



OUR IMPACT

IMPACT REPORT 2021



www.kamlafoundation.org



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WELCOME

This report captures in one place, the scale and scope of our work and the impact we have made to the lives of those living on the margins of society in rural India. This has been a journey of collaboration with partners, supporters and those who have gifted their time and expertise to our cause.

We continue to put the people we serve at the heart of what we do, working alongside communities and individuals so that they are part of deciding what support they need and how they get it. In addition, we are harnessing the opportunities to reach more people in new ways and in doing so, strive to inspire others to mobilise their kindness to support those less fortunate than us.

Our focus is resolute in ensuring that what we do is relevant for those in greatest need, continuing to maximise our impact. This allows us to respond to the scale of need arising within the areas we operate. Our partners in India have enabled us to act quickly when needed, through tailored support based on existing connections with the communities in which we work.

Through the delivery of our work, we have captured our learning in a multitude of ways.

This report enables us to assess the difference we have made, also a promise to continue to build on and improve what we do. Looking forward, we aspire to continue to transform the lives of the most vulnerable in India. Throughout, we hope that

the Foundation can continue to provide a small but important window into that change. Understanding need, innovative approaches, capturing impact and critique commentary will remain the hallmarks of our work.

In a world that sometimes seems full of discord, carrying out our work makes me remember that in fact the world is a place of amazing kindness and generosity where people despite the odds, commit to making a huge difference. Thank you for being one of those people.

Bhupendra Mistry

Founding Director
Kamla Foundation

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report outlines how we respond to the needs of the most vulnerable and how we help them to achieve better life outcomes and forms part of our commitment to better understand the difference we make.

We draw on data from across our work, internal and independent evaluations of our programmes, feedback and accounts from the people we help. Where there has been a need, we have called for policy changes to achieve impact for the most vulnerable beyond our services and programmes.

In demonstrating the difference we make, we recognise the challenges in measuring our contribution where the people we help, draw on the support of multiple agencies to get back on their feet.

We are conscious of the limits in our ability to have lasting impact, where we support people for short periods of time and where we are supporting people with complex needs, that leave them vulnerable to repeat catastrophes.



ABOUT US

Kamla Foundation is a registered charity based in the U.K. helping the poorest communities in rural India, develop their capacity to meet basic needs and create solutions to poverty and injustice.

We have implemented a series of life changing programmes to help the most vulnerable in India find a route out of poverty. Our approach is to build partnerships that respond to locally defined problems with culturally sustainable solutions.



UNDERSTANDING POVERTY

Ultimately, through our work we are trying to understand poverty. Poverty has many different facets, each one as unique as the next, with strengths and weaknesses that can catalyse or inhibit an individual's journey out of their wretched existence. Getting used to selling your dignity for a rupee's work is one thing and living on the edge of precariousness another. But witnessing the rest of the population reaping the benefits of formidable growth is probably the most dangerous and unstable feature of poverty in India today. We are trying to make sense of this juxtaposition.

OUR MISSION

Our approach is to understand how poverty impacts the 'whole' person, building trust and strengthening relationships, responding to locally defined problems with appropriate solutions. For us, the focus is not on being the voice of the poor; rather it is on enabling them to speak for themselves. With our partners, we are developing approaches to better understand the plight amongst those deemed most marginalised in society.



MEASURING THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE

The drive to capture the difference we make and the experiences of those we help is not without its challenges as many are in need of complex support. Despite this, we have a rich evidence base to draw upon and we are committed

to improving how we do this, ensuring that people and communities are at the heart of what we do.

We also believe in sharing our experiences and best practice and through our publications we

have laid out our understanding and findings of poverty. These reports will inform our future thinking and provide the basis for our forward work programme.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Expertise in helping the most vulnerable, realign their paths out of extreme poverty
- Better able to understand the lives of the most in need
- Providing hope and inspiration - the cornerstone of our programmes of work
- Delivering a myriad of options to promote greater wellbeing
- Supported over 30,000 villagers journey to a better life
- Partnered with like-minded agencies and people, making a greater difference
- Continuing to change minds and lives

OUR EVIDENCE BASE

Our data:

We collect data on all our activity, including, how many people we reach and the types of support they receive, giving us a more consistent and reliable understanding of who we help and how.

Beneficiary experience:

We collect testimonials and stories from the people we help about how they were affected by their plight and what it meant to be supported by Kamla Foundation.

Evaluation:

We work with our beneficiaries to set goals that help us to ensure our support meets their respective needs. This approach has enabled us to transform how we engage with the people we help, so they get the support that reflects their preferences and priorities. Goals are reviewed at regular intervals so that we understand how we are making a difference and can adapt our support.



OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

The figures overleaf refer to the people we directly reach through services delivered together with our partners. However, they only show part of our impact. To make lasting change happen on an extensive scale, we also work with a range of agencies to understand their impact; link policy makers with people on the ground; change attitudes and behaviours; pool knowledge and resources and rally support from people and organisations across the regions we work across. Through this collaboration we benefit many more people than those shown below.



KAMLA FOUNDATION IN NUMBERS

2

partnership with two Universities in India, developing an outreach programme

3

long term strategic partnerships formed with like-minded NGO's

5

pieces of invaluable medical equipment donated to the Medlife Foundation

7

sponsored students, who have now graduated from University

15

volunteers gone to India to support our work.

