

School4Freedom Update June 2017 – India, outside Varanasi

Reporting month: Jan-March 2017 (5<sup>th</sup> Quarterly report)



Meeting with Self Help Group (SHG) women for documentation to link with National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)

### **New Developments:**

**1. In the last three months, some of the most exciting or rewarding things to happen at this site have been:**

- Now Community Vigilance Committee (CVC) (please see acronym explanations at the end of the report) members conduct CVC meetings by themselves and share their views and discuss issues. In meetings they are learning their rights.

- Most of the community members started to resist the atrocities of the slave holders with the support of S4F team.
- The SHGs women secured Rs.15000.00 (about \$232) from the bank as credit under NRLM and that capital was used to lease the agriculture land.
- The SHGs women are producing their own agriculture products.
- 7 community members (1 male adult female Adult, 3 boys and 2 girls) have been freed from the brick kiln with the help of S4F team.



Meeting with CVC members to access Govt. programs

- In this quarter S4F team organized a health camp along with Govt health department in the community for vaccination and treatment of measles. The community members obtained free medicines and vaccinations by the Govt. Health department.



- 22 community members have secured their Aadhar cards [identity cards kind of like social security cards] with the help of S4F team members.
- 11 community members have opened their bank accounts with the support of S4F team.
- 2 community members have got their free cooking Gas connection (under Ujjawala scheme).



*A CVC member using her new cooking gas connection*

**2. Some of the most difficult things about the project lately have been:**

- Often slave holders and their henchmen loiter around the community and V4F school just to create pressure.
- In this quarter most of the community members were suffering from measles so they had health issues.
- Slaveholder threatened S4F team members to stop helping the community.

- One family who is the supporter of slave holder disturbed the community and they always meet with slave holder and tell them all the things what the S4F team does in the community.
- Law enforcement agency ignores the complaints of community. Police always support to slave holder because slave holder is a rich and powerful person.
- The process of accessing Govt programs had been slow because of an election.



A health and medical camp organized with the help of govt. department

**3. What are the next steps, the things you are hoping will happen in the next few months at this site?**

- Community members deprived of government entitlements will be linked with government programs by S4F team on the basis of village profile register prepared by front line workers of S4F.



- S4F team will organize Community Help Desk in the community to support their government entitlements during next quarter.
- Skill training of SHGs women will start so that they will have a skill to do their work and earn their own income.
- The children will be trained in skit or street play on issues related to trafficking and child labor. This will create awareness among S4F School children on the issues of bonded labor and human trafficking.
- S4F team will conduct an exposure visit to Govt. service departments for the children.
- In next quarter S4F team will conduct a meeting with Child Protection Department to activate the village child protection committee in the village.



The community members with their Addhar cards

**Teacher's Report:**



**Teacher: Madhuri**

### **Overview of school**

- Altogether 38- 40 children are attending the S4F School everyday.
- The timing of S4F School is 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm.
- The parents help S4F team and they send their children to S4F School on time.
- In my school solar lamps are used for lighting in the

classroom. When we come to S4F School we charge the solar lamp by putting in sunlight. Children enjoy study in the light of solar lamp.

- Progress report card was developed and progress was examined of every child in S4F. By this progress report card S4F senior team members evaluate the child's basic knowledge and future plans are made accordingly for each individual child.
- I think that the children are very happy in S4F School.

### **Progress**

- 22 children have learned reading and writing Hindi and these children are also writing their family member's name in English. Rest of the children is still in learning process.
- S4F School children respect their elders and when S4F senior team members come to school they stand up in their row and tell them "Welcome in my School".
- Positive behavioral changes have been observed in children since they started coming to S4F school. They come to school with neat and clean.
- 7 children have learned how to operate the computer and also they write their name in English.
- Most of the children have learned slogan on Risk and Rights related to trafficking and slavery.





The children in S4F school

### Problems:

- 4-5 children avoided coming to school because of their age (16-17 years).
- Few children spend only 2-3 hours and they disappear after having mid day meal.
- Many children of S4F School were suffering from measles so they couldn't come to school.
- Slave holder often come in community and they sit nearby S4F School and create nuisance in School.
- Some parents who take the debt from slave holder still take their children to work.

