent. Educated and healthy girls become healthy mothers producing healthy children. Focusing programs on girls translates into better futures for women, children and families, thereby creating true intergenerational impact.



## How does Protsahan Invest in Systemic Transformation of Adolescent Girls?

**I**n past five years, since our inception, Protsahan has explored how the preceding best practices for empowering adolescent girls can be established in the Indian context. As per Protsahan the most high impact interventions on empowering adolescent girls are those that are closest to the communities in which they live. These include:

**i. Engaging Adolescent Youth Themselves**

In India, the adolescent girls are often unaware of their choices with regard to their role within home and

community, their educational opportunities and their sexual and reproductive health. Also, they lack open and non-judgemental guidance in making their choices.

Protsahan believes in engaging youth via fostering of healthy debate on issues relevant to adolescent girls' lives such as early marriage, dowry, women's rights, and domestic violence. Engaging youth is essential to get young people to lead the change that they want in life.



*Protsahan engages youth in two ways:*

**a. Protsahan Slum Panchayats:** Adolescent girls and their mothers are collected and educated on their choices for reproductive and sexual understanding of their bodies, maternal health and how important is it to establish the bond of respect and trust between the mother and daughter. These conversations in slum panchayats have gone a long way in building a community culture of trust and understanding for a girl's growth. Protsahan has used the essentialities of cinema, design, photography and stage road shows as advocacy tools to foster this over 5 years.

**b. Peer educators (Badi Didis):** Protsahan believes in creating a cadre of youth who are able to engage peers and other community members as influencers. A strong group of such community changemaker heroes goes a long way in building a sustainable impact in community. Also with such an approach, Protsahan's programmes for community change, for actually end mile transformation, get owned by the people it's being targeted at.

## **ii. Mobilizing Communities**

*Protsahan focuses on more effective communication with the local key influencers in an adolescent girls' life in order to overcome the root cause which hinders their empowerment, such as families and communities. Protsahan's communication with mothers and communities has demonstrated a positive effect on countering gender based violence and overall sexual and reproductive health. Protsahan's communication with mothers and communities has demonstrated a positive effect on countering gender based violence and overall sexual and reproductive health.*

*Typically, Protsahan in 2014-15 focused on mobilising communities through families. Protsahan believes that a positive behaviour change among key influencers like mother, father has a significant impact on the way that girls are treated in India. Promoting messages on girls' education, reproductive and sexual health, and violence against women ensures that families are better informed and make better decisions affecting their girl child.*

## **iii. Building Field Level Networks with Grass-root NGOs**

*Building field level networks and consortia with grass root non-governmental and corporate organisations has helped Protsahan spread practices across geographies while simultaneously taking into account the specific needs of each community. It has also helped Protsahan with resources and expertise to significantly scale programs while maintaining the quality of impact on adolescent girls. Some of these organisations are:*

- Swechha NGO,
- Teach for India, Chennai
- HelpAge India
- Hope for the Children Foundation, India
- UNICEF, India
- UN Women (Singapore)
- Make a Difference, Bangalore
- Goonj
- Safecity (Red Dot Foundation)
- Toybank, Mumbai
- Dream A Dream, Bangalore
- CSRs – SAP India, Google, DP World, Ernst and Young and more.



#### **iv. Impact Assessment and Tracking**

*It is a critical intervention in India since an accurate portrait of the ground level realities is required so that Protsahan's future policies and programs can be improved.*

*Protsahan engaged in qualitatively and quantitatively tracking impact of the projects undertaken so far by:*

- a. Identifying key stakeholders in adolescent girls' lives*
- b. Measuring attitudes and behaviours of girls in conflict situations*
- c. Tracking increase or decrease in the incidents of violence against adolescent girls Protsahan works with.*

*In India, at present there are significant gaps in understanding the needs of adolescent girls and effective practices that can empower them. Hence, Protsahan's strong qualitative tracking mechanisms will form the foundation for further developing the long term impact of interventions.*

#### **v. Offering Products and Services**

*Protsahan works with adolescent girls through a centre-based approach within the communities providing following:*

- a. Education: Offering creative education enables Protsahan to bridge the gap between adolescent girls and community thinking as well as draws young people to centre.*
- b. Individual Counselling: Protsahan provides professional counselling services not only to adolescents but to their parents as well especially mothers.*
- c. Safe Spaces: Protsahan acts as a place for adolescent girls to mingle learn from their peers and seek refuge from domestic violence, proving adequate support to girls who live in constrained or abusive environments.*





# Protsahan's Five Cornerstones of Empowering Adolescent Girls

**P**rotsahan's approaches to empowering adolescent girls takes into account specific age related issues since they form a heterogeneous group in terms of their needs. It also ensures a strategic focus on areas that have the highest impact on developing their future potential: creative education, and income and productivity. Hence, in order to implement all this, Protsahan focused on five key areas listed below:

## **1. Bridge Course and Subsequent Mainstreaming of Adolescent Girls in Schools**

Education is associated with long term results over generations and Protsahan essentially believes that educating girls has the potential to increase empowerment in a short time. Protsahan adopts a means of creative education modules like photography, technology, cinema, and design in its Bridge Course for children who have faced severe abuse post which they are mainstreamed into schools. Post this highly interactive and empathy based bridge course, the girls are directly admitted to fifth-sixth-seventh or higher grades in schools, while they keep coming to our centre. Education offers the girls an opportunity to discover a world outside their communities and makes them aware of their own abilities.

## **2. Delaying marriage and pregnancy**

Due to child marriage, girls lose the opportunity to experience their formative years, and discover themselves. Early marriage means that far before the adolescent girls are mentally, emotionally and physically ready, they have to take responsibilities of an adult married woman. Also, early marriage translates into early sexual activity and pregnancy which is harmful not only to these girls but to their children as well.

## **3. Building Safe Learning Space**

Protsahan enhances a girls' sense of self-worth as well as her ability to make decisions and exercise choices. We have done this through life skills education, also referred to as personality or self-development. We have broken stereotypes by discussing about the menstrual hygiene through cartoons, discussing gender roles with the fathers of the girls, holding innovative slum panchayat sessions to build mother-daughter relationships, involving fathers in the dialogue and more. Focusing on building safe learning space for girls helped build their negotiation and communication skills, has broaden girls' horizons, and raised awareness of sexual and reproductive issues in their lives.



Protsahan has focused on psycho-social and emotional upliftment of girls and built a safe learning space for girls where they find themselves with their peers so that they can open up easily, and keep themselves engaged in various activities like film appreciation classes, picnics, historical tours which has changed the views of these girls with which they view the world.

#### 4. Increasing Income Generating Potential

Protsahan enables girls, once they are in the age bracket of 14-16 years of age, to acquire practical skills such as vocational training as the most direct ways to reduce the opportunity cost burdens on their families. Also, enhancing economic opportunities for girls makes them postpone their marriage and reduces the risk of being engaged in exploitative labour.

#### 5. Improving Adolescent Girl Health

Adolescent girls' health needs encompass reproductive and general health, involving the intricately related aspects of emotional, social and mental wellbeing. Working with adolescent girls on issues related to reproductive and sexual health. Protsahan improved the adolescent girls' health through the following actions:

i. *Disseminating sex education:* The patterns of sexual and health seeking behaviour established during adolescence set the stage for adult health. The fundamentals for the same at Protsahan focused on protecting against unwanted pregnancies, stopping child labour, domestic abuse, etc.

ii. *Preventing violence against girls:* Compared to women, little girls are at a higher risk of physical or sexual abuse. Also, gender based violence has a clear link to mental health. Hence, we organise regular workshops of mothers under the program called Slum Panchayats.

iii. *Fostering understanding of menstrual hygiene:* The beginning of menstruation is a confusing time in a girls' life due to hormonal changes, and shift in day to day behaviour. We make the adolescent girls understand about this through the means of Menstrupedia where cartoons and films are used to make them understand, and hence break the taboo.





## **Apr- May'14**

*It was a month of global appreciation for Protsahan. We received acknowledgement for our holistic approach to girl child development in the TIME magazine and Femina magazine along with major print media. Protsahan also conducted a long series of Digital-Stories Workshop for creating awareness on using toilets in urban slum communities through the voices of young girls. Parent Teacher Meet in April saw story telling session at Protsahan, this was attended by girls and their mothers alike. The idea was to bring light to serious issues like child violence and working towards abolishing it. 165 girls were put into schools in this month itself. Regular academic classes continued from Monday to Saturday throughout the month uninterrupted.*

## **June'14**

*It was a beginning of our association with UNICEF India on Poo to Loo campaign on sanitation. A team from Google taught girls digital photography and technology basics with the help of which they raised concern for issues like child marriage and sexual abuse. One of the highlight for this segment of the year was sale of Protsahan's 12 year old artist's Kalamkari painting in Australia. Protsahan also became a home for more than 200 girls as it expanded its operating space. Regular academic classes continued from Monday to Saturday throughout the month uninterrupted.*

## **July-Aug'14**

*Hyderabad's vernacular Eenadu newspaper carried an article on Protsahan's Mother-Daughter campaign. It was indeed very well received across the region. The work in Delhi was reaching all regions within India too and not just internationally. Femina's July issue also featured a story on Protsahan and our founder. We gave special attention to Livelihood training for financial independence of the girls. This included vocational trainings like Candle making (for Diwali), Rakhis, Stitching, Block-painting etc. Project Inspire was it's full steam in this part of the year. 80 girls received life skills based training along with modules on menstrual hygiene management. Regular academic classes continued from Monday to Saturday throughout the month uninterrupted.*

## **Sep-Oct'14**

*In the month of September Protsahan girls turned activists to present their first ever Nukkad Natak (street play) on reducing carbon footprint. The play was entirely conceptualized and executed by the girls and supported by DP World. Diwali was celebrated in full scale by Protsahan family. All the gifts made by the girls on this occasion were sold through various mediums across different segments of the society. Protsahan received Diwali gifts from it's twitter family, new clothes for the girls! Regular academic classes continued from Monday to Saturday throughout the month uninterrupted.*



## **Nov'14**

Information and Communication Technology became one of the primary medium to educate children. High end 3D quilling sessions were conducted on fighting abuse in children as a theme. Film appreciation classes were held at regular intervals to familiarize them with concept of space (Gravity), Team work (Chak de India) and self-discipline (Mary Kom) amongst others. Project Stree -took another step towards empowering women by producing Christmas presents for sale with the help of factory waste alone. A Unique 3D art practice was conducted to teach menstrual cycle and other related hygiene factors to adolescent girls. Regular academic classes continued from Monday to Saturday throughout the month uninterrupted.

## **Dec'14**

Protsahan participated in Yamuna cleanathon drive with Sweccha. Also initiated e-waste recycling project by young girls themselves through waste paper strips art class

thus emphasising the reuse of waste and made a short film which they self scripted, acted in and directed, which is uploaded on YouTube on our official channel: Protsahan India. In the month of December Protsahan also got the opportunity to represent itself at the world forum through Active Talks on 'Using Art Innovation to foster Sanitation led projects' at UNICEF. Toybank and SAP employees presented New Year gifts to Protsahan girls! This month also marked a beginning of a new project for the Protsahan girls where they have started scripting and directing their own production on Baal Vivah (Child Marriage) which they have named, 'Tukri ki Shadi'. The final film will be produced and be ready in middle of 2015 and made available online for children across the country and the world to see. It's a project very close to the hearts of Protsahan girls and they are leaving no stone unturned to make a remarkable motion picture to put forward their voices through multimedia and technology. Some very recognized authors and young people are helping execute this project. Regular academic classes continued from Monday to Saturday throughout the month uninterrupted.









### **Jan '15**

The year began with Founder of Protsahan, Sonal Kapoor presenting a talk at the social entrepreneurship conference at XLRI Jamshedpur. Protsahan's filmmaker girls became socio-environment crusaders as Protsahan put together its second Street Play showcasing Don't Drink and Drive Campaign through their creative ideas on road safety. This was a month long multi-partner campaign and was extensively covered on National Television by NDTV. Art activities continued in full steam in everyday classes, focus was on Self Love in the life of a young adolescent girl. The workshops were so highly impactful that now we are conducting the same with more than 4 partner organizations across the country for young children. Regular academic classes continued from Monday to Saturday throughout the month uninterrupted.

