

# Monthly Musing

**JANUARY-2026 EDITION**

## Welcome To Nss's World!

Welcome to Neev Shikshan Sanstha's Newsletter, your go-to source for our monthly activities and news. We're thrilled to have you on board! At the end of the newsletter, we have a small request from you, so please read it till the end. As always, we love hearing from you, so feel free to reach out with any questions or feedback. Enjoy the read!

## Pages Of Progress



- Empowering Education Leaders
- Strengthening Implementation
- Think, Count, Learn
- Beyond Academics
- Math Moments
- The Rural Review Meet
- PSEI Progress Meet
- Toy Topia
- Empty Corners to Learning Corners
- Outside the Classroom Box



## Monthly quote

**“STRONG EARLY FOUNDATIONS ARE KEY TO REDUCING LEARNING GAPS LATER.”**

**-DR. RENU SINGH (EARLY LEARNING & POLICY EXPERT)**



## Upcoming Event/Interesting Facts

- FLN Event
- Trainings with NGO Collaboration

### • *Did you know?*

*The ‘Wooden Blocks’ children use in preschools today were designed by Caroline Pratt over 100 years ago!*

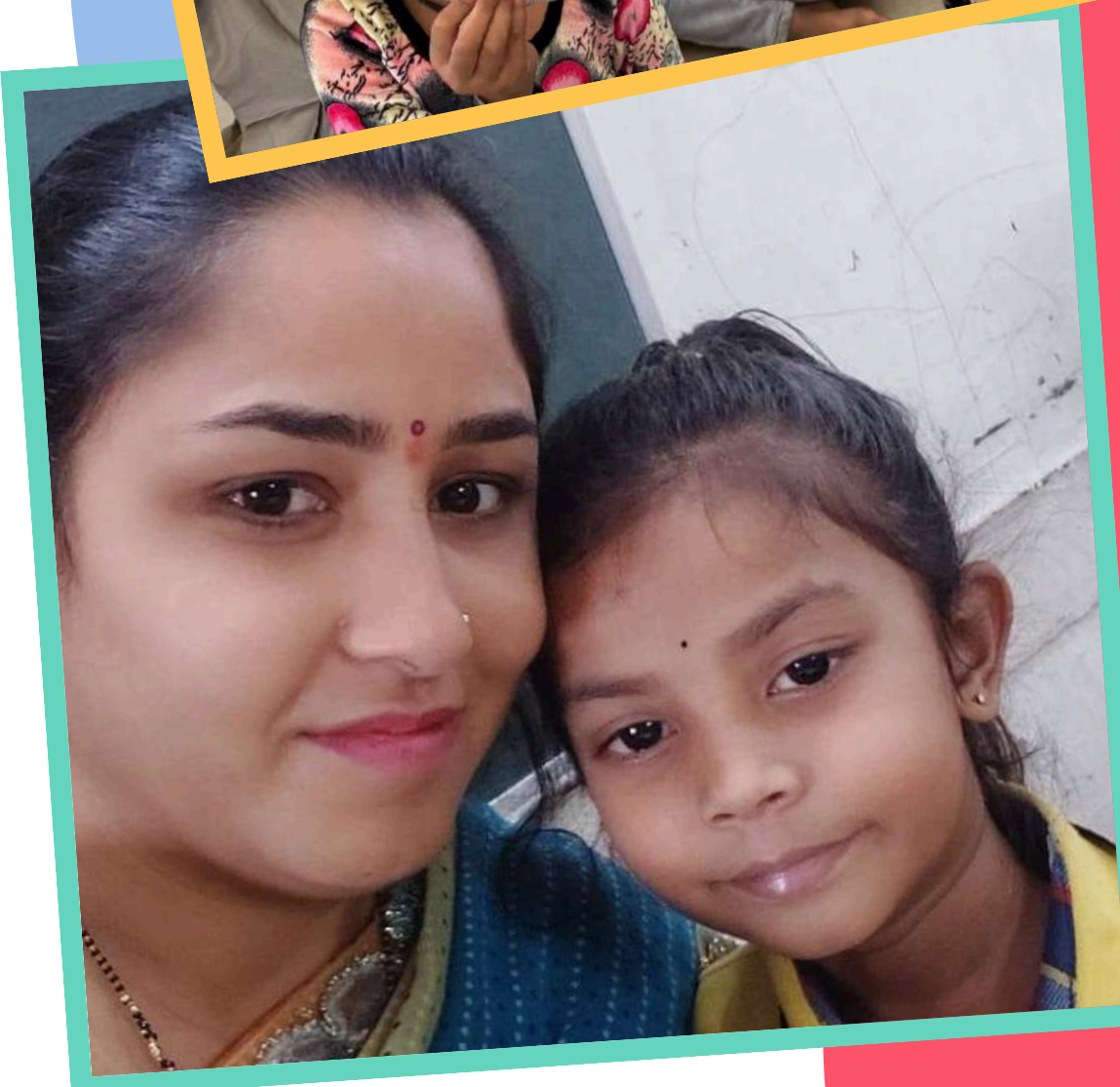
## Messages from Mentor

### /teacher/NSS member

“જ્યારે બાળક પ્રથમ વખત સ્કૂલમાં આવે છે અને પહેલો દિવસ હોય છે, ત્યારે ઘણી વખત તે રડતું હોય છે. ઘણા બાળકો પહેલા ક્યારેય સ્કૂલ ગયા ન હોય અને સીધા જ સ્કૂલમાં જોડાય છે, તેથી તેમના માટે ક્લાસનું વાતાવરણ નવું અને અજાણ્યું હોય છે. આવા સમયે અમે બાળકો સાથે રમકડાં અંગે વાત કરીએ છીએ, તેમની મનપસંદ વસ્તુઓ વિશે પૂછીએ છીએ અને પ્રાણીઓ તથા શાકભાજીના ચિત્રો બતાવીએ છીએ. અમે બાળકોને પૂછીએ છીએ કે તેમને કઈ રમતો ગમે છે. ધીમે ધીમે અમે તેમને પ્રોત્સાહન આપીએ છીએ, ઉત્સાહ વધારીએ છીએ અને ક્લાસના વાતાવરણ સાથે પરિચિત કરીએ છીએ. આ રીતે બાળકો ધીમે ધીમે સ્કૂલના વાતાવરણથી વંચિત થાય છે.”

On their first day at school, many children feel scared and overwhelmed. To help them feel comfortable, we talk about toys and favourite games and show pictures of animals and vegetables. With gentle encouragement, children gradually adapt, connect with the classroom, and start their learning journey with confidence.