### Process:

- We divided children in to two groups according to their minimum learning level. I responsible for 1<sup>st</sup> group and 2<sup>nd</sup> teacher responsible for 2<sup>nd</sup> groups.
- We teach children with the help of white board, literature chart, books, and many activities.



- We teach them about help line number, slogan, song on bonded labor, and their rights.
- We always play with children and we give them many ideas of different types of game.
- In middle of month we teach them human rights education.

**How do you think the school is impacting students?**

I believe that children are happy in school. In spite of working along with parents they came in S4F school. They respect their elders and they do not quarrel. The children understand the importance of education.

**How do you think the school is impacting the entire village?**

- Now the community members have a hope and confidence because of S4F.
- They shared their problem with S4F team members without any fear.
- The parents send their children in S4F School and help the teachers.
- With the help of CVC members 7 community members were freed from brick kiln.

**What are you doing well? What could you do better? What would it take to do it better**

- We are teaching the children as per their interest.
- We always try to interact with children through games and playful activities.
- After school hours are used to motivate the community members for their children's education where they are made aware of topics and issues related to bonded labor and human trafficking.
- Educational activities in class are running really well. We are trying to teach math, Hindi and English words, and social studies by different activities as per their interest.

### **Case study –Student**



Name- Alok  
Sex- Male  
Age-10 Years  
Father  
Brother- 2  
Sisters- 1

#### **Brief background on their history, family.**

Alok is 10 years old boy living in the community with 2 brothers and 1 sister and his Father. His father had taken the debt from the slave-owner (brick kiln owner) and all of them had to work to repay the debt. His mother died 4 years ago. His father had taken the debt of Rs. 12000.00 (about \$185) and had been working in lieu of the debt. The high interest rate on the debt put them in a vicious cycle of debt-work-debt and they were living in debt bondage slavery situation since last 4-5 years. After starting the S4F in community Alok and his family was helped to quit from the work and now Alok is in S4F transitional school.

#### **Tell us what you do in school? What are you learning?**

I study in school. In Hindi, I am learning how to read Hindi words and sentences. In math, I am learning table of 7 to 10 and addition of two digits. In English I am learning alphabets and names of flowers. I also learn how to play Carom game in school. I am learning to draw pictures and sing songs in my S4F School.



### **What is your favorite thing about school?**

I like to study and eat mid-day meal in the S4F School. I like mathematics the most in school. I like to play cricket. I like to eat rice and vegetable the most in meal. My teachers are very good. They bring the children who do not go to school from their home to school.

### **What don't you like about school?**

When children make a noise in school I don't like it at all. I don't like English study. I don't like play Gilli-Danda (a local game children play with sticks and sometimes the children get injured). I don't like to have Khichdi in meal on Saturday.



The male teacher working with Alok

### **How did you spend your days doing before you started school?**

When there was no school in my community, I used to work in a brick kiln with my father. I had to start work very early in the morning, 4:00am. I used to arrange raw dry brick in brick kiln & carry the sand. Whenever we played at the brick kiln the supervisors had beaten us. I used to load sand with my father.

**What does your family thinking about you going to school?**

I come to school everyday. My father is very happy. Earlier I could not read or write, I only worked but I can read and write now.



Alok playing at S4F

**What is the most important thing you are learning in school?**

I have learnt many poems and I often sing in school. I have learned Hindi alphabets and words. I can read and write A to Z properly in English. I know 1 to 100 counting, 2 to 7 table and one digit addition in mathematics. I have learnt how to draw flowers, dog, and mouse in art. I learnt to respect our elders.

**What do you want to be when you grow up and why? How do you think you will be able to make that happen?**

I want to become a driver and will drive train when I grow up. When I will be a driver, I will make a lot of money. I will not let my father to do work and will get my sister married. For this I will do hard work to and will study attentively and will do exercise in the morning.



**What have you learned about your rights?**

I came to know about my right, earlier I didn't know about my rights. We have right to study, to play and to walk (away from a bad situation).