### **Feb '15**

Several puppetry based sessions to spread awareness on gender violence and child abuse were conducted in this month for hundreds of young girls and children in partnership with several smaller grassroot NGOs. Sonal Kapoor, Founder, Protsahan was invited at several

roundtables for young people, social entrepreneurs at Trichy, Josh Talks and at Change The Script conference conducted by Dream a Dream, Bangalore to inspire more young people to work with children using design and empathy based approaches. One of our most remarkable recognition included being honored (in most inspiring young changemaker category) at the Rotary Club, Nariman Point by Adi Godrej along with India's Mars Orbiter Space Mission (Mangalyan) team (Science and Technology category)

### **Mar -Apr '15**

Sonal Kapoor was invited at INSEAD, Abu Dhabi campus to give an inspirational talk to hundreds of INSEAD women alumni on Women's Day on March 8. Sonal was also honored with the Biz Divas Award in the Young Trailbrazer category by Barclays. Holi was beautifully celebrated with our girls. The high point of this month was our model campaign launched with Red Dot Foundation (Safecity) on stopping street sexual harassment using technology based interfaces by Protsahan girls. Film appreciation classes, art activities using design and cinema continued in full swing across the month. Regular academic classes continued from Monday to Saturday throughout the month uninterrupted.





# Pratsahan's Enhanced Focus on Skill Development along with Creative Education

**T**wo major driving forces of economic growth and social development of a country are skills and knowledge. The problem is two-fold in rapidly growing economies like India with a vast and ever-increasing population. On one hand, there is a severe paucity of highly-trained and quality labour, while on the other hand large sections of the population possess little or no job skills.

As the Indian economy is on the path of a huge growth, large scale sectoral shifts are to be observed in the working population from agricultural sector to other sectors of the economy. But since these sectors other than agriculture require different skill sets, sometimes specialist skills are required; there is a huge requirement of training and skill development in India. Hence, this leads to the addressing of skill gap in India through comprehensive efforts, at various levels and catering to different needs of the industry and society.

Also, recently the government of India has put in a lot of efforts to make India a skill capital of the world by training people and hence, providing ample opportunities for their growth.

## Pratsahan and Skill Development

Pratsahan understands that a lot of skill development is required in India in order to have a rapid growth of the country. But until the adolescent girls of mostly the marginalised community are not provided proper training to develop their skills, India will not be able to get developed. Unless these girls are made aware of their importance to the society and of their abilities and hidden skills, the growth of the country would be meaningless. Hence, Pratsahan constantly focuses on development of these marginalised adolescent girls by providing them creative training to develop their skill sets so that they are able to gain importance and have value in the society through the dignity of their earnings.

Pratsahan believes that the poverty cycle cannot be broken unless these girls are made financially independent. The main reason for the discrimination against girls is that they are considered dependent on their male counterparts. Pratsahan attempts to end this dependence and make the girls and women financially independent through like skills and vocational skills in the following ways:



## Life Skills:

**1. Information, Communication and Technology:** Protsahan trains the girls to use modern equipment like computer, camera so that they are able to use the technology to express their views and opinions in the community. For example, girls at Protsahan are encouraged to make photo digital stories, films where they write script, act and direct themselves. The purpose behind this is that we enable the girls to use technology to display their understanding and opinions on various social issues so that they are able to raise their voices in the later part of life due to proper understanding rather than just teaching them about various social issues and how to use computers.

**2. Nukkad Nataks:** We encourage girls to perform Nukkad Nataks in which they are free to take any cause which impacts them the most. These girls prepare the act themselves which boosts their confidence and helps them in raising their voices and opinions in front of their families and community on social issues like reducing carbon footprint.

**3. Film Appreciation:** We do not believe in just making the girls watch cinema. At Protsahan, girls attend film appreciation classes where they not only share their learning from the movie but most of the times give a completely different angle to the message of the movie. We show them movies like Komal which is a movie on child sexual abuse. Adolescent girls at Protsahan are able to relate to these movies which make them open when sharing their views about the same so that they are able to raise their voices against any injustice in future.

## Vocational Skills:

**1. Jewellery, Designer Cloth Bags:** We believe that making girls financially independent is a key to empowering them. Since it would reduce their dependence on the male counterparts and hence will reduce various issues like domestic violence and abuse to a great extent. Hence, Protsahan empowers women by developing skills of making jewellery, designer cloth bags and essential tailoring as micro entrepreneurial shops.

**2. Soft toys:** On the similar lines of financial independence, the adolescent girls at Protsahan are given proper training to make stuff toys under professional trainers so that they are able to sell those in market and earn an extra dime as a part time business after school. This ensures that their creative skills are developed and are not seen as a burden by their families.





In 2013-14, Protsahan received grant under Project Inspire launched by UN Women Singapore and MasterCard which engaged youth to advance women empowerment. Out of 570 global organizations, United Nations Women Singapore and MasterCard Foundation chose the young and creative Protsahan India Foundation to execute this project to churn out 100 creative slum girl micro entrepreneurs. Under this project girls rescued from points of vulnerability and abuse, from streets and slums are being trained to become artists, filmmakers, community teachers and creative micro entrepreneurs. Such creative expression is not just educational for girls, but has the power to give them a voice that would be heard. Our approach is different, as we believe in reaching numbers the right way. The approach for an individual girl has to be right before sustainable scaling.





# Protsahan's Commitment to Millennium Development Goals

**T**he Millennium Development Goals are eight international development goals that were established following the Millennium Summit of the UN in 2000. Protsahan understands the importance of these goals and is dedicated towards enabling the nation achieve them. As an organisation we have strategically chosen to focus on the following MDGs basis the community demographics we deal with for maximum impact:

## **MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education**

In order to realise the promise of universal education for every child, Protsahan invests in three areas: getting more children into primary school; helping more children stay in school through the secondary level; and improving the quality of the learning they receive throughout their schooling.

Protsahan's 'Project Educare' focuses on Creative Education through innovative approaches of Design, Art, Stories, Photography, Theatre and Cinema to foster Creative Education and Sustainable Livelihoods. After completing Protsahan's 10 month long bridge course, 12-16 year old slum children who have never been to a traditional school are able being admitted directly into the 4th or 5th grades of government schools in Delhi. Protsahan also follows a strict monitoring procedure in which it keeps a track of every child sent to school for a period of three months to ensure that the child is able to continue his education independently now. In 2014-15, Protsahan has successfully mainstreamed 800 girls

back to school and is working with about 9000 children across the country through partner organisations.

## **MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**

Protsahan under its flagship project 'Project Stree' combines traditional and modern ideas to spread awareness amongst adolescent girls and women of marginalized backgrounds by organising design oriented workshops to render survival skills. Some of the major projects include and are not limited to production of sanitary napkins, terracotta jewellery, cushion covers, designer earthen lamps and so on. Protsahan uses simplicity of design, technology and art to churn out simple usable products at the level of urban slums.

Protsahan conveys the message unless the empowerment reached the mother working with only the little girl will not be holistic. Hence, Project Stree aims in creating sustainable livelihood for the mothers as well.

Also, Slum Panchayats by Protsahan are an innovative and fun platform for women living in the slums of India to speak and find solutions to the issues plaguing them. It allows women to come out of their shells and voice their opinions on different issues such as women's safety, empowerment, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, and using skills to maintain livelihood. Protsahan also works to give voice to young girls and women on their rights of gender equality and health.



In 2014-15, we had conducted over 7 Slum Panchayat Sabhas reaching out to over 2500 mothers.

### **MDG 5: Improve maternal health**

Delivering healthcare to over a billion people is a very complex challenge. Protsahan targets this by educating adolescent girls in their early years about menstrual hygiene and basic first aid using 3D art practice so that they get a complete understanding of the same. Protsahan believes that a healthy mother and a healthy baby is the route to a productive, developed nation. While women contribute to up to 80 per cent of the household income, not even 20 per cent of that is spent on them.

### **MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**

This goal focuses on integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs; reducing biodiversity loss; reducing the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; improving the lives of slum-dwellers. In India, close to 594 million (or 48% of population in India) practices open defecation. If it continues to be like this, there will be no escape from the stench of life threatening diseases, infections and epidemics. Protsahan's "poo2loo Campaign" with UNICEF INDIA aims at ending open defecation in India. Protsahan reached out to thousands of children to promote understanding of need of toilets and ending open defecation through field partners.

In India, a lot of plastic bags are used every day. The plastic bags are so inexpensive that in the stores no one treats them as worth anything. Hence, leading to plastic pollution which adversely affects the environment. Protsahan tried to reduce it by making cloth bags which could be used for wrapping Diwali gifts. It not only helped in reducing environment pollution but also provided extra earning bread to the cloth bag makers.

Protsahan encourages girls for street performance where they convey the various messages like reducing carbon footprint through their performance in front of hundreds of their own community. This not only spreads out the implied message but also provides a platform to girls to open up and wash out their fears of speaking up and expressing their views in public.

### **MDG 8: To develop a global partnership for development**

Protsahan understands that to reach more and more little girls through highly creative approaches of innovative art and technology, partnership with local grassroots NGOs and local MCD schools is the way forward. Also, community participation of not just women but men folk too is equally essential to bring holistic change in the life of a young girl. Simultaneously imperative is the guidance and expertise of global multilateral organizations that'll help us see the larger vision with undiluted focus.



# Building an Ecosystem for Girls through Creative Safe Spaces

**P**rotsahan uses art innovation and design thinking to transform lives of street and slum children acing abuse and vulnerability with a focus on empowering adolescent young girls to break the extreme cycle of poverty.

Protsahan believes in a holistic approach. We focus not only on adolescent girls but try to influence the complete environment surrounding them using a 360 degree approach. The three building blocks at Protsahan for empowering adolescent girls are:

## 1. Creative Education

“It’s a brisk morning in a dark slum of West Delhi and a class of young girls have burst into the rooms of Protsahan for learning something new. These are children of rickshaw pullers, house maids, sex workers, ragpickers, or/and have faced extreme child abuse in one context or other. Amid an explosion of colours and ideas, Meena, 8, and Aanchal, 9, two young girls, are building a tower out of colourful wood blocks. Their structure, however, is top-heavy, and it begins to wobble. The pair stops and scrutinizes their work. Aanchal dismantles the tower and starts to rebuild. “Let’s put it like

this,” she tells Meena, using the biggest blocks to create a solid foundation. Up the tower goes again, this time standing firmly on a solid base.”

This might not seem a remarkable activity since kids break stuff and pull it apart on a daily basis. But what Aanchal did in revising her construction methods was that she engaged a two-step thought process known as “divergent thinking.” First, her mind flipped through her knowledge on the geometry of blocks (cubes are sturdy; cones, not so much). And then it generated new ideas for how she might use them (placing large cubes at the bottom, instead of on top). Divergent thinking is key to problem solving and is the backbone of creativity—understanding what is, and then imagining the possibilities of what could be.

In our society the word “creativity,” tends to be applied to artistic endeavours. But divergent thinking is an essential part of everyday life. Hence, Protsahan puts more emphasis on creative education rather than just on artistic creativity. Some of the samples made by the young girls fighting abuse are shown below:





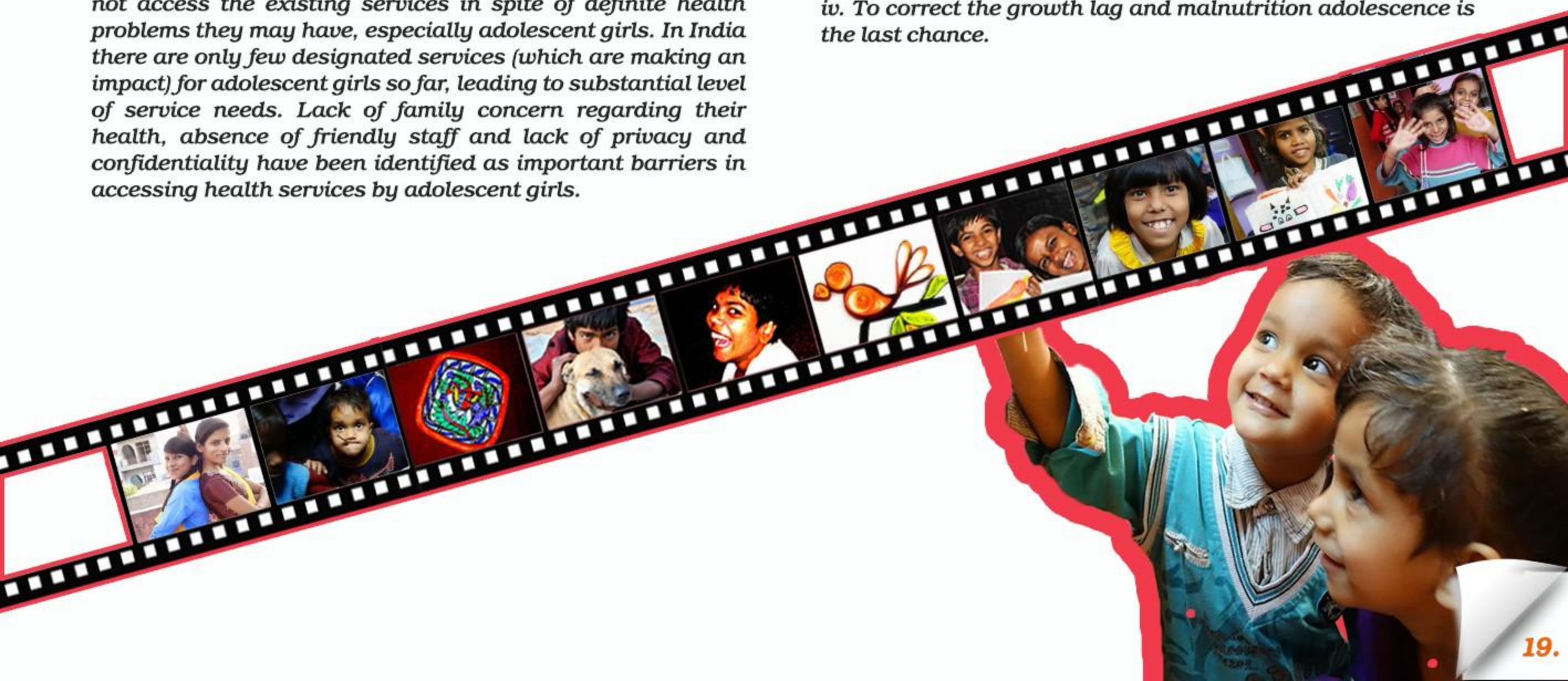
## 2. Child Healthcare

Pratsahan thus emphasizes a lot on healthcare of adolescent girls. It uses the skills of creative learning and art to teach the young girls about various diseases.