**-Sonal Gandhi (Teacher, Geeta Mandir Vidhyalaya)**

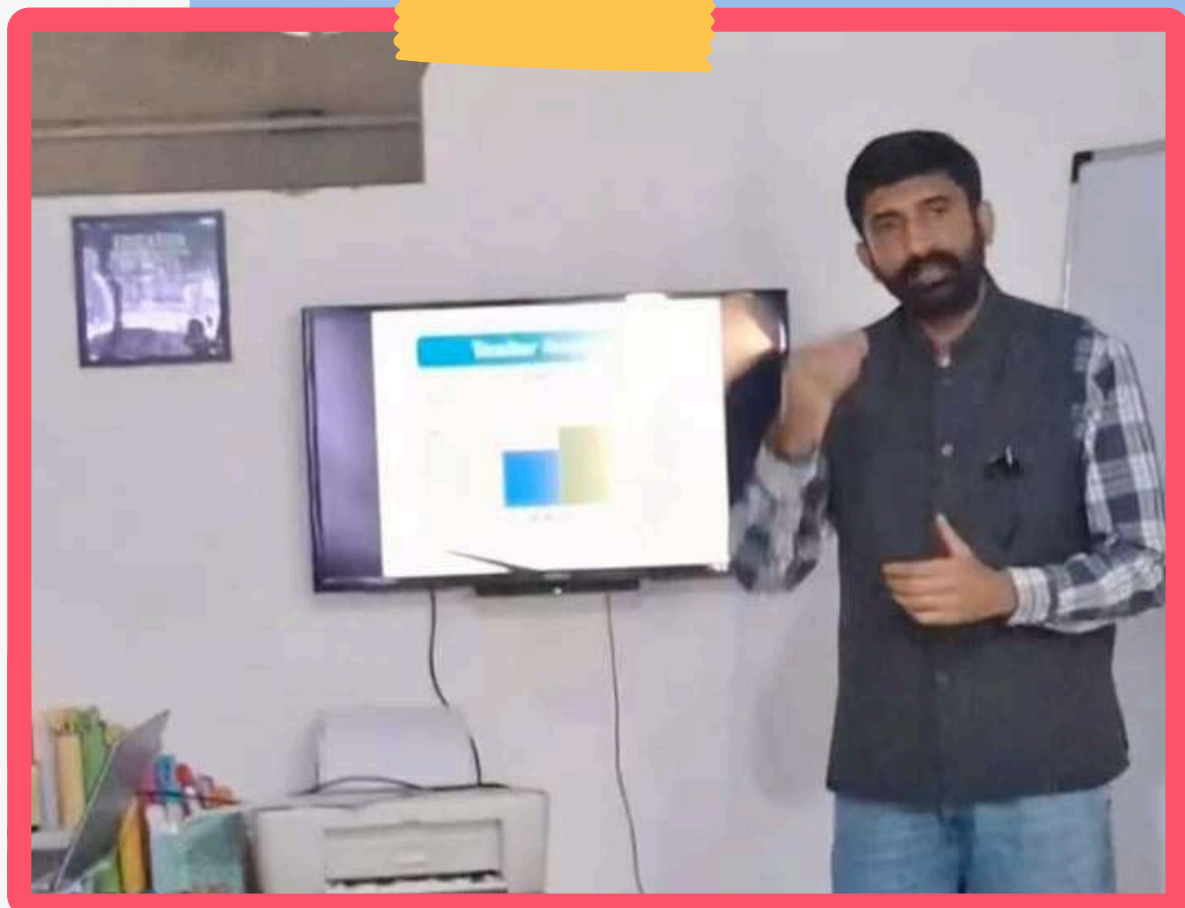




# EMPOWERING EDUCATION LEADERS

NSS team organised a School Leaders Meet to review the progress of key programme components across partner schools. The session focused on strengthening principal understanding of the Unnati framework, including FLN (Foundational Literacy & Numeracy), TLC (Teaching Learning Circle), and TLM (Teaching Learning Material). Discussions highlighted uneven clarity among school leaders regarding certain components and monthly NSS activities. Key practices such as Gupshup targets, Circle Time, OLD (Oral Language Development) activities, Read Aloud, and Art and Expression were reviewed in detail. Teachers' average scorecards were presented to support data-driven discussions. The team also shared updates on upcoming initiatives like Capsule Workshop for year 1 and 2 teachers, year-end planning, Vriddhi Purashkar, and TLM distribution. Principals discussed challenges related to teachers managing multiple responsibilities and viewing programme tasks as an extra workload. Concerns about irregular checklist submissions and low WhatsApp group engagement were raised. In response, a simplified monthly checklist was introduced by the NSS team. It was agreed to conduct refresher orientations and share individual teacher scorecards for better follow-up.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to improve coordination and strengthen implementation across schools.





# STRENGTHENING IMPLEMENTATION

The NSS team organised an Alumni School Principal Meeting to review the progress of the Unnati programme across partner schools. Discussions focused on strengthening understanding of key components such as Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), Teacher Learning Circle (TLC), Teaching Learning Material (TLM), and monthly NSS activities. It was noted that clarity on activities like Gupshup targets, circle time, workshops, and classroom practices varied among schools. Video reflections emphasised the need for continuous teacher upskilling and improved instructional methods. Data revealed that nearly 30% of Grade 2 students struggled with basic literacy skills, with a noticeable learning gap between Grades 3 and 4. While TLC meetings were held regularly, they lacked structured planning and follow-up. Classroom observations were also found to be inconsistent. Teachers shared challenges in managing multiple responsibilities. In response, refresher orientations and a simplified monthly checklist were introduced. TLC meetings will now be more action-focused with regular feedback mechanisms. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to strengthen leadership and effective implementation of the Unnati programme.





