



Education is the Most Powerful Weapon  
We can use to Change the World

- Nelson Mandela

## SARD's Approach to Quality Education



Society For All Round  
Development (SARD)



Michael & Susan Dell  
FOUNDATION





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# 1. SARD's Concept on Education

SARD's approach to education has been inclusive and holistic with a view to ensure the basic rights of children and provide quality education for all. Thus, SARD believes that education of children should focus on learning level improvements, promoting cognitive development with IT-enabled support systems, nurturing creative talents and engage in meaningful co-curricular activities. To achieve this, SARD ensures safer schools with positive discipline; teachers with appropriate capacities built through training; and sensitized governance through sustained advocacy.

SARD's journey in the field of education initiated in the year 1997 through establishment of non-formal education centres for the most disadvantaged minority community of meo-muslims in remote rural areas of Bharatpur district, Rajasthan. This effort was strengthened by ensuring quality education in formal schooling on a pilot basis, where the processes were streamlined and consolidated for a larger outreach and mainstreaming. Having enriched from this rural experience SARD up scaled its educational intervention to the urban pockets to



work with mainstream schools of Municipal Corporation of Delhi, which specifically looked into addressing academically weak children with bridge and remedial support. In addition to the tenets of rights to education, child protection, infrastructural development, IT-enabled education has been inculcated in the MCD system to enable it to build Model Academic Institutions. Further to improve the reading, writing and mathematical skills in a child centric way among the children who are at the risk of not reaching and maintaining academic grade levels were enabled to mainstream schools of MCD through remedial education.

This model of piloting, consolidation, outreach and mainstreaming has been up-scaled in the states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Delhi.

The steadfast efforts with MCD schools in Delhi by SARD, since a decade, have been very gradual and methodical. The platform for intervention among MCD schools was nurtured gradually by interfacing between the school teaching fraternity, children and parents of children, school administration and liaison with the elected setup at policy levels has been continuous in adding values. The value additions in terms of pedagogical, infrastructural and systemic support extended by SARD earned itself a recognition and continued acceptance.

Today SARD has a direct outreach in 450 mainstream schools covering 75000 children directly and indirectly encompassing more than 200 schools situated in the villages. These efforts are supported by multiple donors comprising

of national, international grant making agencies, family foundations and leading business houses. Based on this empirical learning, SARD envisages marching into the future to influence vibrant public policy with systemic advocacy among stakeholders to perceive and own initiatives through converging technology and resources by means of enhanced networking and enabling functional integration.

In view of its broader goal of empowering people to realize their full potential, SARD kept adding values by focusing on rights and education of children. We believe children are incredibly important section of the society, as they are its next generation. With appropriate guidance, optimal support and the right opportunities their latent talents and capacities can be brought out to the fore and utilized efficiently. Thus, it is very essential that children are provided with best services to develop into contributing members of the society.

SARD envision to work towards “the best interest of the child” and ensures compliance of the national laws and international laws and commitment towards Child Rights and Child Protection. To realize the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG 2) that lists achievement of universal primary education as one of the key goals, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act , 2009 was passed that ensures compulsory schooling for children of the age group 6-14. Even before the act coming into force, SARD has been deeply committed to the education of marginalized sections of society and have demonstrated this commitment through



successful implementation of programs in the past.

Our experience and innovation in the education field lead to the development of SARD's own strategy and pedagogy to provide quality education for students enrolled in government schools. We aspire to develop concepts and models of education which create the best environment possible for students, taking into account their socio-economic and cultural background. Ideally, our innovations will be replicated and thus contribute to the improvement of the current education system. Our target groups in the education field are socio-economically and disadvantaged children of the community who are enrolled in government schools. We do not believe in the effectiveness of a parallel structure to the government education system,

therefore we work in close cooperation with the respective state and district level administrations.

SARD's goal in the education field is to provide quality education for all. Quality education in SARD's view has to embrace the all round development of a child – not only its academic performance, but also the development of the child's personality and social skills. Therefore, our understanding of quality education is not limited to conveying knowledge, but comprises multiple aspects to enable a child to develop all its skills and talents and become a contributing member of our society. To reach this ideal of education, we have to respond to the child's nature of learning, including their perspective and ensure the quality of the teaching, of the infrastructure and of the applied pedagogical concepts.





