

Saksham

Girls should progress.

It shouldn't be the case that if someone advises against educating a girl, we refrain from doing so. We don't want them to go through the same challenges that we've faced.

Therefore, I am committed to providing her with an education. There is no point in sitting at home. If she studies and does well for herself, she will progress. I firmly believe that education is the only way forward. Despite lacking formal education for myself, I am taking a bold step to ensure my child receives an education. Had I been educated; I might have avoided encountering these challenges altogether? NTT India's only goal is to empower a girl child through their 'Right to Learn' mission. So, we are doing a lot of things for the school. We made a computer lab, science lab, and a library. But if the children keep dropping out then what's the point? We thought we need to do something beyond this. Girls used to be very good in their studies, but however parents don't want them to be educated.

In many communities, studies are not encouraged, and hence children are made to sit at home. Our school fees are very nominal and very low. So, that is fine. But because of their conveyance charges, uniforms, school bags, parents don't spend easily for all these things. So, we started looking at what can we do. One of the options was, we could organize the transportation itself. That could have been more difficult to implement, but also less sustainable. So, we thought, why not we create something for the families so that they have a source of income. And that source of income then keeps generating further income for them. Which in turn they can support. At least now, they know that they do not have to worry about, where will I get this financial support. And that's when this idea came up that, can we create some self-empowerment for them and make the mothers more self-sufficient. So that they have a larger say in sending their daughters to school. And that's when 'Saksham' was formed. When NTT presented the 'Saksham' project to me, it felt like they had struck the perfect chord, addressing the heart of the matter. They had identified the exact cause of why a child's education is abruptly stopped. The initial idea was that our children's education should not stop, no matter what. That was the only goal. But when we started with the project, we saw the spark in their eyes, we saw that how empowered they are and they are standing on their own feet, working, and earning more and more income. You see five families doing it, you know, 10 more say 'oh! you know what, now there is a source of income for them. Let me learn this as well and then let me be part of it. To get their children educated, they don't have to take permission or support from their husband. They are earning on their own and getting their daughters educated. Acquiring this machine has been a tremendous source of encouragement for me.

I couldn't have done this much, before. The newfound inspiration has empowered me to ensure my daughter receives an education, all through my independent efforts. I invest significant effort in stitching, diligently saving and spending money, all to provide education for my children. I am glad that NTT has provided me with the machine. Now I stay home and work. Otherwise, I would have to go out, earn and then take care of my children.

We are delighted to have received this machine. And the simple thought was, you know, what can you do to empower families, to support their child education. But now, self -employment is creating an income for them. That is not only helping them to support their education, but now, there is a general upliftment of the family in terms of their economic status. I mean, essentially, we as NTT DATA, we do not want to be limited just by any framework. We use the framework, but sometimes maybe create new ones to make it more effective. For example, what we started doing in the school for education, and now, we have extended that support to their home. They support us a lot in so many ways. Who would give so many machines? Long live NTT. My aspiration to get my children educated is getting fulfilled. No matter, how much ever we thank them, it will never be enough.