

EKAL VIDYALAYA *Integrated* VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

“All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are not taught to help themselves.”

- Swami Vivekananda



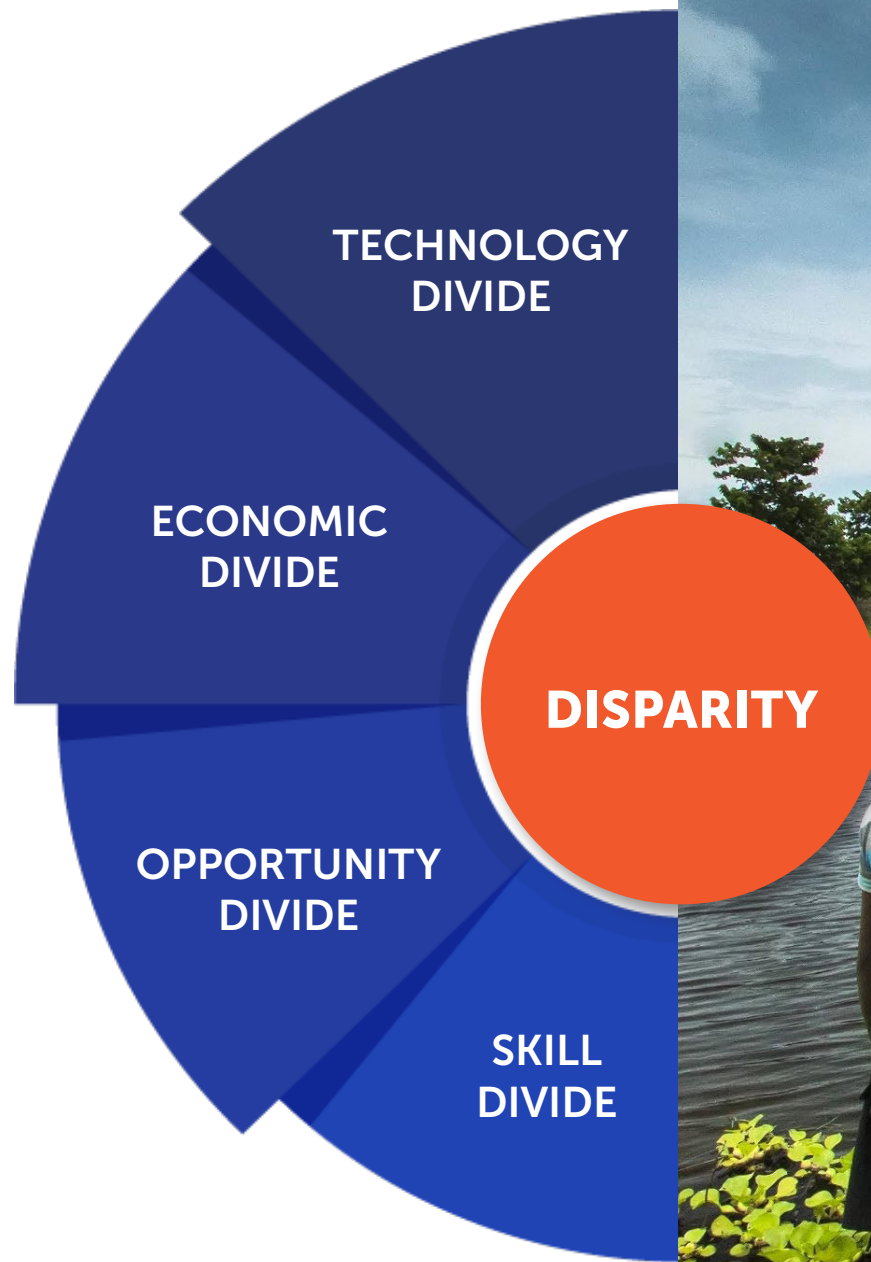


Vision

Empowering Rural India's
Changemakers

Mission

Bringing literacy, healthcare, and
economic prosperity to remote
villages in India



THE CHALLENGES

Out of a population of 1.4 billion, 830 million people reside in 640,000 villages and hamlets in India

Agriculture has been the backbone of their existence for hundreds of years. But climate change, lack of opportunities and a widening urban rural divide has created a crisis that has pushed nine million farmers out of agriculture between 2001 and 2011 leading to an increase in urban migration as the average land holding halved since 1992.