# THINK, COUNT, LEARN

NSS team conducted a four-day Workshop at Savali, bringing together nearly 212 Anganwadi workers with the shared objective of strengthening early learning experiences for young children. The sessions focused on building practical classroom skills through two key modules – literacy and numeracy – designed to support foundational learning in an engaging and child-friendly manner.

The workshop emphasised interactive, hands-on learning, encouraging participants to actively engage in activities, discussions, and reflections based on real classroom situations. Through playful methods and simple teaching techniques, educators explored new ways to nurture curiosity, confidence, and foundational skills among young learners.

Throughout the sessions, the trainers shared practical strategies and easy-to-implement tools that Anganwadi workers could apply in their daily teaching routines. The discussions highlighted the importance of making learning joyful, meaningful, and consistent in early childhood settings.

The workshop was well received, with participants appreciating its relevance and practical value. By the end of the four days, educators felt empowered and motivated to implement innovative learning practices in their Anganwadi centres, transforming everyday moments into positive and impactful learning experiences for children.





# BEYOND ACADEMICS

Team attended a workshop on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), organised by Aura Education Trust. The session brought together educators, professionals, and representatives from different schools and organisations to explore the concept, significance, and practical application of SEL.

The workshop began with a detailed introduction to what social-emotional learning is and why it is vital for individuals and institutions alike. We were shown how SEL aligns with educational and organisational frameworks and were given insights into ongoing projects that implement SEL practices effectively.

The session was highly interactive, with hands-on activities that encouraged us to reflect on real-life scenarios where SEL plays a crucial role. We discussed various cases highlighting the need for social-emotional skills and watched informative videos that illustrated the impact of empathy, emotional intelligence, and behaviour on personal and professional growth.

The importance of values, ethics, and behavioural awareness was emphasised, along with concepts such as behavioural icebergs. Stress management and coping strategies were also covered, providing practical tools to navigate challenging situations thoughtfully.

Overall, the workshop offered a comprehensive perspective on why SEL is essential not just for individuals, but for schools and organisations as a whole. The session was engaging, insightful, and left us with actionable strategies for emotional intelligence, empathy, and balanced behaviour in our everyday interactions.





# MATH MOMENTS

A one-day mathematics workshop was organised at Zenith School by NSS, bringing together teachers from grades 1 to 12. The session began with a focus on developing pre-math skills in children, highlighting the foundational abilities that are essential before introducing formal mathematical concepts. Teachers explored practical methods to strengthen these skills, ensuring that children build confidence and curiosity in numbers.

The workshop then moved on to the concept of place value. Educators engaged in hands-on activities designed to make learning interactive and fun for children. Through creative exercises and demonstrations, teachers experienced firsthand how to simplify complex ideas and make them relatable. The session emphasised why understanding place value is critical in mathematics and shared strategies to help students grasp it effectively.

Lively discussions and collaborative exercises kept the energy high throughout the day. Teachers left the workshop inspired, equipped with practical tools and innovative approaches to bring mathematical concepts to life in their classrooms.