In SARD, we believe that a true education cannot be anything else but child centered because the total development of the child's personality is widely accepted as the most important objective of education. Child-centered education means that the child's point of view, its interests, needs and aptitudes are prevalent over the teachers' and curriculum's point of view.

This understanding of quality education led in the past years to SARD's development of a threefold approach in the education field. We focus in our interventions on three different aspects: Quality of teaching, quality of infrastructure and Child Rights. The combination of these three aspects is intended to create an environment for the child, which allows it to have access to quality education and fully develop its academic and social skills.



## 2. About the Partnership with MSDF

SARD has been partnering with MSDF since 2011. The initial intervention started in 100 primary schools of West and Najafgarh zones of South MCD. In the first two intervention years, the project targeted each year directly 9000 primary school children. In the third year of the project, SARD increased its support to 142 schools in total, with the adoption of 33 new schools and the indirect intervention in 42 schools where the process of handholding the innovative interventions for continuation by the MCD school administration is underway.





## 2.1 Rationale of the Project

Over the past decade many developing countries have expanded access to primary education, but improvements in school access and enrollment have not universally translated into actual improvements in learning outcomes for all students. This is especially true in India, where 96% of children (ages 6-14) are enrolled in school, but 47% of children cannot read a grade-2 level text and 62% cannot do basic arithmetic in spite of spending five years in school. This means that well over 40% of all rural children in grade-5 are at least three grade levels behind.

This lack of education is due to multiple factors. One of them is the migration background of many primary students in MCD schools. Mostly they migrated from Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and UP within the last ten years. Migration contributes significantly to below average school enrollments and



high dropout rates at the elementary level for two main reasons. First, many families fail to re-enroll their children in school upon arrival in Delhi. Second, many of these families return to their home villages during the agricultural season, which disrupts the education of their children and causes some to drop out of school permanently.

Though the capital city of Delhi has a comparatively high literacy rate of 86.34%, Education For All, remains an elusive dream, particularly in the light of its migratory population dwelling in various slums in the city. In spite of the expanded school enrolment under SSA, Government Schools in Delhi are far from providing quality education. Factors in the education system that contribute to the current situation in Delhi include: neglect of early childhood education, poor quality of teaching; inadequate school infrastructure

and curriculum; rampant use of corporal punishment; high teacher absenteeism; large-scale teacher vacancies; lack of school community linkages, and inadequate allocation and expenditure of resources for education. Early Childhood Education remains a sorely neglected area in Delhi, with only the Municipal Corporation of Delhi Schools catering to pre-primary classes in less than 50% of their schools, while Directorate of Delhi Schools, do not cater to the pre-primary age group within their schools.

Municipal Corporation of Delhi (now trifurcated into three distinct units viz., East, North and South corporations) is the biggest stakeholder in Primary Education sector of Delhi. In its 1800 schools, the corporation enrolls about 11 lakh children. Needless to mention, that children from underprivileged section are the biggest client group of MCD schools.





Apart from the universal enrollment and retention, one of the key objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is 'Focus on Elementary Education of Satisfactory Quality with emphasis on Education for life'. The issue of quality education is directly linked with the retention and quality completion of children in School. Delhi has attained a stage where there is near universal enrollment in Std I but by the time they reach Std IV, 27% of these children drop out (against the national average of 34%). In addition to migration, economic instability is a key issue for dropout and non retention of children in schools. This reflects in poor academic performance among the MCD schools which is also attributed to varied educational background (distance, regular and private courses) of the teachers deployed in the MCD schools,

inappropriate pedagogical support from the technical support institutes like SCERTs and inadequate in-service teacher training by the DIETs. These result in poor standards in the school, which in a way prompts the parents to send their wards to work than to send them to these mediocre schools where quality has been lacking.