The female workforce participation rate (WPR) at 23.54%, is almost half of the male WPR at 73.2%. A McKinsey Global study concluded India could boost its GDP by \$2.9 trillion by 2025, if female workforce participation rate was to improve by just 10%

points bringing 68 million more women into the non-agricultural labor force.

The computer literacy rate lingers around 10%, slightly lower in remote rural and tribal areas. With the highest percentage of its population under 40 years old, the lack of skilling and vocational training poses a deeper problem for the emerging India.

In conclusion, rural India faces unprecedented challenges with the lack of livelihood opportunities, hunger, resources, access to markets, lack of infrastructure and inclusion in mainstream society.



"Putting people at the center of development is much more than an intellectual exercise.

It means making progress equitable and broad based, enabling people to be active participants in change."

- Swami Vivekananda

THE CHANGE WE SEEK

Ekal's story is a story of social dreamers who believe that education can transform lives. In the early 1980s, Dr. Rakesh Popli, a professor of nuclear physics at IIT Kanpur, and his wife, Rama Popli, a primary education specialist, were inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's teaching to advance the nation and left their positions to improve conditions in rural India.

They were moved by the lives marked by poverty, gender disparities, and lack of access to education they witnessed while visiting rural areas in the Gumla District (now the state of Jharkhand in eastern India).

With like-minded activists, they conducted a study to determine the region's greatest needs and concluded that **education was the most effective way towards India's rural development**. Incorporating a holistic syllabus of math, science, language, creative arts, and physical education, the first Ekal school was born in 1986, with Rama Popli as its teacher.

Integrated Village Development

UNICEF redefined education as the power of a community to educate its children and adults, make informed decisions for their wellbeing, empowered with the ability to grow inside out.

With education as its flagship program, Ekal is expanding towards integrated village development with initiatives for digital literacy, women's empowerment, health services, sustainable agriculture, jobs, and skills training. With an active and trusted international network of 400,000 volunteers, Ekal's vision for a thriving rural India is on its way to realizing a goal of 36,000 integrated villages by 2030.

Ekal, which means unity and strength, was and often still is the only education option for rural children. After India gained independence in 1947, the government built thousands of schools across India. However, they were scarce in small, remote villages and hamlets. Additionally, low-income communities often depended on their children, especially girls, to contribute to the family income and help around the house.

Ekal approached these hurdles head-on. The organization's leaders provided a school with a locally trained teacher for every village and hamlet providing access to education. To accommodate families' schedules, Ekal schools ran in the afternoon, after household duties were completed. Families whose children attended Ekal schools were encouraged to spread the word. By 2000, within 10 years, the number of Ekal schools had grown from 60 to 5,000. Since then, Ekal has grown to 100,000 schools in rural India.



INTEGRATED VILLAGE INITIATIVES

Integrated Villages take a multi-tiered approach towards bridging the rural-urban divide and accomplishing economies of scale by clustering 30 villages, covering education, health, and jobs. Ekal takes a 360-degree view to ensure primary school education links with high school and enables job creation within every village's ecosystem.

EDUCATION

Primary School Education

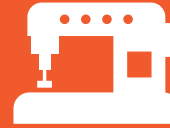
DIGITAL EDUCATION

Expanding employment and entrepreneurship opportunities through computer training



VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Providing training in tailoring, life skills, preventive medicine, maternal care, prenatal care, basic healthcare workers and financial independence



SKILLS TRAINING

Teaching market-aligned skills such as computer literacy, carpentry, and handicrafts; connecting trainees to employment and market opportunities

INTEGRATED VILLAGE INITIATIVES

HEALTHCARE

Offering preventative healthcare resources, maternal health, prenatal care and education



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The sustainable agriculture program trains farmers in organic farming techniques, ensuring higher crop yields and revenues, providing market linkages and maximizing outcomes for the community.



“Without Ekal, I would never have known about education. Today, I would have been taking care of the cattle at home instead of getting my degree. Ekal has transformed my life.”

~ Kumari Kalpana Mahto
Ekal Graduate, currently studying for Bachelor's
in Technology at AMI Kolkata



education

PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

Education is Ekal's flagship program. Since 1989, the organization has brought literacy and economic opportunities to over 10 million students in 80,000 villages and tribal areas in rural India. An innovative model of a single-teacher primary school has led to long-term, unprecedented impact. Ekal is a revolution that's changing the paradigm of education.