India is the second most populous country in the world with total population of over 1.2 billion. And adolescents form a large section of population, about 22.5 per cent. Adolescent has been defined by WHO as the period of life spanning between 10-19 years. They are but not yet adults, but no longer a child. It is a common observation that adolescents do not access the existing services in spite of definite health problems they may have, especially adolescent girls. In India there are only few designated services (which are making an impact) for adolescent girls so far, leading to substantial level of service needs. Lack of family concern regarding their health, absence of friendly staff and lack of privacy and confidentiality have been identified as important barriers in accessing health services by adolescent girls.

## Why focus on adolescent girls?

- i. Adolescence is a period of rapid physical growth, including sexual and psychological changes.
- ii. Habits and behaviours picked up at this age have impact lifelong.
- iii. Adolescent girls in our society constitute a socially disadvantaged group especially in rural areas.
- iv. To correct the growth lag and malnutrition adolescence is the last chance.





v. Many adolescent girls are sexually active but they suffer from lack of information and skill for self-protection.

vi. Adolescent sexuality leads to adolescent pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (especially AIDS), unsafe abortion, and social problems.

vii. They have simple but crucial reproductive health needs: menstrual hygiene, safety from sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, and contraception. Also, communication gap exists with parents and other adults especially on these issues.

### **Health Problems at priority for adolescent girls:**

i. **Sexual and reproductive health problems:** problems regarding breast and menstruation for example, abnormal vaginal bleeding, painful menstrual cramps, adolescent pregnancies, sexual abuse and rape

ii. **Nutritional problems:** large number of adolescent girls are anaemic and malnourished, and one of the major problems at this age is inadequate calorie intake.

iii. **Mental health problems:** Adolescent girls especially in rural areas suffer from various psychological problems like emotional disturbances, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, etc.

iv. **Substance abuse:** Adolescent girls easily get influenced by adults and get engaged in trying tobacco, alcohol, and

other substances.

v. **Accidental and intentional violence:** Family, interpersonal and community violence leads to injury and death of adolescent girls.

### **3. Intergenerational Bonding**

Two major attributes which affect the parent-child connections are social attachment and sexual similarity. The more attached a child with parent, and the more similar, often the stronger the bond. Mothers start with more attachment to children than do fathers by bearing, birthing, and breastfeeding.

As for sexual similarity, it connects mothers to daughters, and fathers to sons, because each pair shares the same sexual identity. Hence, a mother knows her daughter better. An adolescent girl shares her all her problems with her mother. So it is very important to educate the mother as well along with the adolescent girls so that they will be able to take care of their daughters in a right manner.

Protsahan uses this approach to complete its ecosystem of empowering adolescent girls since unless these girls get the support of their mothers they will not be able to fight with the community and place their opinions boldly. Protsahan has been engaged in conducting various events where the arts and creativities of girls are shown to their mothers to make them realise the change Protsahan has brought in their daughters, and also lets them share their views and difficulties faced by them in their adolescence.



# Sanitation Interventions in Urban Slums through Creative Advocacy

**T**he World Health Organisation states that: "Sanitation generally refers to the provision of facilities and services for the safe disposal of human urine and faeces. The word 'sanitation' also refers to the maintenance of hygienic conditions, through services such as garbage collection and wastewater disposal. Sanitation includes these four engineering infrastructure items: excreta management system, wastewater management system, solid waste management system, and drainage systems for rainwater.

A lack of adequate sanitation contributes to a range of environmental and health problems. Inadequate sanitation also deepens the cycle of poverty, leads to increased living costs, lowers income earning potential; decreases spend on education and nutrition and threaten safety and welfare.

Women and girls also pay a heavy price of poor sanitation. Apart from health repercussions of inadequate sanitation there are many other reasons treating it as a priority issue:

1. In many areas, the only time girls can defecate is after dark due to lack of toilets. This can also cause serious illness apart from discomfort caused by the long wait. And also during the night-time walk to and from the communal defecation fields, there is a risk of harassment and assault.

2. One of the main factors preventing girls from attending school is the lack of separate and private sanitation and washing facilities (particularly when menstruating).

3. The health and lives of children are constantly threatened by environmental hazards as they get sick through contact with excreta in their environment. And also caring for sick children adds to the already heavy workload of women and girls.

4. Also, sanitation-related hookworm infections in pregnant women pose a considerable health burden on the society.

In India, children often use spaces nearer the settlement to defecate like nearby parks and playgrounds open gutters right outside their own houses, open spaces adjacent to streams and water sources, thereby contaminating their surroundings and drinking water sources. Also, girls are reluctant to attend school, and also parents are disinclined to send them, if there are no safe, private toilets for them to use. The difficulty face by women and girls every day and at every stage in their lives due to lack of a simple toilet is unimaginable. Inadequate sanitation leads to illness which compels adults, especially women, to take care of ailing members of the family. Thus, impacting the productivity of the nation.



## **How is Protsahan addressing this issue creatively and sustainably?**

Protsahan India understands the importance of sanitation and all the underlying issues. Protsahan recommends five cornerstones that are crucial in providing universal urban sanitation in India:

### **1. Developing a Gendered Approach**

The sanitation projects that not only focus on men but are designed with full participation from women are five to seven times more successful. It is very important to acknowledge the distinct role of men and women and involving them both as important actors, stakeholders and change agents for improved sanitation.

### **2. Nurturing Community Ownership**

Due to the government's traditional approach that often neglects the requirements of the communities being served universal sanitation in India remains elusive. Hence, there is a need to move away from this top - down method to a community led approach. Protsahan encourages communities to confront the consequences of their sanitation practices and takes ownership to improve their situation.

### **3. Customizing Solutions and Creating Standards**

It is of utmost importance to consider the unique features of different communities that might hinder progress, and customize interventions accordingly.

It is equally important, to standardize scalable aspects of the sanitation chain and leverage existing sector knowledge to reduce duplication of effort, and at the same time contribute to scale.

Protsahan has from starting focused on sanitation. Protsahan encourages the spread of importance and need for sanitation via the medium of creative education. Following is a glimpse of how Protsahan creates the awareness on the need for sanitation:

#### **1. "Swacchtha Soldiers: Protsahan Girl Brigade"**

The girls at Protsahan created a film on their own on "Need for Toilet for Girls" where they acted, scripted and directed the entire movie themselves in order to spread awareness about the necessity of toilet for girls. The film was premiered and screened in their community spreading the message for ending open defecation.

#### **2. "Poo2Loo Campaign"**

Protsahan in association with UNICEF partnered in this campaign in an attempt to end open defecation in India. Protsahan used the platform of shadow puppetry, Nukkad Nataks, design & art, film making & digital stories, technology and cinema to tackle this issue head on.

#### **3. "Hand washing campaign"**

Protsahan is completely aware that improper hand wash before eating is one of the major reasons for various diseases like diarrhoea in India. Hence, in order to spread awareness on the same Protsahan initiated this campaign where it spread the message among young children on importance of hand wash in a fun way using a medium of art and creativity.



# ICT (Information, Communication and Technology)

**A**n increase in a student's exposure to educational ICT has a significant and positive impact on student achievement especially in terms of knowledge-comprehension, practical skills and presentation skills as well.

ICTs stand for information and communication technologies and are defined as a "diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, store, disseminate, and manage information." These technologies include computers, broad casting technologies (radio and television), telephone and the Internet.

## **Effectiveness of ICTs in education**

ICTs are potentially powerful tool for extending both formal and non-formal educational opportunities, to the ignored or underserved constituencies, rural populations, ethnic minorities, women and girls, elderly people, persons with disability as well as all others who because of time constraints or for reasons of cost are unable to enrol on campus.

a. **Anytime, anywhere:** One the most effective feature of ICT is that it is not restricted or constrained to time and space. The online course materials can be accessed anytime day or night. ICTs make possible asynchronous learning, i.e. learning characterized by a time lag between the delivery of instruction and its reception by learners.

b. **Access to remote learning resources:** Teachers and learners, for their educational needs, no longer have to rely solely on printed books or materials in physical media housed in libraries which are also available in limited quantities. A wealth of learning materials with the Internet and the World Wide Web, in a variety of media and in almost every subject and can now is accessed by an unlimited number of people. ICTs also facilitate access to resource persons, experts, business leaders, researchers, professionals, mentors, and peers—all over the world.

c. **ICTs help prepare individuals for the workplace:** One of the most common reasons for using ICTs in the classroom has been to better prepare the current generation of students for a workplace where ICTs, particularly computers, the Internet and related technologies, are becoming more and more ubiquitous. The ability to use ICTs effectively and efficiently or, technological literacy is thus seen as representing a competitive edge in an increasingly globalizing job market.

The benefits of ICT can also be categorised as follows:

### **Benefits for teachers:**

- ICT facilitates sharing of resources, expertise and advice
- Easier planning and preparation of lessons and designing materials
- Computer use during lessons motivated students to continue using learning outside school hours



- Access to up-to-date pupil and school data, anytime and anywhere

*Benefits for students:*

- Higher quality lessons through greater collaboration between teachers in planning and preparing resources
- Gains in understanding and analytical skills, including improvements in reading
- Development of higher level learning styles.
- Opportunities to address their work to an external audience
- Students who used educational technology in school felt more successful in school, were more motivated to learn and have increased self-confidence and self-esteem.

### **Integrating ICT for Development Strategies to Empower Adolescent Girls**

Social, cultural, political and economic systems and traditions which prevent girls from fully achieving their rights present a formidable challenge to development organisations. The integration of ICT to the strategies to empowering adolescent girls provides an additional means for increasing participation of marginalised girls in social transformation. The root cause for discrimination and violence against marginalised girls stem from harmful norms and practices embedded in social, cultural and religious value systems as well as institutional and structural discrimination. Thus, the process of transforming marginalised adolescent girls requires a holistic approach that engages all orbits of influence, including the institutions and individuals including families and peers surrounding the adolescent girls.

The marginalised groups are systematically denied the opportunity to participate in the collective decision making processes of their communities and societies under the political dynamics of social exclusion. This is doubly so for many adolescent girls who suffer from multiple forms of discrimination that can severely limit their opportunities for participation in society and prevents their entrance into the public sphere. However, ICTs can offer girls an opportunity to connect with peers, engage in political processes, and increase their sense of agency which will allow them to make informed decisions and choices.

### **Protsahan's ICT4D based 5 Pillar Creativity Model**

Protsahan captures, amplifies and up streams the voices and ideas of marginalised adolescent girls from individual or community levels to higher levels of influence and decision making. Protsahan uses the medium of painting, photo, socio-drama, song and video in order to contribute to social mobilisation (ICT4D = Information, Communication, Technology for Development approach).