The current challenge is to effectively address the key issues of equity and quality in elementary education with a view to accelerating progress - not just towards education for all, but towards quality education for all. It is imperative, therefore, to view the prevalent perception of 'lack of interest in studies' factor, which must be viewed as a reflection of the critical need to improve the quality and delivery of education, to make it more relevant, joyful and motivating for children.



## 2.2 Goal of the Partnership

SARD and MSDF partnership envisages for creating up of Model Academic Institutions and enhancement of the learning level outcomes of primary school students in MCD schools. This goal is attained by facilitating the access to and ensuring the quality of education in primary MCD schools. Apart from direct remedial support to Children in Need of Academic Support (CNAS), the project equally focuses on the enhancement of the capacity of MCD teachers and SARD's appointed Academic Facilitators to become Master trainers and work towards promotion and dissemination of best practices and is building the capacity of diverse stakeholders to achieve the sustainability of the intervention.





## 2.3 Methodology/ Strategy

### Remedial Support to CNAS

The major focus of the intervention is to provide the remedial support classes in the intervention schools. In each intervention school, one quality education centre is set-up, named as Child Resource Centre or Ananadayi Kakash is set up where 90 children identified as lowest academic performers of grades 3, 4 and 5 are benefitted from remedial support in Hindi and Mathematics. These Child Resource Centre's breathes in the child friendly mode of environment which also incorporates the concepts of BaLA (Building through Learning Aid). These Children in Need of Academic Support are selected after large scale assessment done through internal as well external agency. The assessments are conducted thrice in a year baseline, midline and endline. In the remedial teaching, the SARD's appointed Academic Facilitators (AFs) provide for individualized attention to each child and are responsible for conducting the



class in a child-friendly manner through activity-based learning. The AFs use innovative Teaching Learning Material (TLM) to teach their students and create a child-friendly and conducive learning environment. The content of the teaching focuses on the identified weak skills and strong skills of the students in order to attain the effectiveness of the teaching. Periodical regular monitoring and evaluation of the students, as well as of the performance of the AFs, ensures the quality of the intervention and the progress of the CNAS whose retention, mainstreaming and empowerment is ensured and upheld.

### Capacity Building of Teachers

Various teacher trainings for Academic Facilitators and for MCD teachers allow enhancement of their capacities on innovative pedagogy and in creatively using TLMs, positive discipline, pedagogical concepts for Hindi and Mathematics. The participants of the workshops and trainings become Master Trainers for further dissemination of their knowledge and ensure the sustainable impact of the project.

### Networking and Convergence for Improving Understanding on Quality Education

To achieve an impact on the quality of education beyond classroom and school boundaries, opportunities of outreach has been explored through developing linkages with the technical support institutes, district level educational training institutes and education institutions like Vikram Sarabhai Institute and Digantar to provide for the enrichment of the pedagogical model of SARD. For ensuring visibility of the impact SARD enables participation in subject fairs, organizing review-cum-planning meeting with participation of teaching staff and principals. Moreover, the TLMs have been developed on the identified weak skills (common errors) of the students and three different books for Mathematics have been published and disseminated. The identified gaps are addressed through IT tools, which is an interactive and playful manner to impart knowledge. These modules are mainstreamed in training both new inductees and in-service teachers through which the aspect of quality education is imbibed and strengthened.