THE CURRICULUM

All Ekal's schools follow a standard core curriculum of language, arithmetic, and science. Students also participate in physical education, values education, and creative arts.

LOW OPERATING COSTS

Schools are located in informal, accessible places that are central to the village. They are managed by a school oversight committee composed of parents and community members. Ekal schools are completely free, with learning materials including digital tools provided at no cost.

THE TEACHERS

Ekal's teachers are selected by the school oversight committee and have a minimum of a 10th grade education. They undergo intense training to serve the pedagogy of the schools. 70% of Ekal's teachers are women who are role models, encouraging families to educate girls. This is crucial for gender equality. 50% of Ekal students are girls pursuing higher education, some joining as Ekal teachers, thereby giving back to the communities they grew up in.

2.8 million

STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED

1.4 million Boys

1.4 million Girls

70%

TEACHERS ARE WOMEN

10 million

CHILDREN HAVE GAINED LITERACY SINCE 1986

80,000

EKAL SCHOOLS IN ALL STATES IN INDIA

Digital Education

Bringing Digital Learning to Ekal's Primary Schools with E-Education

Rural India fell further behind when schools closed for two years during the Covid pandemic. E-Education is an innovative initiative to incorporate customized, high quality digital learning in Ekal's 80,000+ single-teacher primary schools. Tablets provide an audio-visual component to Ekal's curriculum, where students gain digital literacy to make learning engaging and fun.

3,600 students are learning with tablets

E-education is active in **1,200** Ekal schools across India

30 students per school

36,000 Ekal schools will use E-Education by 2030

Tablets can be used offline, reaching students in the remotest villages. Interactive lessons engage students with hands-on learning. Students learn how to use tablets, gaining digital literacy skills

“Whatever we used to teach on the blackboard is now seen by students on tablets. Students are more interested in lessons, and they're learning faster.”

~ Kumari Julie Rana - Ekal Teacher, Dewari



Computer Training Lab

Providing computer literacy & digital skills to rural youth

Computer Training Labs provide rural youth with practical computer skills. Computer training enhances employment and earning potential, increasing incomes and changing futures. Our goal is to demystify computers to rural youth and bridge the digital divide between rural and urban India.

For rural youth, computer skills mean broader employment opportunities, financial security, and the freedom to dream big.

Graduates of the program go on to work in a variety of computer-related fields. Whether working as data entry operators, running computer facilities in their villages, or starting their own businesses—there's no limit to what they can achieve.



After taking training at the Computer Training Lab I now run a E-Banking service from home.

Neelu Kumari, Jarangloi



20,192 Rural girls and boys gained digital literacy
1,075 Villages served
43 Mobile computer labs
Program Winner of the Digital India Conclave's
Digital Trailblazers Award



VOCATIONAL TRAINING

TAILORING

Tailoring Training is an initiative to empower rural women with tools for micro-entrepreneurship. The program teaches women how to sew clothes and connect them to large-scale market opportunities, increasing both earning potential and self-confidence.

Trainees participate in a three-month program at a local Community Resource Center, led by expert instructors and taught in the local language. After graduating from Ekal's tailoring program, there's no stopping women from using their skills to the fullest.

MICRO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Graduates of the tailoring program often go on to start shops in their villages. This grows rural economies and empowered local women serve as role models for younger generations.

MANUFACTURING

Tailors have the opportunity to join a manufacturing group at their local Community Resource Center, sharing their skills with the urban market.

EMPOWERMENT FOR ALL

Graduates are able to start satellite training programs in their village, empowering even more women to thrive.





17,284
RURAL WOMEN TRAINED

48
TRAINING CENTERS



HEALTHCARE WORKER'S PROGRAM

Ekal's healthcare worker's program (TEA) is a women-led wellness revolution that trains local women as community health workers. They provide last-mile affordable healthcare and vital on-the-ground resources, connecting patients to doctors via telemedicine and administering/teaching preventive healthcare. Serving as role models they empower women in their community to become self-sufficient and encourage entrepreneurship.



855,000
VILLAGERS WITH ACCESS
TO HEALTHCARE IN

1,710
RURAL VILLAGES



TEACHER TRAINING

Ekal excels in sourcing talent and resources from local communities to reduce costs, increase engagement in children's education and providing jobs at the local level.

Men and women with a minimum of 10 grade education, representing a diverse ethnic group are specially trained in pedagogy to meet the needs of rural children. Teacher training involves hours of rigorous immersion into curricula, engaging students of varied ages and needs to lay a solid foundation of success.

