



THE NABHA FOUNDATION

NABHA SPEAKS ***

The Nabha Foundation Phulkari

COVID-19 Response by the Nabha Foundation

The COVID-19 pandemic started spreading rapidly to all parts of the world before people even had heard about it. In India, especially in the rural parts, people were unaware about COVID-19, leave alone its symptoms & the precautions required. Due to lack of awareness, the risk of spread in rural areas is heightened. It became important to generate awareness regarding COVID-19 so that people get a chance to protect themselves.

The Nabha Foundation Team swung into action and started work on the 'COVID-19 Response' for Nabha and more than 80 nearby villages. The Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material was procured from

the Government website and leaflets & flexes were printed for distribution to spread information. After taking all safety measures, our team



started by putting up posters on the most visited public places like the gurudwaras, bus stands, schools, railway station, factories, Nabha jail, Dulladi Gate, densely populated colonies like the Baazigar Basti and nearby villages. Keeping in mind its importance, all care was taken so that people don't gather and form a crowd.

The education program team conducted special meetings in

schools for children & their parents about COVID-19 so that they know the facts, don't panic and take all precautions.

Announcements through gurudwaras and religious institutions throughout Nabha were conducted (this activity will be ongoing, not only to impart awareness but also to combat fear & further spread).

Message was spread in Punjabi through audio announcements on bicycles to more than 80 villages, covering each and every habitat in these villages. Community awareness camps in these villages were organised, leaflets distributed and flexes were put on display at all public places.



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Even after the lockdown, the health program team is reaching out to HIV positive cases with essential medicines and keeping their morale high. The team is also working on identifying families facing hunger and sharing this data with SDM,

Nabha. Government is extending help to these identified families with essential groceries. The awareness campaign is now being carried out by circulating Government & WHO approved messages via WhatsApp to give the correct picture and to stop

panic amongst people.

You too can support our campaign and lend a helping hand, do write to us at info@thenabhafoundation.org and we will get in touch at the earliest.

Gendered Approach Towards Development



India has made rapid progress in the overall socio-economic development and that has significantly improved maternal and child health, increased life span, narrowed literacy levels between male and female and growing opportunities for work. But this trend of development has not yet resulted in equalizing sex ratios in general and gender relations in particular (Ahlawat Neeraja, 2016). India's obsession with male child and their significance has not diminished. Son preference in India is ancient and universal and is considered to be an indicator of social development. Economic survey (2018) reported that **'India could have as many as 21 million unwanted girls**, that is, girls whose parents wanted to have

sons instead.¹ World Economic Forum (WEF) has released Gender Gap Index-2019 that shows India has slipped to 112th position. India has moved downwards four places in terms of gender equality amid increasing disparity in terms of women's participation in the development of the country.²

Gender inequalities are a major impediment to rights based sustainable development in Punjab. The right to life itself remains uncertain for the female gender in Punjab and captures the widespread discrimination prevalent in the state. While the state's model of development is considered to be the most equitable one, it also has the lowest sex ratio. Historically, there has been lesser number of women than men in Punjab, contrary to the biological pattern. Punjab has been consistent in maintaining a skewed sex ratio since the first census in 1881, with a sex ratio of

844. As per census 2011, it remains at 895 with the Indian average at 943. Girl child discrimination is reflected with a Child Sex Ratio (CSR) of 846, which is taken as a consolidated reflection of mortality in the most vulnerable age group. In Punjab, the missing girl child rate is 11084 in comparison to India's 3328 (Punjab Vision Document, 2017). Furthermore, the trend of poor female work participation rate (FWPR) also highlights the inherent gender inequality in the state remaining at 13.9 percent, which is much below the Indian average of 25.51 and is amongst the lowest in the country.

The situation of women and young girls in Nabha is no different from the rest of Punjab. The region is characterized by



1. <https://qz.com/india/1191272/economic-survey-2018-indias-preference-for-boys-has-produced-21-million-unwanted-girls/>

2. <https://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/wef-gender-gap-index-india-slips-to-112th-rank-in-bottom-5-on-health-economic-fronts-1576556883-1>



strong patriarchal norms, culture promoting preference of sons and inherent gender bias. Gendered practices and norms are deeply embedded within the everyday lives of the women of Nabha. Work participation among women is extremely low and woman working is considered as a sign of shame for the family, especially among the upper caste people. Moreover, women regard their work to be of an inferior nature and less valued than that of men. During our field interactions, women would often say, **'What we do back at home is easy, cook food, take care of babies, clean house. That's all. We stay back at home. Our work does not bring money. May be what you do get you money. But not ours. It is not work.'** There is an inherent common thought existing among the women that they attain social status only when they are married and have children, preferably sons. The attainment of respect and social status is only through being somebody's wife and a mother of a male child. As one of the expectant women explained the significance of a son in her life, 'I have two daughters. This time I really hope for a son, else my husband is going to leave me and my life will be equivalent to this cattle tied to a rope.' Thus, such narratives from the field reflect the inferior position of women and deeply rooted discrimination practices against the girl child.

The Foundation, through its development initiatives, is trying to address the discriminatory practices and norms so that female subordination and gender discrimination can no longer remain impediments to women's social, cultural and economic growth. The Community Health Program of the Foundation aims to create awareness and education on various health concerns existing among sex workers, pregnant and lactating mothers and adolescent girls. Regular meetings and camps are organized with specific groups so that they are always informed and motivated. Through the Phulkari Program, TNF is trying to address the economic inequalities existing in the Nabha region by providing home based employment to marginalized rural women who are specialized in a traditional form of embroidery. Meetings are held with the women groups on the overall issue of gender inequality so that they are equipped to end the many forms and manifestations of prevailing discrimination in their lives.



Navi Disha Schools (NDS) are aiming at improving the educational landscape of Nabha and reducing the literacy gap by providing quality and free education to the children of disadvantaged communities. Girls are especially encouraged to excel in academics as well as

Photo of the month



Every cloud has a silver lining, we pray for the well-being of all.

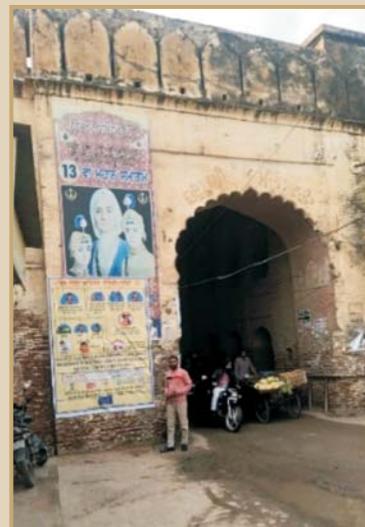
Photo credit: Shubhra Singh

actively participate in the extracurricular activities for an overall social development. Another initiative of the foundation, Maharani Gur Charan Kaur School (MGK), is providing world class progressive education to the girl children in Nabha and equipping them with a modern world view so that young girls can dream and aspire to become the best version of them.

The Nabha Foundation will continue to work for improving the social, cultural and economic lives of the women and girls of Nabha with a firm belief that gender equality is intrinsic to human rights and critical to sustainable development. The Foundation has not only adopted a gendered approach in all its interventions, but also has a team with more number of women employees at all levels. Through our work, we hope to empower women and girls in Nabha to take charge of their lives and break the chains of patriarchy.

In our next issue, we talk about our health workers who are helping HIV+ people during this crisis...

Talking Through Pictures....



Covid-19 Response by the Nabha Foundation

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We apologize for any errors or omissions