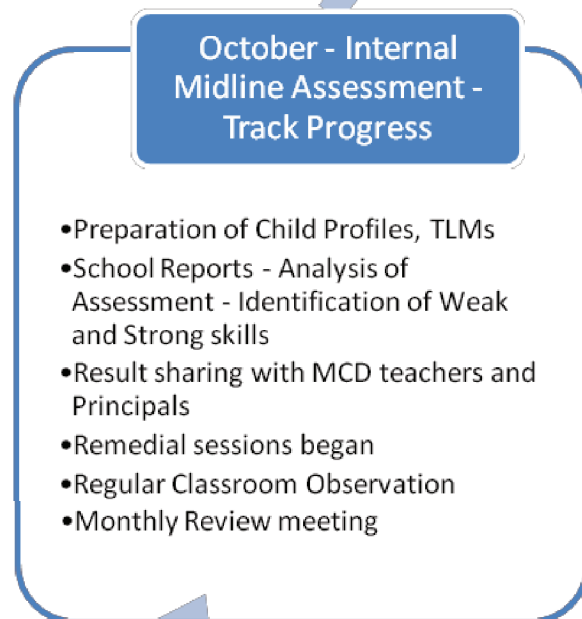
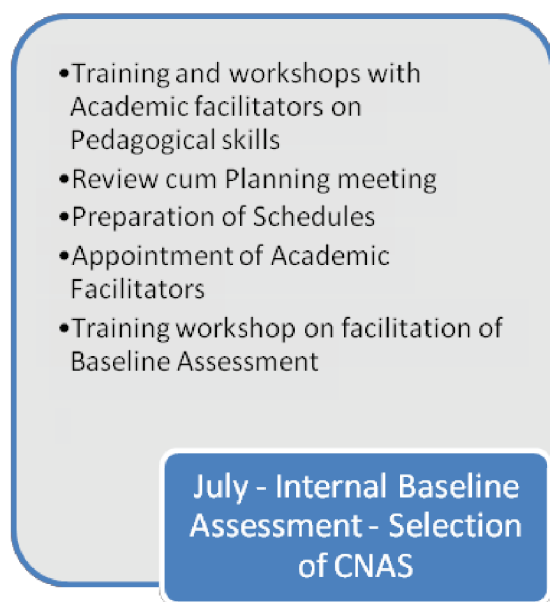
Similarly, SARD in collaboration with UNESCO evolved an inclusive learning friendly kit and its mainstreaming among MCD. SARD has thus been enabling convergence of resources both conceptual and physical by ensuing participation of Donors allocation of resources by MCD administration in its annual budgets.

# 2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

This programme is evaluated by two agencies -

## Internal Assessments conducted by SARD

SARD conducts its Internal Baseline assessment in all Direct Intervention Schools. This year this assessment was conducted in 92 MCD schools. The aim of this Baseline assessment is the identification of CNAS and their weak and strong skills. It is conducted among 50 children from each grade(III, IV and V), who have consistently scored low in school examinations. 30 students from each grade who obtain least scores in this assessment are selected for remedial sessions and are called CNAS. Midline assessment is conducted to track the progress of CNAS. Finally, Endline assessment is conducted to measure the improvement in learning levels of CNAS.