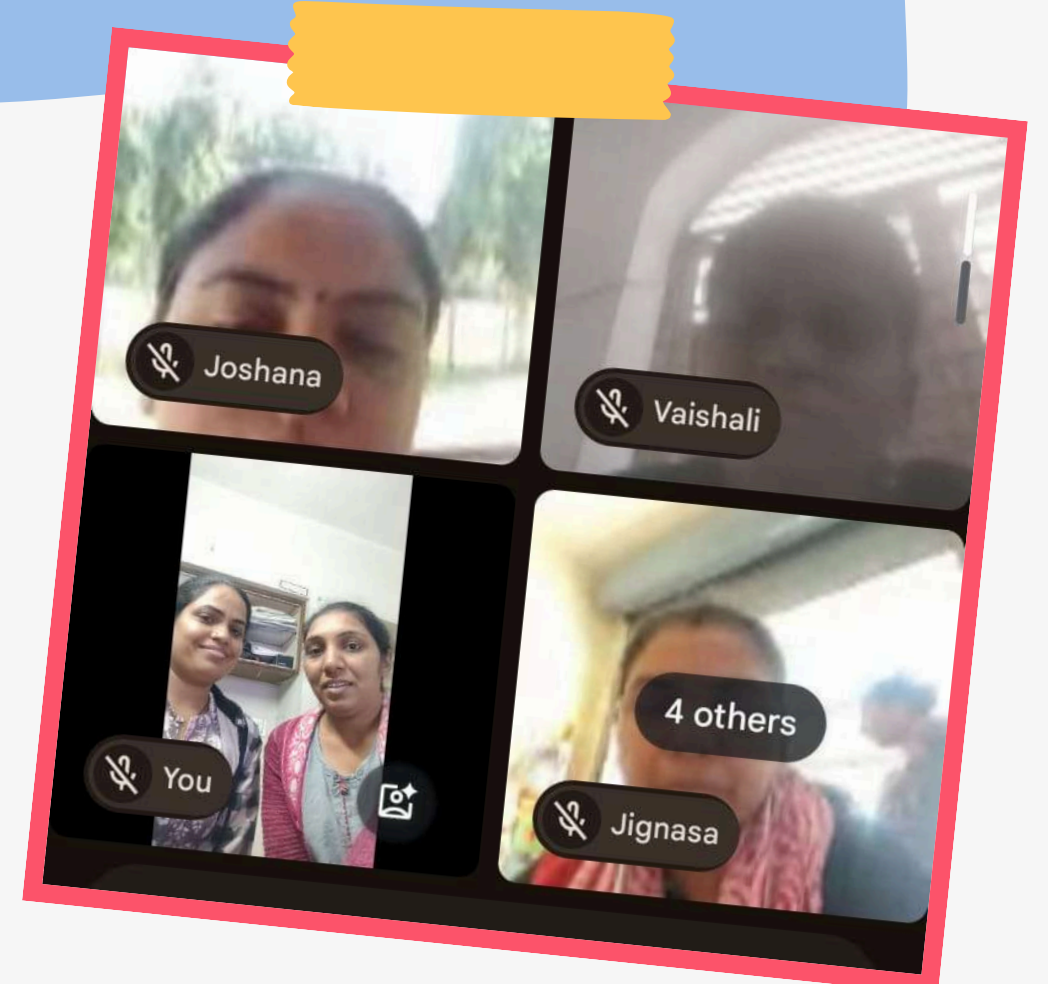