Protsahan focuses on:

- a. Girls affected by harmful practices
- b. Girls living in insecure areas vulnerable to natural disasters, the effects of climate change, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict and gender-based violence
- c. Girls belonging to socially excluded and vulnerable groups of the poor - ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities; indigenous and nomadic communities; populations living in remote areas and urban slums; female prisoners; and female migrants;



d. Girls denied access to quality education because of poverty, geographical location (remote rural areas and urban slums), being part of ethnic minorities, lack of safety and security, disability, and religious conventions or traditional practices which force them to leave school early.

e. Girls without adequate protection such as girls in institutions, girls living apart from both parents, girls in violent households, girls in domestic labour, girls who are trafficked or living on the streets, girls without families in IDP and refugee camps, and girls who are heading households. We use our '5 Pillars' of Creativity Approach by incorporating the creative arts and technology in the process of learning, making it a fun filled activity.

Protsahan has integrated ICT into its strategies for empowering adolescent girls in the following ways:

**1. Film appreciation classes:** At Protsahan, girls are shown movies and art films in order to develop their minds, mould their opinions and enable them to think out of the box for the solutions to the problems existing in their communities also known as transformative cinema. At the end of the movies, these girls are asked to express their feelings and views on the social issues displayed so that they are also able to raise their voices freely at any point of time. Hence, girls are not mere audiences but also participate in the discussion session after the movie.

**2. Film making by girls:** Protsahan motivates girls to be creative and helps them in using latest technology in conveying their views to the community where they act, script and direct on their own. Recently, girls created a documentary on their own in order to create awareness about the 'Need for toilet for Girls'.

**3. Photo digital story:** At Protsahan, girls are encouraged to create digital stories on issues that matter to them or in other words it gives the voice to their dreams and hence, it enables them to express their feelings openly. Protsahan also ensures that these messages are conveyed to the community and especially to the girls' families.

Also, there has been constant support to Protsahan from the industry (CSR and Bollywood alike) in order to integrate ICT into strategy for empowerment of girls, for example, team from Google taught the girls digital photography and technology basics.





## A Look at Some of our Stars

### **Soni**

*“Kyun paida hote hi maar dete hain us nadaan ko, kya jeene ka haq usse nahi jo bezubaan ho? (Why do we kill her while she only a foetus, does a little baby who cannot speak, also have no right to live?)”*

She was barely 10 when she joined Protsahan in the year 2010. Another girl child born to a family that saw her just as a burden and nothing more. It was at Protsahan that Soni learnt to appreciate the power of education, it not only helped her learn alphabets and numbers but also made her aware of all the social and economic issues the society was dealing with.

She learnt to appreciate films which taught her the importance of cleanliness, sanitation. Theatre introduced her to the problems that persisted in a young woman's life it also gave her the strength to battle social stigmas a girl living in the society as ruthless as hers was to face.

Soni also enjoys writing poetry and already has 32 poems to her credit all of which will soon be published as a compilation. At 14 years of age, Soni will have a book of poems all written by her. It is with this pride in their eyes her community teacher and friends recall her very first poetry recitation, it was a poem on a flower. Soni has come a long from that her very recent ones include poems on battling serious issues like child marriage and gender violence.

In the year 2014-15 Protsahan has helped her hone skills like Stitching, Quilling and embroidery. Last month she finished stitching an entire soft toy and also crafted beautiful piece of jewellery. It is a step towards making Soni self-sufficient, it is to help her slowly yet gradually stand on her own feet.

In 2012 Soni was about to get married off, though only 12 she fought her way out of it and displayed exemplary courage. She firmly put her foot down when her parents were putting her sister through the same fate. Soni for reasons like this and many others continues to be a role model for other girls at Protsahan, her warrior spirit and resilience is a source of great inspiration for all her friends.

### **Mala**

When Mala lost her father at a very young age she had a very hard time watching her mother deal with taunts from other members of her family. As a girl with no father people around her often made her feel she had lost her right to live. That is when Protsahan came into her life, today 12 years old Mala is one of the youngest girls here.

Mala proudly comments on how she has learnt everything she knows at Protsahan. It is with the help of Creative education and ICT she has learnt her best lesson at Protsahan. As much she is proud to be able to read and write English, her first love continues to be theatre.



In the year 2014-15 she was a part of a Nukkad Natak on 'Road Safety'. As an active member of the group writing, directing and acting in the play Mala learnt a great deal behind and in front of the camera. Discussing matters which are a grave concern to the society at large mobilizes the girls to think in the right direction further more theatre provides them the tool to help others see the light too. Through this particular production these girls wanted to spread the message of not indulging in Drinking and Driving to their community elders.

### **Shivani**

A 14 year old needle magician. Shivani has been with Protsahan for the last 5 years. When she came in at 9, her parents were very apprehensive about her joining Protsahan. They insisted she spent her time at home helping with household chores. After 5 years one can hear them say "Humein uspe garv hai (We are extremely proud of her)."

Apart from acquiring basic level education Shivani has spent the last two years learning how to stitch beautiful flowerful embroidery because that's her passion. Under Project Stree, Shivani and many others like her undertake many vocational trainings like Beautician techniques, Madhubani Painting, Jewellery making. Protsahan strives to build a model of Micro-Entrepreneurship for these young girls.

Shivani stitches all kinds of clothing and has started teaching her peers. It not only brings a great sense of accomplishment to her but also helps her make her own place in the big bad world or "Itni badi duniya" as she puts it.

### **Chaiyya**

As we waited to speak to Chaiyya about her experience at Protsahan we had the pleasure of going through some of the paintings she had made. One cannot exclaim with surprise at how talented the 8 year old is.

Chaiyya is the youngest star at Protsahan, she has been associated with Protsahan since 2012. 3 of her 5 sisters are not even adults but are already married. Chaiyya's life would have also taken the same path if it hadn't been for her time spent here at Protsahan. She now understands how much there is to learn and gain. Her initial years at Protsahan have been devoted to the Edu Care programme at Protsahan. Under which she has learnt to Read, Write and do Warli artwork to express her deepest inhibitions and happy moments.

Chaiyya sheepishly admits to being a cinema fan. She remembers watching many films at Protsahan. She recalls her learnings from each of them. While at the end of our conversation she earnestly asks me to pledge to keep my surroundings clean, "Humein khud se shururat karni hai (we must begin with ourselves)" she adds.



## **Sunaina**

*Sunaina, 32 was married much before she could learn to even read and write. Her family consists of her husband and 6 children. As her husband rendered himself unable to earn bread for the family Sunaina joined Protsahan and took up the humungous task of feeding a family of 8.*

*Her journey at Protsahan is sure an inspiring tale. Soon after realising how talented a craftsman she was, Sunaina now earns about nine thousand rupees a month in a matter of 1 year. "This journey wouldn't have been possible without Protsahan." states Sunaina. She also adds how much respect she has earned in the society because of her work at Protsahan. She extends the association with Protsahan by personally training all the girls how to stitch, embroider and other needle work.*

*Sunaina feels empowered and strives to provide the same sense of accomplishment to other young girls by teaching them hoping one day they'll be as self-sufficient as herself.*





**Mala**



**Shivani**



**Chaiyyan**



**Sunaina**



**Soni**





# **EXPLORING RESILIENCE AND THE IMPACT OF INTERVENTIONS ON SLUM CHILDREN BY INTERVENTIONS OF PRO TSAHAN INDIA FOUNDATION**

**RESEARCH PAPER BY AANCHAL BHATNAGAR AND CHHAVI MITTAL**

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2014-15**

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the study was to explore resilience and the impact of intervention on slum children. The target population comprised of young adolescent girls, residing in Vikas Nagar Slums of Delhi, India, and had been undergoing interventions by the PRO TSAHAN India Foundation. Mix method approach was used to meet with the aims of the study. A combination of participant observation, focused group discussion, personal interviews with selected participants (n=4) and the researchers' personal reflections was used for data collection. Five Risk Factors- Financial Instability, Violence and Aggression, Gender Discrimination, Unsafe Environment for Girls, and Lack of Proper Education, were identified.

Family Support, Peer Group, Education and PRO TSAHAN were identified as the Protective Factors. The impact of the NGO's intervention strategies was evident in Basic Education, Creative Education, Life Skills Training, Group Skills, Awareness, Social Support and provision of a Stimulative Environment. Evidence for resilience comes from the Optimism about life, Coping Mechanisms and Psychological Growth of the participants in comparison with their own siblings (Better than own Siblings). The findings of the present study can be used the area of child counseling, development of policies for child care and protection, educational psychology etc.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Adversity, Risk Factors, Protective Factors, Intervention, PRO TSAHAN



## **INTRODUCTION**

### **RESILIENCE**

More than 30 years ago, investigators studying children in high-risk environments observed that many children achieve positive developmental outcomes despite adverse experiences (Garmezy, 1974; Murphy & Moriarty, 1976; Rutter, 1979; Werner & Smith, 1982). Individuals who achieve these better than expected outcomes have been labelled survivors or resilient. As a result, the study of resilience has emerged as a distinct domain of empirical and theoretical inquiry in psychology, particularly in developmental psychopathology (Sroufe & Rutter, 1984). The individuals who achieve positive developmental outcomes in face of adversity exemplify patterns of resilience reflecting "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990). According to Vanderbilt & Shaw (2008) most agree that resilience involves children displaying adaptive or competent functioning despite exposure to high levels of risk or adversity. Resilience cannot occur without the presence of two factors—adaptive functioning and exposure to risk or adversity. A well-functioning child who has not faced high levels of adversity would not be considered resilient. Resilience has moved from being considered a fixed personality trait to being a temporal process. Research suggests that resilience is not static but may wax and wane over the life course (Luthar, 2006). Some children may appear resilient in terms of their behaviours but actually be experiencing internal distress (Luthar, 2006). Children may also display resilience or adaptive functioning in one domain (e.g., emotional functioning) but experience significant deficits in another (e.g., academic achievement) (Luthar, 2006).

### **PROTECTIVE AND RISK FACTORS**

At the level of individual, protective and vulnerability factors moderate the effect of adversity on developmental outcomes. Whereas an asset has a comparably beneficial effect in both high and low risk environments, a protective factor is disproportionately salient under conditions of adversity. A vulnerability factor is associated with negative outcomes, particularly when the individual is exposed to adversity. Protective and vulnerability factors represent interaction effects whereby a given factor has an especially beneficial, or, harmful, influence under high-risk conditions. Identifying assets, protective factors, and vulnerabilities is an important first step in understanding resilience. Resilience is a heterogeneous, multilevel process that involves individual, family and community level risk and protective factors. Individual protective factors may include emotional self-regulation, self-efficacy and self-determination (Cicchetti, 2010). Family factors may include a close relationship with at least one caregiver and sibling attachment (NCH, 2007). Community factors may include a community's social assets such as schools, associations and sporting clubs, as well as feeling a sense of community connectedness (Dean & Stain, 2007; Maybery, Pope, Hodgins, Hitchenor, & Shepherd, 2009). Determining how and which protective and risk processes are involved is imperative for designing effective interventions (Luthar, 2006).

### **RESILIENCE IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE**

A 40 year Kauai longitudinal study by Werner (2004) is the only study till date that has examined development from birth to midlife. The study explores the impact of a variety of biological and psychosocial risk factors, stressful life events, and protective factors on a multi-racial cohort of 698 children



correlated with lower socio-economic status. A study by Anjali and Sinha (2000) indicates significantly lower opportunities for linguistic stimulation among two year olds of low socio-economic status when compared to age peers from middle and higher income backgrounds in an urban setting. According to this study children in poverty were also significantly lower on measures of vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and expressive language. Misra and Mohanty (2000) indicate that poverty has an impact on several other cognitive functions such as visuo-motor co-ordination, immediate memory and concept formation.

With regard to self esteem many studies have reported positive correlations between socio-economic status and adolescent self esteem indicating that adolescents in poverty consistently score lower on measures of self esteem (Bharsakle & Srivastava, 1991; Kapur, 1991). Characteristic differences are also seen in motivational patterns. Lower socio-economic status adolescents demonstrate low internal and higher external control orientation with a higher reliance on significant others, God and luck for success (Sinha, 1994). Disadvantaged adolescents tend to have low and stagnant levels of aspiration along with low achievement needs (Pareek, 1994).

