

Pooja's Story

Najafgarh, January 2017



Pooja Jha, aged 15 years, lives in Issapur village near the Delhi-Haryana border. Her mother is a school guard, while her father is an alcoholic. Her mother could not afford to pay for Pooja's secondary education on her meagre wage, so she stopped going to school and started pursuing open study. She has one elder brother and a younger brother and a sister. Her elder brother is a gambling addict while her father steals her mother's earnings to spend on alcohol, and beats her when she tries to help her mother.



Pooja has grown up seeing violence against her mother. For a long time, she was unable to talk about her family to anyone but one day she opened up to a friend who introduced her to Anil Kumar, the founder of Samajik Badlav Trust (SBT). Anil Kumar promised to help her and enrolled her in the Kadam Badhate Chalo (KBC) program.

She was uncertain on attending the KBC sports camp in Phase 1, as she had never participated in any sport alongside boys. But she was eager to learn about sports and interested in making new friends so she decided to attend the workshop. In KBC phase 1, Pooja gained a lot of information about the issues of gender, Violence against Women (VAW), and gender inequality which were not openly talked about earlier. Moreover, she learnt about sports and how it helps in bringing the youth together and sensitize them on equality and gender.

After the completion of the KBC Phase 2 Sports Leadership Workshop, Pooja learned about the rationale behind the sports activities and its importance in everyday life. She learned that respecting each other, playing together and effective communication are essential qualities of a leader. The KBC program has been an informative journey for Pooja.



She mentioned, "Yaha pe sab logo mein bahut achey-achey gunn hai. Mohini aur Rahul bahut achey leader bann sakte hai. Mein yaha ek do logo ko hi janti thi par ab mene kafi dost bana liye hai. Deepanshu mera acha dost bann gya hai"

(I met a lot of talented participants in this program. Mohini and Rahul can become good leaders. I knew only a couple of people here but now I have made many

friends. Deepanshu has become a very good friend of mine).



On being asked if she can lead activities? She replied, "Mein bhi acha kar sakti hu par muje ek sathi ki zaroorat padegi mere sath meri help karne ke liye" (I can also do well in leading (sports) activities, but I will require help from another participant). Having said that when she was given a chance to lead the game of 'Team Relay', she did an excellent job, and she herself was amazed by her performance as a sports trainer.