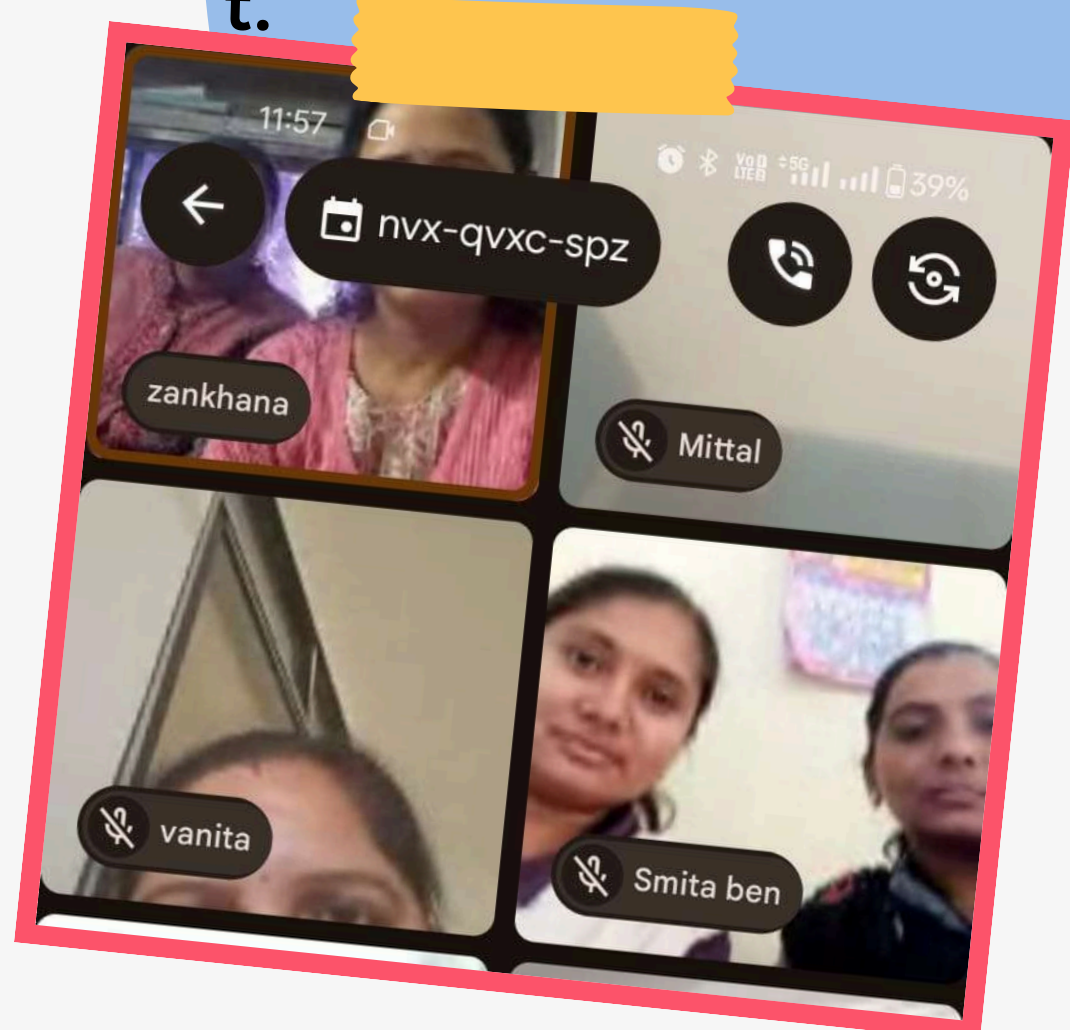




