

EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE – SGD 5 :GENDER EQUALITY

Bahujan Hitay Girls Hostel, Pune (TBMSG trust) | (2023-Present)

(<https://tbmsg.org/project/residential-educational-projects/vishrantwadi/>)

(<https://www.instagram.com/p/DO7jTQ-iKEv/>)



The Bahujan Hitay Girls Hostel, established in 1987, aims to serve girls from 5th to 10th grade that belong to marginalised and disadvantaged communities from the Pune district. These girls aged between 10 to 17 are victimised by the patriarchal practices at their homes and community, which deeply affect them. The hostel is a great source for many of them to overcome the adverse conditions they are facing. For the last 30 years, the hostel has been providing facilities for residence, education, health and overall development to over 2300 students.

I pursued the Duke of Edinburgh's IAYP Bronze Award in grade 9, which required 52 hours of creativity, activity, and service. For the service component, I was referred to the hostel, and I had volunteered to teach the girls. When I came to learn that the girls were abandoned because their

families had limited means and did not want to take care of a girl child, I was deeply shaken. I wanted to do more than just fulfil the requirement: I wanted to make a lasting impact.

I began visiting the hostel twice a week to teach science, maths, and digital literacy. Slowly, I started to form a bond with them, both the students and I looking forward to each session. Not only did these sessions help the girls tremendously, allowing them to learn and build confidence, but they also taught me valuable skills such as patience, empathy, and adaptability. There were also days when I organized sports and fun games in their backyard just to see their faces light up with laughter.

With the support of my parents and crowdfunding, I raised funds to purchase 4 desktops for the hostel so that more of the girls could gain access to basic computer education. I also organized crowdfunding drives to help cover part of their electricity bills to ensure that there would be no hindrances to the girls.

Even after moving to the United States in 2024, I have remained connected with the girls. I still conduct online lessons, keeping the bond I forged with them alive. Each smile on their faces, their ever-growing curiosity, gives me immense satisfaction and strengthens my belief in education being able to transform lives.

Three years and counting, this experience not only did open my eyes to the disparity of opportunity due to gender in our world, but it also inspired me to help make a difference in alleviating this through education. It continues to inspire me to dedicate my time and skills to create opportunities for others where they are needed the most.