**What do they think they have learned about themselves, their personal strengths and weaknesses, as they have been going to school or working to improve things?**

Earlier I did not know that even children also have rights. But now I have known that we have rights. I study attentively to improve and I obey my ma'am/sir in S4F. I play with my friends in school everyday. Whenever we have problem in playing, our ma'am and sir teach us by playing with us.

**What do they hope for in the future, for themselves and their families?**

I will drive train after becoming driver and will drop the people to their destination. After becoming driver, I will establish a school in which the poor children like us will be studying. I am very happy after opening of S4F School.

**Case Study – Adult**



Name- Shamsheer

Age- 38 years

Gender: Male

Job profile before S4F intervention- He was working as debt bondage slave in Brick Kiln.

Job profile after intervention- He is now doing his own agriculture on the rented land and also doing daily wages labor in the town and earning more than the minimum wages.

Children- 5 (2 Sons and 3 Daughters)

### **Describe how they join in the program**

Shamsher lives in the community with his family for two generations. His parents got the land to live from the slave-holders many years ago and they used to work for the slave-holders. His parents had taken the debt from the local slave-holder and Shamsher decided to work outside the village in order to repay the debt. He was trapped by the middlemen of the brick kiln and taken to a brick kiln 45 km away from the village against the debt of Rs.10,000.00 (about \$155). He worked 12-16 hours in the brick kiln, but was in big pressure of debt. During monsoon season he returned to the village with promise to get back again in the same brick kiln. Once S4F team was conducting the community meeting and he didn't want to join the meeting. S4F team leaders went to him and listened his story. S4F supported him and his family to quit from debt bondage and he and his wife had also joined the CVC. S4F supported him to rent the private land and they are now doing the agriculture.

### **Can you tell us about the loan your family took that trapped you in debt-bondage slavery?**

Three year ago I took Rs.10,000 (about \$155) debt from a brick kiln owner to repay the debt taken by my parents from the slave-holder in my village. After getting the Rs.10,000.00 we started work there and did hard work for repay the debt, but never happened because the brick kiln owner always used to say "You have still the debt, I will not leave you until I will squeeze the single last penny from you". My wife and me were working 12-16 hours in a day with our 2 elder children. Whenever we tried to give up the work he beat us and we were caught every time and his henchmen took us many times from our village to the brick kiln. During October 2016 when brick kiln work started, the slave-holder (brick kiln owner) came and said to us "If you will not return the debt, I will beat you and make you cripple". After 2-3 days S4F workers came to me and encouraged me to face the slave-owner because debt bondage is illegal. After 3 of 4 attempts I got out of the debt bondage slavery.

### **Highlight how they benefit, as well as describing if there are ways that they contribute**

I learned to face the slave-holders and also learned how to plan for future. I learned about debt bondage and laws related to this. S4F team supported me to rent a private agriculture land and I have



started my own agriculture work. I just harvested my wheat crop. I would use Police helpline number whenever any atrocity happens. Now I support to other and hope rest of the community members

would be freed from debt bondage slavery. I bring the community members in CVC meetings and I tell my story to them.



Shamsheer doing his agriculture work

**What do they think they have learned about themselves, their personal strengths and weaknesses, as they have been going to school or working to improve things?**

I learned the risk of debt and advance. Nobody can force us for work without wages. I learned that we should keep the proofs of our wages if we would work for somebody. I was in fear of slave-holders

but now I earn a living without any threat and would be completely independent in future. My life has changed and I am very happy now. I am still learning many things about our rights in CVC meetings.

**What additional skills or abilities do they want to work on, for themselves?**

I want to expand my agriculture work. Apart from that I would start some additional business like duck or goat farming and small shop. I want training for that.

**What impact do they believe the school is having in the village? Is one of their children in the school?**

The S4F School has changed the entire environment in the community. There was no facility of education for our children near to our community and most of the children worked with their parents. But now those children do not go to work in spite of that they come to S4F School everyday and they would be totally freed from the debt bondage slavery. My 2 children go to S4F School. The community has become firm and confident now. We go to the Govt. officials now whenever any issue arises. The S4F school is a favorite place for us.

**How do they try to help their children with schooling? What do they do to learn with their children?**

I send my children to school everyday. My children worked with us in the brick kiln and now they are in S4F School. They do not work now. I support my children to get up and be ready to go to school. I always motivate my children about education and say "I am illiterate because I never got a chance to go to school but you have got a chance to be in school. Do hard work and be educated".