18

computers purchased for a community resource centre

24

sewing / embroidery machines purchased for 3 training centres

28

bore wells installed

30

children sponsored through the child sponsorship programme

42

women's groups supported - through delivery of empowerment programmes

45

Widows supported for their daily needs in a Widows home

52

Workshops hosted - on effective leadership training for leaders of local NGO's

75

families in the slums of Ahmedabad supported with earning and skills training

90

cataract operations performed free of charge for widows in Gujarat

285

small businesses developed for rural women - securing their livelihood

310

aqua filters distributed to families in need of clean drinking water

400

additional villagers benefitting from clean water from the aqua filters

1,000

toys, stationary, books and equipment shipped to stock a resource centre

1,130

cleft lip/palate operations sponsored

28,750

villagers have access to clean drinking water

Over 30,000

lives changed from the impact of all our Projects

CASE STUDY

“Five years ago, I was no-one,” said Kanta Devi to me, sitting up straight against the wall of her one-room mud hut in a small village in India’s south eastern state of Tamil Nadu. “Now, people know me by my own name, not just by the name of my children.”

I was sitting on the floor, across from Kanta, a mother of six, who belonged to one of the most vulnerable and socially excluded castes in India. She recalled how when her husband was injured and lost his job a few years ago, the family was pushed over the brink from subsistence to hunger and poverty. At the time, Kanta took a bold step for a poor woman used to living in the shadows of society. She joined a women’s self-help group (one of many we created across rural hamlets) in her village and took

a small loan to raise goats. With the income she generated, she repaid her first loan and took another one - this time to lease land to produce grain. She borrowed again when her family faced a health crisis.

Today, Kanta has several sources of income. She is also planning ahead and wants to open a food outlet on a busy road. Given that two of her sons have now married, she wants to find a larger living space for her growing family. Of course, Kanta and the women in her self-help group still have a long way to go. Yet this is another remarkable story of empowerment through collective action. To me, the confidence these women have cultivated over time carries as much currency as their earnings. Through our support, the group

were inspired to organise themselves and work hard towards building a better future.

For many years, the region where Kanta lives was known for endemic poverty, corruption and a society deeply divided by the caste system. Then, the state government launched an ambitious development programme. It invested in roads, public health care and school systems. It even gave bicycles to girls as a reward for staying in school, which resulted in a fall in dropout rates and finally economic growth outpaced the national average.



HOPE

H A S N O B A R R I E R S

However, daunting challenges remain and that is why tailoring our approach to meet the specific needs of the poorest by developing innovative programmes and working closely with local NGO’s remains at the core of what we do. The marginalised communities we work with are the ambassadors of tomorrow. They demand that government and society should enable them to empower themselves, hope and positive change are not only possible, but inevitable. When people have power over their own lives and support to use their resources however they please, we find progress is certain.

We find that individuals and

communities can make a huge difference by working together, changing lives and overcoming the embarrassing statistic of millions trapped in poverty. Whether it is a single contribution to the cause or a much wider appeal, it’s important to get the message that they are part of a larger village where they can grow and make a difference of their own. When they come to us, visit our partner organisations or engage with one of our programmes of work, we may not know all the complexities of their lives but we do know that they look to us with hopeful expectation, that we will help them navigate successfully through the unpredictable high and low

waters of poverty and all that it entails.

For us, it’s about displaying and retaining a powerful and instinctive sensibility, in favour of the common good and social justice. We believe in cross-sector collaboration, strengthening engagement with civic partnerships and playing a key role in helping create lasting change. In doing so, helping to destroy misconceptions and prejudice. Through the delivery of our respective programmes of work, we are raising hopes and aspirations and find this to be the catalyst in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Charities are facing significant challenges in resourcing the vital work that they do, while need is increasing amongst the poorest communities. Given the global pandemic over the past year, fundraising has been heavily impacted. Therefore renewed ways are needed to enable people to give their time and donate money, with a clearer sense of how their contribution makes a difference. To this end, we are reshaping ourselves to meet these challenges so that we can be fit for the future. Ensuring our resources are targeted on helping the people who need it most. We are sharpening our strategic focus so that our resources are channelled into supporting people who are most vulnerable

to the challenges they face.

Using insight and evidence, we will focus on how we can make the greatest difference to those in need; work in partnership with others to have collective impact and amplify this further by enabling others to respond where they are better placed to do so. We are already adopting more personalised and community-based approaches, engaging with people so that they can be part of developing and improving the support we deliver. We are investing more in gathering evidence and insight about what we do so that we know what works, can improve what we do and going forward can better evidence the difference we make to the people we help.

The power of kindness:

We want to provide a platform that can harness human kindness through easy ways to donate or offers of time and connect it to the people who need it the most. We expect to be more ambitious, focused on where there is unmet need, more innovative in how we work, influential in how we use our voice and offering more ways in which people can support us and join us on this journey of change.

For us, it’s not the investments that determine how any great organisation is judged but the outcomes of those investments. Those outcomes are guided by our ability to innovate, influence and in the end generate impact. To this end, we continue our work ‘breaking the cycle of dependency’, providing hope

and inspiration to thousands, improving their standing and helping them to gain acceptance back into wider society.

Our success to date in lifting people out of poverty matters to us, as we continue to draw from our experience on what works and what doesn’t in public policies, governance and development practices. We continue to learn from the lives we are able to transform - like those of Kanta Devi and others in her self-help group. Only when we can help replicate their stories will we be able to see an India where extreme poverty ends in our lifetime.



“

Every day,
I am
afraid of
the next

”

A quote from one of our beneficiaries, who was enslaved by a crushing burden of fear and what the future held for her, before we helped turn her life around