PROTSAHAN India Foundation is a youth based international non-profit organization that uses the innovative approaches of Design, Art, Digital Stories, Photography, Technology & Cinema to foster Creative Education and Sustainable Livelihoods at bottommost of pyramid. The mission of 'Protsahan' is to foster Creative Education and Skills Development in at risk communities of adolescent children with a focus on Innovation and Empathy. In the last 4 years, the NGO has touched the lives of about a 3000 little girls and

boys from urban slums/ red light areas/ construction sites/streets. Most children the NGO works with are sexually abused or under the influence of drugs. Creative Education is used to mainstream them. The NGO also runs women empowerment and skill based initiatives for their mothers/exploited women in urban slums, where their exploitation is maximum.

PROTSAHAN believes in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and strives to encourage this moral and ethical obligation in the young people they come across. CSR is a way of teaching the young and privileged the benefits of giving something of themselves back to their communities and the importance and empathy, hard work, and understanding. Through corporate partnerships 'Protsahan' aims to reach out to millions of young adolescent girls. The NGO is associated with many UN projects. Under "End Violence Campaign" PROTSAHAN India Foundation implemented innovative workshops across India in 2013 to end violence with UNICEF India and promoted zero tolerance and legal action to abuse. Under 'Project Inspire' the NGO was chosen by United Nations Women Singapore to churn out 100 creative slum girl micro entrepreneurs. In 'Poo2looo Campaign', NGO Protsahan is involved with many creative education projects in partnership with UNICEF India that brings to light the menace of open defecation.

The NGO uses and instructs its partners on the use of the creative technologies of digital stories, design and traditional art to reach out and change the lives of young girls. Using Madhubani art, the NGO talks about gender equality, using Warli art, they talk about trigonometry and geometry. Using digital stories and cinema, they have talked about road safety. With clay and origami techniques, they have done



born in 1955 on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. In the Kauai study, a team of mental health workers, pediatricians, public health nurses, and social workers monitored the development of all children born on the island at ages 1, 2, 10, 18, 32, and 40 years. Some 30% of the survivors (n=210) in the study population were born and raised in poverty, had experienced pre- or perinatal complications; lived in families troubled by chronic discord, divorce, or parental psychopathology; and were reared by mothers with less than 8 grades of education. During a potentially stressful situation, such as a series of developmental tests, they were described by the examiners as more alert, cheerful, responsive, self-confident, and independent than children of the same age and sex who later developed serious learning or behaviour problems. The Kauai toddlers were also more advanced in communication, locomotion, and self-help skills and engaged in more social play than the toddlers who later developed problems (Werner & Smith, 1989). In Kauai Longitudinal Study Resilient youths (17-18 years) who coped successfully in spite of chronic poverty, parental psychopathology, and family discord were more responsible and achievement-oriented than their troubled teenage peers. These youths were more socially mature and had internalized a positive set of values. They were also more nurturant, empathic, and socially perceptive than their age-mates who had difficulty coping. These characteristics differentiated them from their peers in adulthood (age 32) and midlife (age 40) as well (Werner & Smith, 1992).

### **POVERTY**

Psychologists have conceptualized poverty as a situation with a number of attendant conditions that individually or collectively influence the development of the person, rendering him less capable of "overcoming poverty by

personal efforts". According to Sinha (1977) poverty is associated with low income, low caste and class status, poor housing, overcrowding, lack of public amenities, various degrees of malnutrition and high susceptibility to disease. The poor is exposed to less stimulating environment, inadequate school facilities, lack of parental support and the like. Some of these conditions belong to the immediate proximal environment that is the more visible layer and some constitute the outer or the surrounding layer of the environment. The two layers do not operate independently but constantly interact with one another. The common psychological effects of poverty include inappropriate cognitive functioning, attentional problems, learning disabilities, inadequate linguistic skills, stagnant or unrealistic aspirations, sense of helplessness, low self esteem and health problems. These result in coping strategies that are dysfunctional in various life situations. The behavioural outcomes in the form of low competencies, low academic performance, high rate of wastage and dropout, low school attendance, failure, withdrawal and apathy indicate that people are not able to cope successfully (Sinha, 2000)

The understanding of poverty from a psychological perspective is very crucial because studies show that the development of children and adolescents growing up in adverse circumstances lags behind their age peers from more advantaged homes ( Misra and Mohanty, 2000). Psychological processes act as mediators between the condition of poverty and its detrimental impact on behaviour.

### **IMPACT OF POVERTY ON COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS AND SELF ESTEEM**

Studies on impact of poverty on early childhood development have shown general cognitive impairments to be positively



correlated with lower socio-economic status. A study by Anjali and Sinha (2000) indicates significantly lower opportunities for linguistic stimulation among two year olds of low socio-economic status when compared to age peers from middle and higher income backgrounds in an urban setting. According to this study children in poverty were also significantly lower on measures of vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and expressive language. Misra and Mohanty (2000) indicate that poverty has an impact on several other cognitive functions such as visuo-motor co-ordination, immediate memory and concept formation.

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creative workshops on bullying and child sexual abuse. Using art based therapy, the NGO is helping children with substance abuse issues become addiction free.

### **RATIONALE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

The objective of the present study is to explore resilience and the impact of interventions on slum children. Resilience has been described as an ability to bounce back and achieve positive developmental outcomes in face of adversity. The review of research shows that resilient children are more optimistic, have higher self esteem, ability to garner support, better recovery strategies and so on. Thus there are factors within the child and the environment he/she is a part of that helps the child to deal with adversity. Different children use different strategies and deal with situations differently. Hence the purpose of the study is to explore how the slum children living in poverty deal with adversity in their own ways through understanding of the culture of NGO they are a part of as well as interviews with some children from the NGO. The present study also wishes to explore how the interventions by the NGO affect their lives and their ability to deal with their life circumstances.

### **METHODOLOGY**

To meet with the objectives of the study, a mix method approach to explore the lives of slum children undergoing intervention at the NGO- PRO TSAHAN will be adopted. The focus will be on their life experiences (both positive and negative) as revealed by the participants and how they have impacted their lives so far. Apart from interviews, participant observation, group discussions etc. will also be done.

### **SAMPLE**

The target population comprised of young girls residing in Vikas Nagar Slums of Delhi, India and enrolled in the NGO- PRO TSAHAN India Foundation. PRO TSAHAN is a youth based international non-profit organization that uses the innovative approaches of Design, Art, Digital Stories, Photography, Technology and Cinema to foster Creative Education and Sustainable Livelihoods at bottommost of pyramid. Of all the girls observed, only a selected few (4-5) (mean age of interviewees- 13 years) shall be interviewed for the purpose of gaining in-depth information.

### **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

The present study uses a mix method approach, which involves exploration of the nature of a particular social experience by way of gathering and using unstructured data, collected from a relatively small number of participants, and interpreting the meanings of human behaviour. Thus, the present study would be carried out over a period of 6 days, wherein the researchers would be staying at the NGO during its functional hours and make their observations.



Following is the list of focus areas for each day

- *Day 1 (8th March, 2014)- Rapport Formation and Participant Observation*
- *Day 2 (10th March, 2014)- Personal Interviews with selected participants*
- *Day 3 (11th March, 2014)- Personal Interview with selected participants*
- *Day 4 (12th March, 2014)- Personal Interview with selected participants*
- *Day 5 (13th March, 2014)- Personal Interview with selected participants*
- *Day 6 (14th March, 2014)- Debriefing and general discussion with the participants*

#### **TOOLS USED**

- **Participant Observation-** i.e. observer participates in ongoing activities and records observations.
- **Focused Group Discussion-** provide researchers with the opportunity of talking to people to find out what people say, think, and feel, and what they have done, and what they know about certain topics or issues of concern in society.

- **Semi-Structured Interview-** starts with more general questions or topics. Relevant topics are initially identified and the possible relationship between these topics and the issues such as availability, expense, effectiveness become the basis for more specific questions which do not need to be prepared in advance.

- **Personal Reflections of the Researchers-** The researchers make note of their own understanding and reflections from their daily experiences while making their observations so as to become aware of their biases influencing their observational interpretations.

#### **PROCEDURE**

The present study was carried out over a span of 6 days, wherein the researchers stayed in the NGO premises during its working hours (1:30pm - 5:00pm) all working days (except Sunday). The design of the study was followed with only minor alterations, i.e. on Day 2, instead of personal interviews; a focused group discussion was carried out with 9-10 girls. The findings from the observations, interviews, group discussion as well as researcher's personal reflections have been presented in the following section.



## RESULTS

The main purpose of the study was to explore resilience in slum children (girls) who are undergoing intervention (through PRO TSAHAN) using the mix method approach. The findings from a combination of techniques employed have been presented in the following sections.

### Section 1- Risk Factors

Risk Factors imply the general adversity conditions that inhibit/hamper the psychological well-being of the participants of the study. The following figure shows the major risk factors identified through observations, interviews and discussion with the participants.



Figure 1- Schematic Representation of the Risk Factors

### Section 2- Protective Factors

Protective Factors are those conditions in the lives of the participants which facilitate their growth and well-being, in other words, act as preventive buffers against the harm caused by the risk factors. The following figure represents the various protective factors identified during inquiry.

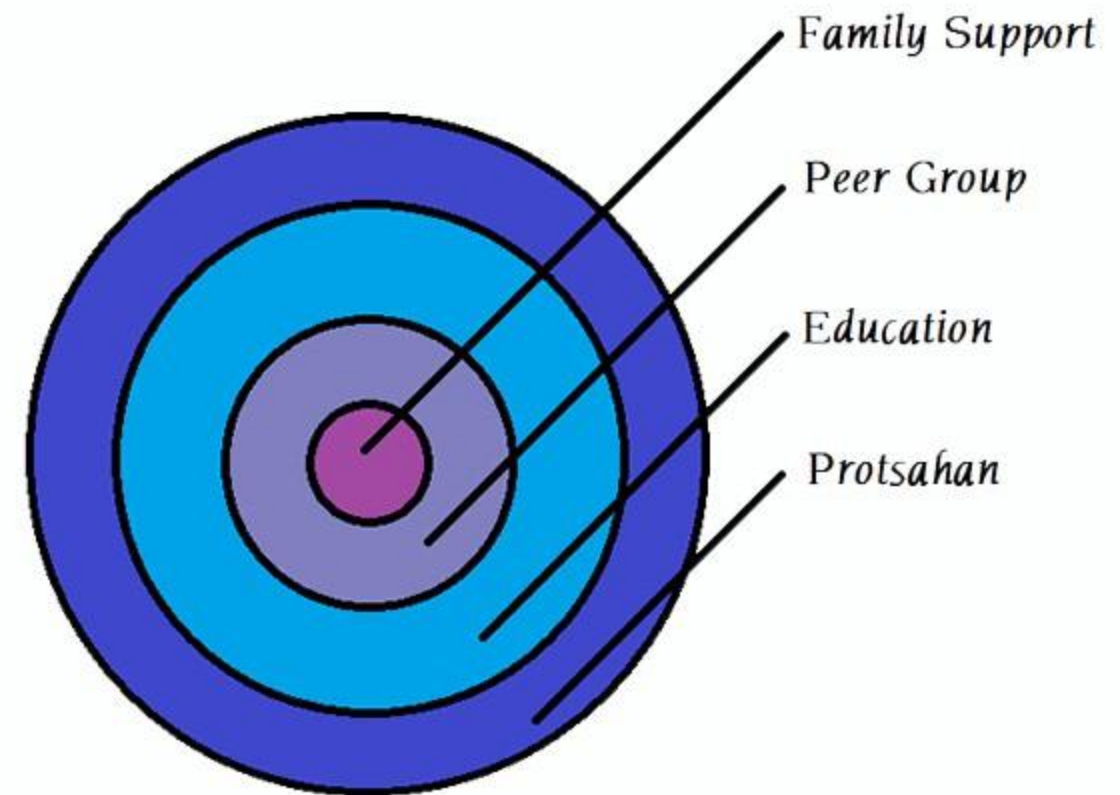


Figure 2- Schematic Representation of the Protective Factors Identified



### Section 3- Role of PRO TSAHAN

The NGO plays a very crucial role in the lives of these girls and has impacted several issues of concern in their lives, in a positive way. The following figure indicates the basic contributions of the NGO in the lives of the participants.