**How has their life changed (practically and in how they are feeling)?**

I had been living in a very painful situation and nobody was there for our help. Luckily S4F came to my village and I am doing my own work now and will be freed from any exploitation permanently. I learned about human trafficking, demerits of child marriage, bonded labor and alternatives means of livelihood.

**What do they hope for in the future, for themselves and their families?**



I hope our children would complete their education. They will have a good life and carrier. If the work will be continued in our community, we hope everybody would come out from debt bondage slavery situation.

**If they feel their village has stopped slavery, how to they think it happened?**

Yes! I wish to stop slavery in my village. First of all we should have knowledge about law and govt. programs. Education is an essential condition to stop slavery, if each of the children will be in school and every adult will have employment; slavery can be stopped.

**What would they like to share that we haven't asked?**

Some of community members in our village are favoring the slave-holders. They sometimes leak our plan to the slave-holders



Children at S4F doing activities with the teacher

## Statistics:

### 1. School attendance (at transitional school)

Numbers of Boys	Numbers of Girls	Total	Cumulative no. of boys	Cumulative no. of girls	Total Cumulative no.
30	16	46	34	22	56

Cumulative No.:

## 2. Detail of skill training

Name of the Trade	Numbers of SHGs	Total participants	Cumulative no. of SHGs	Participants Cumulative no.
Agriculture	1	12	2	22
Agriculture	1	10		

Explanation: The SHG women have started their own Agriculture work and they had rented the land in the village. S4F team supported them for access of good quality seeds and fertilizers on subsidized rate.

## 3. Detail of mainstream children to Village school from S4F

Currently mainstream children to Village school from S4F			Cumulative no. mainstream children to Village school from S4F		Total Cumulative no.
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0	0	0	10	8	18

Explanation:

## 4. Detail of CVC

Members of Male	Members of Female	Total Members	Members of Male cumulative no.	Members of Female Cumulative no.	Total Cumulative no.
10	15	25	14	17	31



Explanation: 6 freed laboures had joined the CVC this quarter.

5. Numbers of children gained access of education.

Children currently in MSVS school			Children enrolled/ made continued in Village school through pressure/ campaigning (Cumulative no.)		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
34	22	56	0	0	0

Explanation:

6. Any other work that improved the quality of education.

- We evaluate every child on monthly basis and according to result of evaluation we revised our lesson plan and time table as per children interest.
- We try to make children understand in simple and joyful methods.

7. Any work that improved access to health.

S4F team sensitized to village and block level health authority for providing health services to the community's people.

8. Number of people with increased access to nutrition and child health Service

PDS				ICDS			
Got BPL cards	Got ration	Got BPL cards Cumulative no.	Got ration Cumulative no.	Children	Women	Children cumulative no.	Women cumulative no.
0	0	0	0	0	0	11	13

Explanation:

**Read Me and Smile:**

Voices4Freedom works with partner, MSEMVS to address the issue of slavery in a holistic manner. People are trapped in slavery in northern India villages because they are extremely poor, illiterate, innumerate and vulnerable to exploitation. And there are people ready to take advantage of their desperate hope to take care of their families.

There are great government programs for the very poor in India but most of the poorest people don't know how to navigate the system and like many places in the world, the villagers don't even exist for their government because their birth was never registered. There is no record of them. That all changes with the S4F program.

A large part of the Schools4Freedom work is to educate the parents about their rights and help them register with the government and get identity cards that are needed to access all programs. This gives them socioeconomic benefits which reduces their vulnerability and helps sustain their freedom.

The numbers at the end of each report indicate the access people are gaining to specific programs. The numbers can look so bland but they represent another gigantic step to freedom.

The alphabet soup can be confusing. Understanding and accessing these programs can be the difference between freedom and slavery.

Each acronym or abbreviation is explained below.

