



BAG FREE SATURDAYS

CONTEXT

The education department of the Haryana government had launched a new initiative on November 19, 2016 to enable all-round development of students, where Saturdays are being marked as 'no bag' days in government schools. Named the 'Joyful learning day', Saturdays are now being utilized by the department to encourage students to nurture their hobbies and interests, going beyond academics. This initiative is a step towards the state government's plan to change the environment in schools from coercive to interactive.

In light of this initiative, PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia and Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF) have collaborated with Haryana Education in Panipat district for the Bag Free Saturday initiative of the Government of Haryana.

The sessions were conducted with students of class 9th – 12th in 11 schools of Panipat district. With the objective to address the issues of gender inequality and challenging the fundamental constructs of gender, the sessions were designed to achieve sensitivity, consciousness and positive behavioral change in school students on the following themes:

- Adolescent health and hygiene
- Safety and Security of girls in schools and in the community
- Gender Awareness and sensitivity among boys and girls



OUTREACH

No. of schools: 11 (illustrated in the table on the right)

No. of sessions conducted: 31

No. of Villages: 8

Block: Samalkha

District: Panipat

No of Students targeted: More than 2000

S.No.	Name of School
1.	Govt. Sr. Sec. School -Bhapra
2.	Govt. Sr. Sec. School- Pawti
3.	Govt. Sr. Sec. School – Kiwana
4.	Govt. Sr. Sec. School - Namunda
5.	Govt. Sr. Sec. School – Titana
6.	Govt. Sr. Sec. School (Boys) – Manana
7.	Govt. Sr. Sec. School (Girls)– Manana
8.	Govt. Sr. Sec. School (Boys) – Beholi
9.	Govt. Sr. Sec. School (Girls)– Beholi
10	Govt. Sr. Sec. School (Boys) – Karhans
11	Govt. Sr. Sec. School (Girls)- Karhans

IMPACT

Various fun based activities are being done with a focus on sensitizing youth on stereotypical division of gender roles. As result of which we can notice some significant change among the youth.

Attitudinal Change and personal responsibility

Sessions have helped them in identifying gender relations in their own surroundings. Consequently, many students have taken personal responsibility to question gender norms in their school and family as well.

“Hum akele kuch nai kar sakte, hum sabko milkar kaam karna padega” - Pooja, Class 11, Namunda.





Leadership among the students

Many students were seen taking the ownership of gathering students for the session. They were also seen helping the trainer during the training sessions.

"Agar ladkiyo ko mauka dia jai to wo ladko se bhi aage nikal sakti hain. Unhe har cheez ke liye roka-toka jata hai jiske karan unke paas aatmavishwas ki kami hoti hai" - Deepika, Class 11, Bhapra School

Equality and Partnership between boys and girl

Sports activities and other activities have helped both boys and girls to understand the importance of equality and partnership among themselves. Now they are supporting each other and also working together with unity.

"Hume aas-paas surakshit mahaul banana ke liye samaj ke andar ladko aur ladkiyo ke beech ka bhedbaav mitana hoga"
- Ajay Chahal, Class 12, Beholi Boys School



CHALLENGES

- External environment such as community unrest for Baba Ram Rahim's case and the closure of schools during this period.
- Period before school examinations – principals were unwilling for the students to engage in bag free events.
- Unwillingness of school administration of some schools to allow bag free sessions

WAY FORWARD

- Finalisation of Bag Free Saturday module
- Training of Trainers programme for school administration to use the bag free day module
- Scale up to entire state