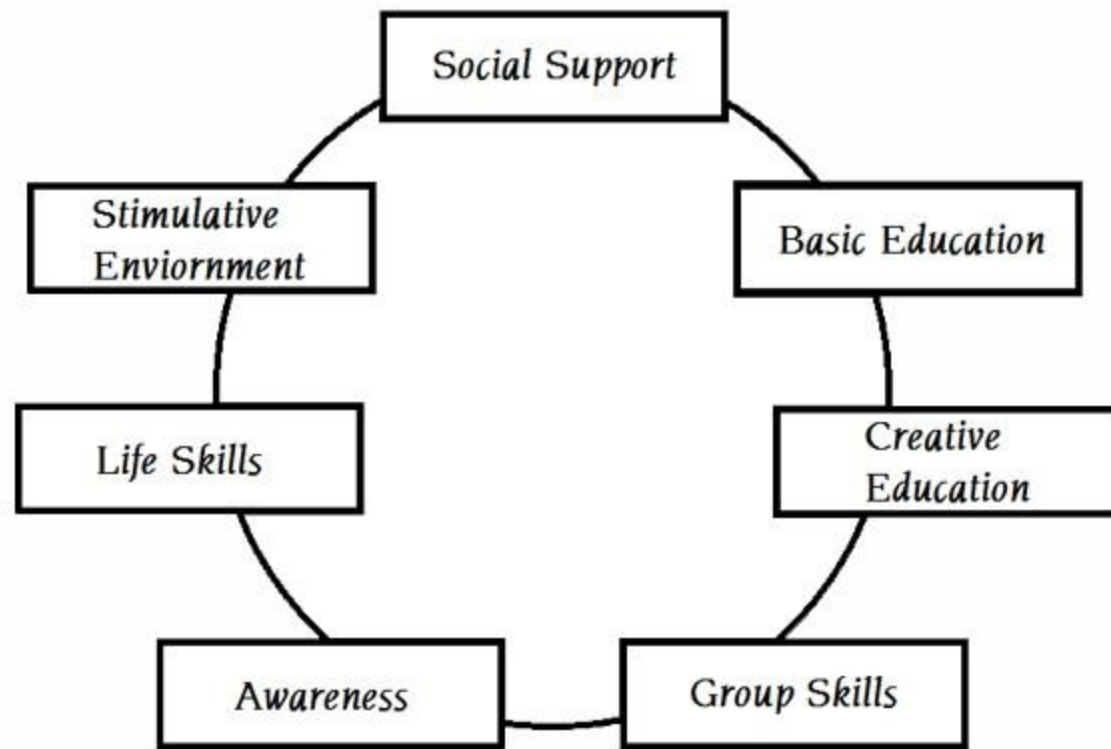


Figure 3- Schematic Representation of the Role of PRO TSAHAN in the lives of Participants

### Section 4- Evidence for RESILIENCE

Resilience basically means the ability to bounce-back from the face of adversity. The following figure lists the various evidences to support the claim that the participants were resilient.

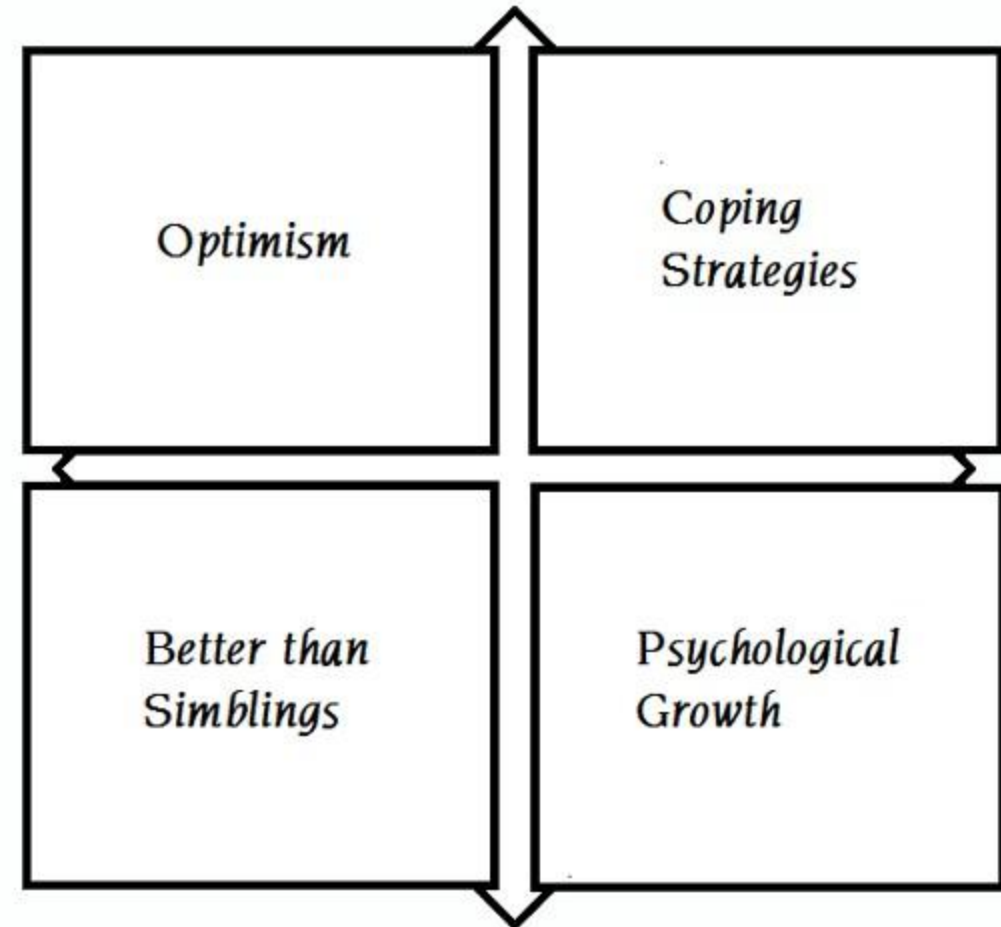


Figure 4- Schematic representation of the Evidence for Resilience in the participants



## DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to explore resilience and the impact of intervention in slum children. To achieve this aim, a combination of various methods were used, wherein the researchers stayed in the field as an insider (i.e. for 6 days, researchers stayed in the NGO- PRO TSAHAN India Foundation's home during its working hours). In the present study, resilience has been described as an ability to bounce back and achieve positive developmental outcomes in face of adversity. The review of research shows that resilient children are more optimistic, have higher self esteem, ability to garner support, better recovery strategies and so on. So through the mix method mode of inquiry, the researchers set out to explore the risk factors and the protective factors that had been playing a significant role in the lives of the target population, i.e. adolescent girls who are enrolled in PRO TSAHAN and reside in Vikas Nagar slums of Delhi, India. As can be seen from the Results section, 5 major risk factors have been identified, while there were 4 core protective factors contributing towards the girls becoming resilient.

In the course of the study, the researchers were participant observers for 6 days, took 4 interviews and also conducted one focus group discussion. During observation one of the most evident thing about the NGO was the group dynamics- the strong bonds of friendship among the children of the NGO and also the volunteers and teachers that work there. The founder of the NGO Sonal had a very good relationship with all the children, her concern and care for these children was very much visible. Another thing that you notice about the NGO as soon as you enter it is the enthusiasm of the children and the way they greet you and talk to you. Also the overall

environment of the NGO is very stimulating with different types of games, maps, animal and other charts, paintings all over the walls. On the first day researchers were introduced by Sonal to one of the groups in Protsahan with girls 10 years and older. The researchers talked about emotions, played a memory game, story making game and free association game with the children. The children did not know many emotion words when asked about various emotions we display. Their common responses were happiness, sadness, jealousy and anger. However when the researchers told them about other emotions like shame, guilt they did not know that they are emotions, then the researchers gave them examples and they understood. The memory game had a twofold purpose- one to know the names of all the children in the group and things they like and also to check their memory and attention. Most of the children were able to remember. For the free association game, they were first given a demo and then the researchers gave those words and they said the first word that came to their mind. All the children instead of pairing nouns were basically saying the function of the word that was given to them.

On the second day of research, a Focussed Group Discussion was conducted. The researchers decided that in Focussed Group Discussion they would talk about life experiences both positive and negative. The way children took these life experiences was not expected. They were mostly recounting their experiences of getting scoldings and beatings from their mothers and other mischiefs that they have done. The researchers also self disclosed here to give them an idea of what kind of experiences they were talking about but that did not help. The talk also led to asking questions about their families and their relationship with family members.



They were also talking about the television shows that they like so the discussion got astray many a times. The major themes that came through the discussion were the constant comparison between village life and city life, financial uncertainty, aggression and violence, mischief, superstitious thinking, beliefs in ghosts and spirits and coping in terms of emotional distancing. They were constantly talking about their life or when they go to their native place and the difference there is between Delhi and their native place in terms of space and other things. Superstitious thinking is also something that came through discussions with almost everybody like their mothers don't allow them to play games that involve drawing from a chalk on the ground because of the belief that it will lead to increase in debt. They also believe in ghosts and spirits.

For anyone to be resilient, adversity becomes a pre-requisite condition, as until and unless a person has overcome adversity, we cannot be sure of whether she/he is resilient or not. Sinha, (1990) reported that poor experience a unique set of psychological barriers to change and development. The poor do not seem to be equipped with qualities, dispositions, skills, motivations and values linked to upward mobility (and breaking free of the cycle of poverty) when compared with the more privileged. Observers of social inequalities in India have pointed to an intergenerational perpetuation of social positions with adult attitudes of apathy, indifference and withdrawal seeming to be transmitted to the younger members of the community (Dube and Sachdev 1983). Children are as a result inexorably sucked into a 'culture of poverty' and the vicious cycle continues. Thus, it becomes imperative to look into the risk factors that predispose the participants towards the ill-effects of poverty. The risk factors

which contribute towards the adverse conditions in which the target population lives in, include- Financial Instability, Violence and Aggression, Lack of Proper Education, Gender Discrimination and Unsafe Environment for Girls (see Section 1; Figure 1 of Results). Evidence for Financial Instability comes from various sources. The fact that the girls lived in urban slums indicates their economic status. Also, during the interactions with individual participants, all 4 of them reported instances where they had faced trouble due to limited monetary resources. For example- during the focused group discussion, one of the participants reported that her mother scolds her for playing 'gitte' as they believe that this multiplies the amount of loan on them. Similarly, during the personal interview, one of the participants reported her concern over the temporary nature of her father's job and how she does not like to ask anyone for money, she said, "wo papa ke pas kabi kaam hota hai aur kabi nai"... "mujhe kabi acha nai lagta ke paise mangne pade". Violence and Aggression was pretty dominant in the setting, as all of the girls who had been interviewed, narrated incidences about either experiencing or witnessing violence and aggression in their vicinity. For instance, one participant responded that she does not like the unnecessary fights that take place around her and how these fights affect her through vicarious learning; she said, "jo bevajha ladai kar leti hai na vo achha nahin lagta kyunki unhone...vo bhi gaali deti hai to hum log bhi sikh lete hain na gaali..." ".....mere bua aur phuphaji na bahut ladai karte the, unse meri mummy papa sikhe the gaali dena aur ladai bhi". Another participant recalled her horrifying experience of seeing blood-shed in her locality, she said, "...kisi ka sar bhi phat jata tha, itni ladai hoti ki kisi ko chhat se hi phaink dete, itna marte itna marte ki vahin pe khoon khoon ho jata, to aise ladai dekhke mujhe achha nahi



lagta hai.” The girls spoke about how often they witnessed the fights between their parents, their other family members, their neighbours etc. Use of expletives and abuses is a form of verbal aggression, which the girls were constantly exposed to. The participants themselves reported that they do not like such behaviour. One of the participants reported that before she joined PROTSAHAN, she herself used to make use of cuss words when she felt angry, but now she has changed. Lack of Proper Education facilities posed another threat to the girls. Many of them talked about how their family members were not educated, including their own siblings. Even in the schools they went to, not much attention was being paid to their learning as such; rather the focus was more on rote memorization, wherein the girls complained that they hardly understood anything. Supplementing the above claim, one of the staff members of the NGO, who takes up elementary education of the girls, reported that the girls knew the English alphabets, yet they did not know exactly how to pronounce a particular alphabet, or even how to write what they hear. Gender Discrimination also emerged as an important risk factor leading towards the adversities faced by the target population. For instance, one participant shared how her neighbour practiced gender discrimination in the kind of education she provided to her daughter and son, the way she would beat up her daughter etc., she said, “jo mere neeche wali aunty hai, who apni ladki se bahut gande se baat karti hai. Use marti hai. Unka ladka English medium school mei padhta hai, aur ladki hindi medium mei. Humare sath. Aaj bhi unhone use belt se mara. Meri mummy bachane gayi. Ma’am mujhe acha ni lagta jab who apni ladki ko aise karti hai.” She also recollected how she too faced similar kind of gender discrimination when she was young, as she reported “Mai jab chhoti thi, mere papa mujhe bhi English school mei bhejna

chahte the. Lekin mere chacha k bhadkane par unhone mujhe hindi school bheja.” Another participant reported that girls are considered as a burden in their community, while referring to the social issue of child marriage. She said, “log toh bahut kehte hai ki betiyo ki shadi jitni jaldi kara do utna hi acha hota hai...”, “...kehte hai k ladki toh bhoj hai.” “...wo kya sar pe baithi hai apke jo bhoj hai... zaroori hai k ladka hi karega help..?” she questions. Similarly, almost all girls raised their concern over issue of safety for girls; therefore, Unsafe Environment for Girls was listed as an important risk factor. The girls reported that they had been stalked and instances of eve teasing in the locality were on a high. One participant shared her personal experience of being stalked by a guy, who was a little elder to her, “Phir na main sadak pe gayi vo bhi sadak pe gaya, main Nisha ke gahr gayi vo bhi gaya phir main boli ki vo na bar bar dekh raha hai to bolta hai ki kuch kaha hai to maine kaha maarungi ek chaanta to phir se aa gaya bhagte bhaagte”. Another girl reported about an eve-teasing case in the area, she said, “maine suna tha humari gali mei ek ladki k sath.. but zyada kuch ni hua tha.. chhed chhad hi hui thi..” The researchers also felt a little insecure while travelling alone in the streets of the locality as they would be subjected to constant gaze from passersby. As can be seen from the above reported instances, the participants had to deal with stressors from various sources, which could have had detrimental effects of their well-being, as some of them explicitly reported feeling uncomfortable because of these circumstances. Using Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Perspective (1994) to conceptualize the life conditions of the target population, it appears that the risk factors were based largely within the Exosystem, and hence influenced their development and well-being.