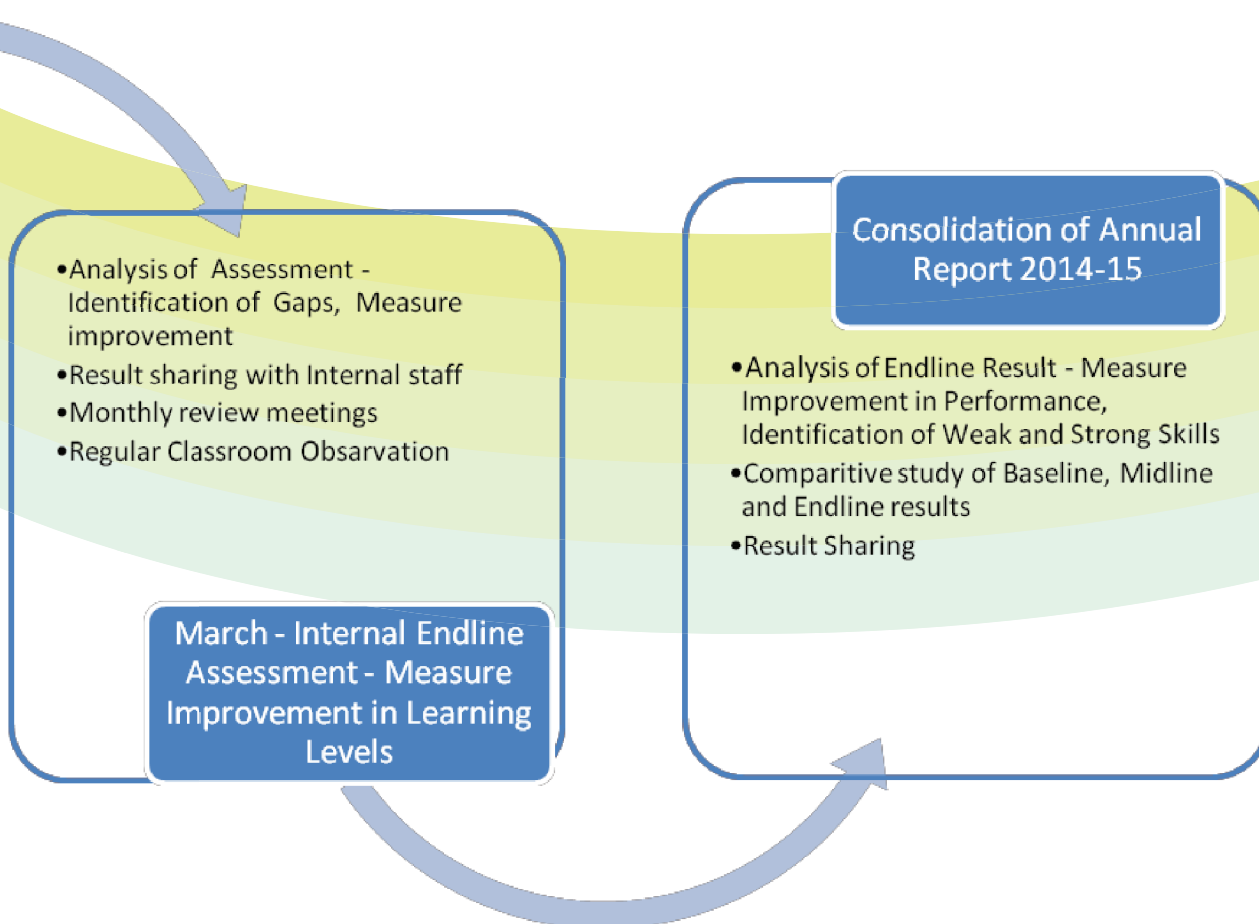




## External Assessments conducted by EI (Educational Initiatives)

EI conducts its Baseline Assessment in a sample of Direct Intervention Schools and Hand-holding Schools. It takes a control group of schools for comparison of performance. EI selects one section from Grade III and one section from Grade V from each direct intervention school. These sections consist of both CNAS and Non-CNAs (children who do not receive remedial support). It also conducts Endline assessment to measure the overall progress of the programme.

The purpose of the Internal evaluation by SARD is to measure improvement in performance of CNAS, whereas the purpose of External Evaluation by EI is to measure the relative improvement in performance of CNAS as compared to performance of Children who do not receive remedial support. Both agencies conduct assessments only for two subjects - Mathematics and Language, because the remedial sessions are provided for these two subjects only.





## 2.5 Advocacy

### SARD's Strategy for Advocacy

SARD's commitment to ensure that every child has access to quality education has led it to continuously endeavor the identification of the gaps and the provision of solutions to it, the mainstreaming of the approaches and innovations, the sharing the best practices and advocacy with the government to replicate the approaches by adopting and adapting them. It aims not to build parallel system to the existing structures, but emphasizes on addressing the gaps through convergence between all the key stakeholders and building upon a common platform for a unified intervention.

The broad ideology of SARD behind its advocacy is two pronged where SARD advocates for ensuring availability of facilities as per stipulations/provisions envisaged, on the other hand SARD evolves a model activity with ideal inputs, showcasing quality changes and advocates for adoption as policy. This process has earned SARD a place in the planning process of MCD where allocation of specific resources for advancing innovations have been possible.



## In Delhi

SARD developed its own model of pedagogy to improve the learning levels and to integrate pioneering innovations in the education field at all levels, in consultation with the technical support from leading educational institutions like, NCERT and SCERT(s). This envisaged inculcation of a reading culture and improvement of reading proficiency among the children. SARD has also ensured participating in books fairs organized by the National Book Trust of India (NBT). To disseminate and to share the diffusion of this learning on a periodical basis with the political stakeholders and other representatives from allied government departments, SARD has been organizing the interface meetings at the local governance level with active participation from Ward Councilors, Directorate of Education of Municipal zone, District Education Officers and School administrators.

