

Background:

People residing in the slums of Mumbai are subject to extremely poor conditions. Typically, most income earners are male and are employed as unskilled and daily wage laborers or construction workers. In the slums of Jari Mari & Govandi, where the majority of population is Muslim, the girls are affected both by the economic and social conditions surrounding them. The dropout rate of girls is extremely high; over 50% of the girls drop out after the 7th standard, due to economic reasons and the need to contribute to housework and childcare.

About Chehak:

Neha Madhiwala (Founder & Managing Trustee) founded the Chehak Trust in 1998 with a vision **to empower girls and women, particularly from Muslim and Dalit communities, and to enhance community-based social capital**. Since 2000, Chehak has been engaged in the field of non-formal elementary education, life-skills education and community based rehabilitation and community health in the two communities of **Jari Mari, Kurla** and **Dindoshi** (over 8 years) and in **Shivaji Nagar, Govandi** (past one year).



Under Sahyog, Chehak runs the following programs:

- **Sahyog - School Without Walls:** It was the first initiative undertaken by Sahyog – it offers opportunity for girls to integrate into the formal system through the open schooling system. Women that have been through Chehak’s programme and are now teaching the younger girls.
- **Sahyog Sangharsh - Special Education Programme:** A community based rehabilitation and care program catering to children and adolescents (up to 18 years) with disability.
- **Jhula:** Life skills development program for adolescent girls which focuses on the direct encounters faced by them in everyday life.
- **Sahyog Manzil:** Started in 2007, it is a resource center that consists of a youth library, a toy library and a centre to strengthen Math and English skills.

Chehak’s Impact:

- In Jari Mari, Chehak has directly affected the lives of **450 beneficiaries**. These 450 beneficiaries have indirectly had a positive impact on over **1500 girls**; essentially the siblings of the direct beneficiaries.
- Starting as a small class with 20 students, presently over 150 girls are enrolled in School Without Walls program. The bridge courses offered by Chehak have been instrumental in ensuring several children return to formal schooling.

Fellowship Program:

The Fellowship Program aims to train 60 women from slum communities in life skills development who will become catalysts for socio cultural change. The idea is to create local resource units in six slum communities by preparing women to tackle social issues related to health, education and disability and provide them with right skills and aptitude to guide and teach the younger generation. This project will have a long-term impact on the community – these 60 women will further train women from other communities - thus creating a domino effect.

EdelGive Approach and Support:

Chehak Trust was the winner of the EdelGive Social Innovation Honours. In addition to the award, this year, EdelGive is also looking at funding Chehak’s Fellowship Program with a funding commitment of over Rs. 20 lakhs. We are aware that there are risks around the community resisting change, but believe Chehak’s model which focuses on training young women from the community itself to bring long-term sustainable change will be adopted and impactful in the long run. We hope to build a long term partnership with them.