However, the participants of the study seem to be highly fortunate as they had preventive buffers against the harm caused by the risk factors, compared to the other girls of their locality. Four major protective factors were identified from the researchers' interaction with the participants. They are Family Support, Peer Group, Education and PROTSAHAN (see Section 2, Figure 2 of the Results). Family Support can be considered as a core factor among all the protective factors. This is proposed because in the Indian setting, family, especially parents are responsible for the major life decisions for the child. Therefore, until and unless the family supports the participants, they could have not received the benefits of the intervention (i.e. PROTSAHAN) which is another protective factor as well as determining factor in them becoming resilient. Almost all girls reported that their parents supported them; they did not discriminate between them and their brothers; and they encouraged them to study, encouraged them to come to PROTSAHAN. For instance- one participant said, "ni.. meri mummy humme se kisi ko wo ni karti.. hum sabko barabar pyar karti hai.." when she was asked if anybody in her family was biased towards her brothers, and stated that her mother loved her and her siblings equally. Another participant stated, "mummy papa bolte hain ki tu padhna chahti hai to kahin se bhi paisa leke mai padhvaunga... Protsahan ke liye kabhi bhi mana nahi kiye. Mummy kabhi kabhi gusse mein bolti hai ki mat ja phir badme bolti hai ki chali ja..." while she was talking about her parents' willingness to allow her to come to PROTSAHAN and her education. Similarly, another participant said, "mere ghar mei sab ache se rehte hai. Sab ek dusre se pyar se baat karte hai. Mere mummy papa mujhe padhne k liye kehte hai. Woh kehte hai ki beta jo bhi karo, ache se dil laga ke karna.

Tum aage badho, mai sari formality poori karunga. Meri mummy bhi papa ki tarah mujhse bahut pyar se baat karti hai... mera, mere bhai ka sabka dhyan rakhti hai..." when asked to talk about her family environment and the views of her parents regarding education, which according to her was very supportive. It is evident from the above descriptions that the parental support was a major factor in their lives. Comparing the above statement of the participant with her previous statement regarding her father's willingness to send her to an English medium school, but due to pressure from other family members he had to enrol her in a Hindi medium school, further validates the claim that the participants receive support from their immediate family which has a significant impact on their well-being. Just like support from family, PROTSAHAN plays an equally important role in protecting and empowering the participants. Its efforts are not only limited to the girls alone, rather, the NGO tries to bring about change in the social setting as well. The impact of the NGO is predominant in all interviews that were recorded. When asked to talk about their experience in PROTSAHAN, all participants exclaimed that they love everything about it! One participant said that she likes PROTSAHAN because here she got to learn English, "Pehle to humko English bhi nahin ata tha, ma'am ne English wala teacher rakha", she said (This is consistent with the previous discussion on Lack of Proper Education facilities as a risk factor). Another girl reported that she really enjoys coming to PROTSAHAN as here she got the opportunity to meet new people from different parts of the world, which is something that she had never thought of. During the general interactions, another girl recalled how she started her formal education at school only after the team of PROTSAHAN convinced her parents to do so.



Another girl reported that what she really liked about PROTSAHAN was that here she felt accepted as an equal. She stated, "Sonal ma'am ki sabse achi baat ye hai ki wo chahe kitna bhi ganda bacha ho... kuch bache hote hai na ek dum gande se... Sonal ma'am unhe bhi gale laga deti hai. Aur logo ko toh jaise unse ghinn ati hai.. lekin humari sonal ma'am aisi nai hai. Wo sabko apna maanti hai... humse pyar se baat kati hai... hume kuch bhi chahiye ho toh hum unse keh dete hai.. wo humare liye who cheez lati hai. Hume who sab kuch bahut pyar se samjhati hai" (Ms. Sonal is the founder of PROTSAHAN). The NGO through its Creative Education program also makes sure that the girls become more socially aware, as well as responsible. For instance- through the activity of film-making, the girls created a documentary on the need for toilets in homes and the harms of open defecation, and this documentary was screened in their locality. Similarly, the girls also staged a play on the theme- 'Save Water'. PROTSAHAN being a part of the girls' Microsystem, was not only impacting their individual lives, rather also tried to improvise their Exosystem, so as to ensure their holistic development and growth. Education is another important protective factor. Some of the girls responded to the question on the need for education as, "ma'am padhai karna bahut zaroori hota hai... padhne se hum bade aadmi bante hai..."; "mujhe padhna bahut acha lagta hai... mujhe sare subjects pasand hai... jaise science mujhe sabse zyada acha lagta hai... kyoki usme har tarah ki baatien seekhne ko milti hai.. aur.. zyadatar usme hum khud ke baarien mei usme padhte hai.." What is important to note here is how the girls view Education as a stepping stone towards their bright future. As mentioned earlier, the parents also encourage the participants to pursue education. From the discussion with t

he girls it became clear that they understand the value of the opportunity that they have got, i.e. the chance to get educated. They shared their career aspirations which were majorly based on the kind of education they received. Even when the researchers were introduced to the participants on the first day, the topic of higher education and its relevance for the girls was addressed with keen interest. Commenting upon her earlier feelings of inferiority as she didn't know how to converse in English, one of the participants stated that ever since she started learning English at PROTSAHAN, she feels confident that she can now speak for herself and does not need to rely on others to communicate for her. Lastly, another major protective factor which emerged from the observations and interviews is the Peer Group (a the participants resided in the same area, belonged to the same age group, and even went to the same school). While the participants were dancing, it was observed that they provided a lot of cooperation and support to each other. If any of the girls made a mistake in following the dance routine, the other girls would not wait for the teacher to correct her, rather they would quickly rush to help her, or guide her. It was also observed that the girls lived as a collective group; they shared their individual knowledge and understanding apart from their personal feelings and ideas. Similar findings were obtained through the interviews with participants, as most of the girls reported that they were friends with each other. For instance- participants reported that they came to know about PROTSAHAN through their peers only. Peers also served as immediate sources of help to the participants, as one participant reported how she and her friend managed to escape from a stalker. Similarly, one of them reported how she came to know about a governmental policy for education



of girls, through her friend (also a student at PROTSAHAN), which entitled her to gain Rs. 500 per month from the government funds to aide her educational needs. From the above discussion of protective factors we can see that these factors work in tandem with each other, and hence the mesosystemic interactions act as a protective layer for the girls from adverse impact of the negative influencers or the risk factors in their lives.

As can be seen from the preceding discussion, the NGO plays a very significant role in the lives of these girls. Also, one of the objectives of the study was to explore the impact of Intervention onto the target population. For the population under study, getting associated with the NGO can be considered as the intervention in their lives. PROTSAHAN India Foundation is a social enterprise that uses creative education and art innovation to empower street children & young adolescent girls. To quote Ms. Sonal, "PROTSAHAN means Encouragement to that child on the street that no one wants to give a second glance to. We give her hope, happy childhood and an empowered adolescence". As is exemplified by the statement of purpose behind starting the enterprise, PROTSAHAN aims to provide not only Basic Education and Social Support, but also provides Creative Education, Life Skills training, inculcates Group Skills, spreads Awareness as well as provides a Stimulative Environment to the girls (see Section 3, Figure 3 of Results). PROTSAHAN believes that in order to break extreme cycles of intergenerational poverty and abuse in the life of a woman, education of adolescent girls is most crucial. PROTSAHAN has specifically devised a '5-pillar of creativity model' using simple approaches but in an extremely innovative way to bridge the gap in education

as it exists today. As previously mentioned, the kind of education provided by the team of PROTSAHAN is basic as it aims at providing the girls conceptual clarity, as PROTSAHAN is not a substitute for formal school, rather it is an after school program. So the focus is more on providing secondary assistance in terms of Basic Education imparted herein, as it was mentioned before also in the risk factors that the quality of education imparted at school was not of satisfactory level. For instance- one participant, who had only recently joined PROTSAHAN, reported that she really appreciated the fact that here she got a chance to learn English starting from the very basic- the alphabets and the fact that she also gets assistance with other academics related problems, she said, "Protsahan mei ek baat bahut achi hai.. yaha hume English na bilkul shuru se sikhayi. ABCD se start kiya. Toh ab hume bhi English samajh aati hai... Aur jo humari madam hai na, wo hume school ki aur problem mei bhi help karti hai. Jaise kabi kisi ka exam hota hai toh who samjha deti hai. School mei itna samajh ni ata, to hum yaha akar madam se puch lete hai". The major focus of the NGO's intervention program is to impart knowledge through Creative Education strategies. To mention a few of their creative education programs, using Warli art, they have taught trigonometry and geometry to the girls; using digital stories and cinema, they have talked about road safety; with clay and origami techniques, they have done creative workshops on bullying and child sexual abuse. Using art based therapy, the NGO is helping children with substance abuse issues become addiction free. PROTSAHAN sees the importance of adapting conventional educational teaching methods to children living in difficult conditions. These children are usually not receptive to rote learning due to the difficult environments that surround



them. They use their '5 Pillars' of Creativity Approach' by incorporating the creative arts and technology in the process of learning, making it a fun filled activity. They also weave into their curriculum some basic life skills that can help educate the children on how to navigate through their circumstances and acquire their basic rights. These skills are perhaps the most important tools they can give these children. Functional literacy is more important than some people may think, and it is the cornerstone to a student's academic and, potentially, professional success. Therefore, by employing Creative Education techniques, PROTSAHAN achieves the aim of not only spreading Awareness among girls and their community, but also imparts Life Skills Training to them. There are prevalent beliefs regarding the inferiority of the girl child and the desire for families to get rid of the perceived financial burdens pertaining to raising a daughter (as was mentioned before in the discussion on Gender Discrimination). Families try to achieve what they believe would be an economic boon by marrying off their daughters as soon as possible in a process which sometimes resembles the sale of livestock. PROTSAHAN works with adolescent girls and their families to try and educate and protect them from this injustice. During the span of the present study, it was noticed that the team of PROTSAHAN was in talks with some media persons in order to start a campaign against child marriage, however as the project was in its initial stages, so details about it could not be obtained. To give an example of life skills training, one participant reported how her experience with PROTSAHAN helped her hone the communication skills; she said, "Jab hum starting me aye the na tab hum bahut ghumte the, ulta sidha bolte the, jo hume achha batata tha hum use ar bhi ulta batate the to