**Acronyms list used in report:**

1	CVC	Community Vigilance Committee	<p>Group of survivors/vulnerable people in a village who come together to resist slavery and protect their communities. As these committees learn about their own rights they are empowered to stand together and grab freedom. They also empower other communities and help them come to freedom.</p> <p>One of the first things frontline activists do is help villagers form CVCs and SHGs. The villagers are enslaved together and learn to unite to come to freedom together.</p>
2	SHG	Self Help Group	<p>Women in groups of 12 or more organize themselves to multiply their income collectively. SHG members do savings in groups which is often used for emergency so they do not fall prey to loan sharks and slip back in debt bondage slavery.</p> <p>They also learn about hygiene and other issues that help the community get healthier.</p>
3	TLM	Teaching Learning Material	Community teachers are from the same caste, which reassures people coming to freedom that the teacher understands their troubles. The teachers are provided regular technical training on teaching methods for children who have not ever been to school.
4	H.R Education	Human Rights Education	CVCs and SHGs and school children regularly get orientation on human rights to sustain their freedom
5	AHTU	Anti-Human Trafficking Unit	A Police unit working for Anti-Trafficking at a District Level. A statutory government body dedicated to address trafficking cases
6	PDS	Public Distribution System	A Govt. Department that provides subsidized Food Grains, Kerosene oil etc.



7	BPL-Card	Below Poverty Line- Card	This is a critical piece of freedom, this card is issued by the government and used for PDS (above mentioned Service) service. BPL card holders get rations at subsidized rates. Also ID for accessing government welfare schemes
8	AAY-Card	Antyodaya Anna Yojana- Card	An ID card issued by the government. for special families i.e. Physically Challenged, single mom, head of households, etc. and used for PDS (above mentioned Service) service.
9	APL-Card	Above Poverty Line- Card	A card issued by the government and used for PDS to subsidized Food Grains, Kerosene. This subsidy is not as large as the below poverty line cards.
10	MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act	<p>This is a highly-regarded Indian labor law and social security measure that guarantees poor villagers the 'right to work' at least 100 days in rural areas during each financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.</p> <p>The workers help create durable assets such as roads, canals, ponds and wells.</p>
11	ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist	ASHA are local women trained as frontline health workers. She is responsible for taking care of pregnant women and other Reproductive Health services. She serves in the community. This service is free of cost.
12	ICDS	Integrated Child Development System	<p>This scheme is basically for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children below 5 years of age.</p> <p>The women get immunizations and food supplements. The children get supplementary food and pre-primary education. This service is free of cost.</p>

13	ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife	Similar to ASHA and provides more expert services.
14	NRLM	National Rural Livelihood Mission	The government of India scheme/program to alleviate rural poverty and empower villagers to organize and create jobs by forming SHG that is similar to what S4F/MSEMVS does.
15	JSY	JananiSuraksha Yojana	An incentive to promote birth registration. Women are given Rs 1500 INR [about \$22.00] when they deliver in a government hospital. Health care is free in India.
16	UIDAI (AADHAAR-Card)	Unique Identification Authority of India	An Identity card for social security
17	NFSM	National Food Security Mission	<b>National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013</b> As passed by the Parliament, Government has notified the National Food Security Act, 2013 with the objective to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity.
18	SPY	Samajwadi Pension Yojana	Samajwadi Pension Yojana is one of the pension schemes launched by the Government of Uttar Pradesh to encourage savings among people living below the poverty line and provide them financial assistance.
19	BOC	Building and other construction Labour Welfare scheme	BOC stands for Building and other construction Labour Welfare scheme, under this scheme the labourers working in construction sector may get the registration through labour department and they get many benefits from labour department.

20	CMT	Community Maturity Tool	A tool to measure the community vigilance committees. MSEMVS has set some benchmarks for the CVC and CMT is administered once or twice in a year.
21	Mediation	Section 64(2) of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996	Mediation is an alternative process of dispute resolution in which a neutral party plays the role of a mediator, enabling two conflicting parties to arrive at a settlement. Legal counseling and mediation strategies are deemed valid under the law.
22	Tahsil Divas	Conducted every third Tuesday (or certain days decided by the Govt.)	Third Tuesday of every month is served as Tahsil Divas. On those days all the Sub District level officials assemble at Sub District headquarter. Any person can come and complain in person directly to the Sub District level officials.