HANDICRAFTS & ARTISANAL DEVELOPMENT

Ekal trains and encourages village communities in carpentry, pottery, and handicraft to produce marketable products and kindle entrepreneurs who provide customized solutions in rural development.



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The sustainable agriculture program trains farmers in organic farming techniques, ensuring higher crop yields and revenues, providing market linkages and maximizing outcomes for the community.



MICRO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Ekal is experimenting with the GRANE - Gramothan Atma Nirbhar Ekal program which is a self sustaining platform maximizing returns for newly skilled village communities. The program buys products at competitive prices, and sells value added produce like turmeric and black pepper to mainstream markets. Profits are recycled into the communities and marketing platforms creating self sustaining systems.

HEALTHCARE

Ekal healthcare is building the foundation for a robust preventive and curative health system in rural areas, offering preventative healthcare resources, maternal health, prenatal care and education.

TELEMEDICINE ENHANCED HEALTHCARE

Telemedicine Enhanced Healthcare is a community program that provides rural communities with critical medical services and preventive health education. The Ekal resource network connects community health workers and doctors to people in remote villages through telemedicine and in-person care.

Classes raise awareness about preventative health measures, lifestyle management and hygiene awareness. This program gives people living without sufficient healthcare resources the information and support to thrive.

360 VILLAGES
CURRENTLY HAVE
TELEMEDICINE AVAILABLE

PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE

Local community members are trained to administer last-mile-care and promote wellness for a lasting impact. A major challenge in rural communities is the lack of education in nutrition and the utilization of preventive healthcare techniques. Malnutrition, anemia, and non-communicable disease are issues addressed by our programs.

ANEMIA

Anemia prevention includes, monitoring hemoglobin, counseling on healthy nutrition, providing anemic patients with iron pills, and connecting patients to treatment when necessary.

VACCINATIONS

Community members are provided education on the importance of, and access to, government-provided vaccinations.



WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE WORKER PROGRAM

A women led healthcare revolution trains local women as community health workers who provide vital on the ground resources. Including connecting patients to doctors, administering preventive health care resources, and providing affordable healthcare.



NUTRITION GARDENS

Preventing malnutrition through education and providing families with fruit and vegetable seedlings and educating them on growing nutritious family gardens. This effort has made vegetables, fruit and organic farming accessible, and encouraged by the positive results, families are also producing enough to sell the produce locally or in bigger markets.



REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Family planning education and on the use of sanitary napkins.

VISION CARE

Facilitating large scale vision screening and providing free eyeglasses to communities.

HEALTH & HYGIENE

Providing in-depth trainings on filtered drinking water, safe disposal of degradable waste, healthy hygiene practices, and prevention of water-borne diseases.

DISEASE PREVENTION & TREATMENT

Providing information on common diseases and planting medicinal herbs to cure common ailments.



IMPACT

Within three years of implementation, the programs have shown powerful impact in all areas:

- Maternal healthcare
- Improved nutrition
- Increased use of safe drinking water
- Improved hygiene habits in children
- Increase in number and use of toilets
- Use of soak and compost pits for safe disposal of waste
- Significant reduction in the spread of water-borne diseases
- Reduction of anemia cases in women and children
- Complete recovery from cases of severe anemia

Financial

- Developing Strong Stakeholder relationships
- Assessing and Managing Risks
- Managing Overheads
- Creating Shared Value
- Investment in Infrastructure

Technical

- Training and Capacity Building
- Exposure Trips to Peer Groups
- Exposure Trips to Markets
- Reverse Experiential Trips of Technocrats

Social

- Selection of People
- Building Leadership Skills
- Social Interactions
- Monitoring and Feedback
- Community Action

Environmental

- Developing Recycled Products
- Environment Friendly Production Techniques
- Right to Water
- Promoting Eco Tourism

SUSTAINABILITY

With a credible presence in 80,000+ villages across all Indian states, Ekal is bringing widespread empowerment to rural India.



80,000

EKAL SCHOOLS IN ALL STATES IN INDIA

10 million

CHILDREN HAVE GAINED LITERACY SINCE 1986

2.8 million

STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED

17,400

WOMEN TRAINED

20,000

YOUTH ARE DIGITALLY LITERATE

90,000

YOUTH & ADULTS HAVE GAINED SKILLS TRAINING



Integrated VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

Bringing Education and Empowerment to Remote Rural India