hum.. hum logo ko ab itni vo hai ki hum sabse dhang se baat kar sakte hain". Another girl talked about how she stopped telling lies after she joined PROTSAHAN. PROTSAHAN also ensures that the girls receive a highly Stimulative Environment, which proves beneficial for their cognitive development among other things. For example, it was observed that in the NGO premises, a lot of informative charts were displayed on the walls of classrooms depending upon the cognitive level of functioning of the group of students. In the class for adolescent girls, the World Map, Map of India were displayed, as well as games requiring intellectual processing like Spelling game were kept. Likewise, in the elementary classroom, a colourful chart displaying the English and Hindi Alphabets was put up on the wall. Inside the founder's office, PROTSAHAN's timeline had been painted along with all the awards and felicitations received by the organization were put on display. Evidence for inculcation of Group Skills comes from the dance lessons majorly. The participants themselves mentioned on several occasions how learning to dance helped them understand the value of team-work. To explain how dance helped the participants learn group skills, one participant, who joined PROTSAHAN about 6 months after it started, responded how the dance teacher taught them to perform as a single unit, she said, "Phir jaise pehle pehle jais mam ..mam ayi thi dance karna sikhaya tha na to sab log kehte the ki mam maine kaisa kiya? Isne achha nahin kiya to mam ne kaha kya ki tum agar ek dusre se hi ladte rahoge to phir group me dance nahin kar paoge. Group me dance karne ka matlab ye hta hai ki milke dance karo, jo nahin kar paa raha hai usko aur sikhao, aur milke dance karo." Evidence for Social Support has already been mentioned in the preceding paragraphs. A very



significant role is played by the founder of the NGO in providing the support to the participants. It was observed that the girls viewed Ms. Sonal as their role-model. Some of them even stated that they would like to be like her when they grow up. Others expressed how they followed every word she said to them. For instance- one of the participants said that she would not mind becoming the 'peon' of the NGO as Ms. Sonal had once jokingly remarked that she would make her one. It seemed that the girls were inspired from her, and they learnt from her experiences. For example, one of the participants talked about how she was sure that she'll make a career for herself, even if she may not reach where she wants to be, she would not lose hope and try for some other field, and then she cited Ms. Sonal's desire to be a doctor and how she ended up with PROTSAHAN as her learning source. Another girl reported that she could not tolerate if anyone said anything negative about her, and this agitates her to the extent that she may even pick up a fight with the person. So, Ms. Sonal is in a way idolised by the young girls. All of them reported that she was their favourite, they expressed a kind of trust they had in her as somebody who would look after them; and fulfil all their needs. It was also observed that the love and admiration was equally reciprocated along with empathic concern by Ms. Sonal towards the girls. For instance, on day 1, during the general discussions one of the girls cited the example of 'lotus' as a flower that grows in water. This was used as an opportunity by Ms. Sonal to impart a very important lesson on resilience as she explained to the girls how lotus grows in mud waters, i.e. it overcomes all the adversity, and yet is so pure. She told the girls to be as strong and pure as the 'lotus', they should rise above all adversities and strive towards becoming self-sufficient.

Further evidence regarding the significant impact of PROTSAHAN in the lives of the participants comes from the self-reports of some of the participants, as one participant, who had been coming to the NGO since its inception, talked about what all different skills she got to learn here and their impact upon life, she reported, "Abhi yahan main Protsahan mein drawing karna sikh rahi hu, painting karna sikh rahi hoon ya kuch aur sikh rahi hoon, silayi bhi sikhaegi mam to aage chalke main bhi to kaam kar sakti hun." When asked about if she has noticed any change in her over the years (after she joined PROTSAHAN), she replied yes, and cited the example of how coming to PROTSAHAN has made her a better person, she stated, "pehle main gaali bhi deti thi bahut zyada, doston se lad bhi leti thi jaise hi kisi ne na bol diya ki tu bahut patli hai ya tu baht weak hai ya kuch bhi aisa to ro deti thi aur yahan aakar mam ne bola ki choti choti baaton pe mat roya karo koyi kuch bole na to tum bhi bol dya karo." She was also asked what PROTSAHAN means to her, to which she replied that she views it as an 'opportunity' to learn and grow, "mere liye Protsahan ka matlab hai ki yahan pe mujhe mauka mila hai kisi se kuch sikhungi main, aur bachhe bhi aenge padhai karne ke liye", said she. The work done by the organization has been recognized at the international level, as PROTSAHAN India Foundation won the global grand prize at the United Nations Women (Singapore) and MasterCard Project Inspire in 2013.

As has been already stated, objective of the present study was to explore resilience in the target population. Resilience, according to Vanderbilt & Shaw (2008) most involves children displaying adaptive or competent functioning despite exposure to high levels of risk or adversity. Resilience cannot



occur without the presence of two factors—adaptive functioning and exposure to risk or adversity. Werner (2004) reported that in Kauai Longitudinal Study, Resilient youths (17-18 years) who coped successfully in spite of chronic poverty, parental psychopathology, and family discord were more responsible and achievement-oriented than their troubled teenage peers. These youths were more socially mature and had internalized a positive set of values. They were also more nurturant, empathic, and socially perceptive than their age-mates who had difficulty coping. Consistent with the findings of the Kauai Study, the researchers were able to find a lot of evidence to support the claim that the participants were resilient. As can be seen from Section 4, Figure 4 of Results, the evidence for resilience has been classified into four broad categories- Optimism, Coping Mechanisms, Psychological Growth and Better than Own Siblings. Optimism is defined as the tendency to expect positive outcomes in future. Through interaction with participants, it was revealed that the participants had an optimistic view regarding their own future, and this view was largely stemming from their belief in their own potential. Majority of the girls with whom the researchers interacted stated well-defined career goals. Their aspirations did not end there; rather they also had an alternate course of action ready in their minds, in case they were not able to achieve their preferred goals. For example- one participant responded that she takes inspiration from a television show in which she identifies herself with the protagonist. She says, “jaise.. k gareeb logo ko haar ni maan ni chahiye.. kehte hai na k gareeb logo ko bade bade sapne ni dekhne chahiye kyukiwho pure ni hote.. aisa kuch ni hota.. gareeb log bhi sapne pure kar sakte hai..mehnat kar lenge toh”, which means that she’s

hopeful that even poor people like her, have the right to dream big, and if they work hard, they can turn those dreams into reality (this is the insight she has gained through the television show). The participant reported that she is sure that she will be able to turn her dreams into reality. Another evidence for optimism comes from the view held by some participants, that they are more likely to face positive outcomes than others, as while talking about the issue of safety for girls, the participant reported, “mujhpe mujhe vishwas hai k mere sath toh ye nai hoga..” Apart from optimism about future, another chief characteristic of resilience is the ability to cope with adversity, thus Coping Mechanisms refers to the various kinds of strategies employed by the participants to deal with the stressors in their lives. Two general coping strategies have been distinguished: problem-solving strategies are efforts to do something active to alleviate stressful circumstances, whereas emotion-focused coping strategies involve efforts to regulate the emotional consequences of stressful or potentially stressful events. Research indicates that people use both types of strategies to combat most stressful events (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). It was observed that the participants also used either of the two strategies. For instance- one participant engaged in emotion focused coping as she stated that whenever she feels distressed, she makes sure that she distracts herself with something enjoyable so as to avoid dealing with those unpleasant emotions; she reported, “Vaise na mere ghar me jab bhi koi pareshan hota hai na to main sabko kehti hu nacho gao (laughs) sab bul jao. To jab bhi mereko koi problem hoti hai to ma sab kuch bhul jati hu”. While another participant who engaged in problem focused coping, said that she feels agitated by the



increasing crime against females, so she intends to bring about a change by making a documentary on the same lines as they spread awareness regarding the harms of open defecation. She stated, "...waise toh ek hi cheez mujhe bahut wo hota hai.. k har cheez ko toh hum rok sakte hai.. but ladkiyo k prati badte bhrashtachar ko kaise hum rok sakte hai.. yei sochte sochte.. tv pe dekhti hu toh sochti hu bahut k ye kyu hota hai... sab kehte hai k desh mahan hai.. kaha ka desh mahan hai... jab ladkiyo pe itna zulm hota hai toh kaise hai ye desh mahan?... mai sochti hu ki agar humari ek.. agar humne ek movie banayi.. aur movie ki wajah se ye ruk jaye toh tab jake ye desh mahan hoga.." Psychological Growth of the participants in terms of empathy, improved self-esteem, assumption of social responsibility, community awareness, high academic aspirations, abstract and creative thinking etc. also indicates towards resilient behaviour shown by the participants. As was reported by Werner (2004) in Kauai Study, the participants of the present study also showed maturity and achievement oriented thinking. For instance, one participant, who was only a student of 9th class, reported how she wanted to turn her hobby of henna art into a part-time profession, and thereby support her family. She said that she was aware that her father would not appreciate it, yet she wanted to do it, in order to help him. She said, "Woh course karne ke baad mujhe mehendi ache se lagani aa jaegi. Fir jab bhi koi festival-function wagherah hote hai na, toh ladkiya aati hai yaha mehendi lagane.. toh mai unke mehendi laga kar kuch paise kamaungi..... mai mehendi lagakar job hi paise kamaungi unse mai apne papa ki madat karungi. Papa ko acha ni lagega.. lekin mai unhe woh paise dena chahti hu." Talking about academic aspirations, when asked what do the participants wished to become when they

grow up, a lot of responses came, ranging from doctor, lawyer, actor, to teacher and social entrepreneur. Lastly, to support the claim that the skills of resilience that were shown by the participants were majorly due to the interventions, the researchers also elicited information regarding the siblings of the participants. The rationale behind doing this was to compare how the participants and their siblings dealt with their life circumstances, and to notice the differences between them (if any). It was found that the participants were Better than Own Siblings in a lot of respects. A lot of participants reported that they enjoyed studying, and wanted to go for higher education, while their siblings had dropped- out of school or were not interested in education as such. For example- one participant stated, "badi nahi padhti, choti padhti hai. Badi ne 6th class se chod dia... Usko mummy ne dobara se admission kara diya tha 7th pe pahunch gayi to usne phir se chod dia. Vo jo choti wali behen padhti hai lekin kya...vo ghoomti rehti hai na to uske upar zyada vo nahi karti... Main abhi to bahut padhna chahti hu" Another participant reported that her elder brother had dropped out of school. Even the parents had more positive expectations from participants, than their other children. The participant reported that her parents encouraged her to study further, while they had no expectations from her sisters, she said, "Merko bahut zyada kehte hai ki tum padho....un dono ka mujhe koi vo nahi hai. Tum padho tumhe jitna padhna hai." Another participant reported that her younger brother expressed his desire to come along with her to PROTSAHAN, although as the NGO currently caters to girls only, he could not come. Central to the idea of Resilience are the sub-themes of persistence, hard-work and faith. It was observed that the girls at PROTSAHAN showed a lot of persistence. They did not



seem to give up, and continued trying despite repeated failure. This was observed when the researcher had introduced a very difficult task of drawing a particular pattern of flower without lifting the pen or doing any over-writing. The complexity of the task was so high that even the researcher failed to perform it in the initial trials, yet the girls persisted. Regarding hard-work, it was evident from the girls' willingness to learn the entrepreneurial skills at the NGO, which they believed would help them in attaining a better future. To quote, one of the interviewees, "mere liye padhai ka matlab hai ki main do teen class hi aage padh loon na to kuch bhi kar paungi. Abhi yahan main Protsahan mein drawing karna sikh rahi hu, painying karna sikh rahi hoon ya kuch aur sikh rahi hoon, silayi bhi sikhaegi mam to aage chalke main bhi to kaam kar sati hun". She believed that even if she gets to study for another 2-3 years only, she was sure that she would be able to do something constructive from her life. She also mentioned about the various skills she got to learn at the NGO, and how she was hoping to learn more of them and subsequently use this knowledge in creating a better future for her. The same participant also reported that her family believes in a particular saint, and it is because of the faith that she has in him that she was able to score well in her exams, and likewise, this faith has made her believe that she will have better future. From these observations and participants' self-reports it becomes clear that only having been exposed to same risk and protective factors (all except PROTSAHAN) did not guarantee resilient behaviour in the target population, as differences were seen in siblings, which could safely be attributed to the interventions provided by the NGO. The participants received the benefits of the interventions, and hence showed more resilience.

Thus, it was seen that the target population despite of the threats posed by financial instability, gender discrimination, aggression and violence, lack of proper education, and unsafe environment for girls, was able to make use of the protective factors like family support, peer group, education and the NGO- PROTSAHAN India Foundation, and hence was able to overcome adversity, thereby showing resilience through optimism, coping mechanisms and psychological growth as well as showing better adjustment than their own siblings. Impact of the interventions provided by the NGO was found to be manifold.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF PRESENT STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

1. The duration of study was very small (i.e. 6 days), hence it is advisable that to gain in-depth understanding, a prolonged inquiry be set up.
2. The size of the population under study was limited, so caution must be taken before using the findings of the study for generalization purposes.
3. Cross-validation of the findings of the study can be done by taking the perspective of parents, community and other stake holders to gain in-depth information.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Through mix method approach, resilience was found in the target population, and it can be attributed at least partially to the impact of intervention strategies employed by the NGO- PROTSAHAN India Foundation.



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