SARD believes that the teachers on roll in the schools should be able to take ownership of their classrooms and SARD's pedagogical skills and innovative Teaching learning Material that has been imparted to them through the periodical teachers training conducted by SARD in close cooperation with DIET(District Institutes in Education & Training) and are voluntarily encouraged to become the nodal persons or SARD's ambassador to disseminate the learnings.

These learning have been disseminated by SARD in various national and international forums on various occasions.

At present, deliberation is under way with the North MCD Delhi administration to upscale the SARD – MSDF model for improving learning levels that could provide a transformative change in the learning level outcome in all the MCD children

SARD's endeavor is to create more opportunities to learn and to sustain conducive learning environments through building child friendly schools using various techniques. Like the BaLA (Building through Learning Aid) concept, integrating the innovative use of ICT in its schools etc. These efforts were appreciated from other state governments like Haryana and efforts have been made to replicate the present SARD – MSDF Learning Improvement Models have been adapted for mainstreaming in Haryana to address the learning needs.

## In Gujarat

SARD's educational Intervention in Gujarat has adopted 10 villages where the focus is on education of girl children in addition to enabling access of education to boys. Two interventions focusing on Remedial aspects and ensuring retention of girl children for continued education in schools are underway. At senior secondary levels, SARD emphasizes that the girl children take up to higher education from there, for which encouragement drives are organized with an handholding enabled with higher educational institutions. These platforms are also utilized for enabling exposure visits of MCD officials from Delhi for learning their class room innovation

concepts practiced. This project is sponsored by for Solaris Chemtech in Bhuj district of Gujarat.

### In Maharashtra

Similarly, SARD is enabling Remedial education at elementary levels, where quality education aspect is addressed in seven schools in Butibori, Nagpur,

Maharashtra in the catchment areas of a power project initiated by M/s. Reliance (ADAG) Industries.

These efforts of SARD's advocacy at regional and national levels shall remain consolidated, refined and disseminated at appropriate forums nationally and also internationally.

## 2.6 Way Forward

### Handholding Phase of SARD –MSDF Partnership

To ensure the sustainability of quality of learning in schools the present SARD and MSDF intervention has made a headway from a direct mode of intervention in providing remedial teaching to children in need of academic support towards the handholding mode of intervention. This handholding mode of expansion in schools aims at strengthening the MCD teachers to be fully equipped in improving the learning outcomes of all the children in multi-level classroom in a MCD school through SARD's innovative pedagogy and child friendly classroom process. This mode will facilitate teachers to enhance their motivation and harmoniously engage students in doing their particular tasks. This process of building teachers' capacities is aimed at making them as future trainers, where SARD ensures that 30-40% of teachers are engaged in this mode when handholding is ensured.

### State of Art Institute for Capacity Building of Teachers

To achieve that the teachers are able to address the multilevel and multi grade classrooms and provide for inclusion and equity, SARD has been supporting the Delhi Municipal Corporation in setting up of State of Art Institute for



Capacity Building of teachers. It also aims at the integration of the use of innovations and technology in ICT and extend its applications to different thematic areas and subjects and other curricular and co-curricular activities.

## Development of Series of Modules on CCE

SARD's content development section is also engaged in drafting and preparing a

series of modules/manuals, data banks in consultation with panel of experts from different academic educational institutions. This material is being developed covers grade and subject specific content, to support the unaddressed provisions for evolving (already under process) Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) as mandated under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.



## 2.7 Conclusion

The aim of SARD is to work for academically weak children and to support a system (here it is MCD) to effectively and continuously provides services to address the learning levels of these children in an equitable, inclusive and sustainable way. The process envisages on building capacities of stakeholders on varied processes by promoting innovations and the outcome of service delivery shall be with optimal quality. These concepts to be self-propelling and is dynamic to the emerging needs.