# RURAL REVIEW MEET

Rural PSEI Monthly Meeting was held to review ongoing practices and strengthen MI Plan implementation across Anganwadis. The session began with a positive sharing activity, where PSEIs appreciated one another, fostering a supportive atmosphere. The main focus was on the progress of Circle Time, which has been initiated in most centres with varying consistency. While some Anganwadis reported regular practice, others faced challenges due to BLO duties and new teacher appointments. The importance of consistent implementation and sharing photographic evidence in the WhatsApp group was emphasised. The previous MI Plan was reviewed with a focus on systematic follow-up and improvement. Special attention was given to reorganising the Four Corners setup and effective use of TLM. PSEIs were encouraged to repair or recreate damaged materials to maintain quality learning spaces. The Teacher Assessment Google Forms process was clarified, highlighting quarterly assessments through five separate forms. The PSEI scoring system was explained, based on actual classroom practices and evidence. Specific concerns from Dabhoi and Shinor centres were addressed, focusing on daily TLM use and regular play sessions. The integration of ICDS materials within learning corners was reiterated. The meeting concluded with planning for the February theme to enhance engagement and implementation.

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# PSEI PROGRESS MEET

Urban PSEIs participated in a monthly review meeting to reflect on the progress of MI Plan implementation and academic practices. The third MI Plan was reviewed, and it was shared that progress was limited due to PSEIs' involvement in BLO support activities. The “Mari Vikas Yatra” plan will continue, with PSEIs taking responsibility for monitoring and ensuring systematic completion. The fourth MI Plan, focusing on daily routines, rules, and labelling, was introduced, with guidance on preparing micro-points for field implementation.

The team emphasised continuing previous MI Plans alongside new ones and discussed improving the organisation and use of Four Corners Game materials. PSEIs were instructed to prepare weekly Circle Time questions for Anganwadis to ensure consistency. The Teacher Assessment Google Form process was clarified, stressing accurate field-based reporting. MI scoring was reviewed and linked strictly to actual performance and consistency.

Theme-based planning was strengthened by gradually adding updates and integrating NSS activities within daily themes. Module 6 implementation will be directly led by PSEIs, along with mock sessions. The meeting concluded with a focus on better planning, coordination, and strengthening classroom practices for the coming month.





# TOY TOPIA

Team inaugurated the toy library at Sama-9 Anaganwadi.

We started our pilot from one of our Anganwadi Classrooms in the month of January, and soon the concept caught fire, and we have expanded to FOUR LIBRARIES; four of which are running in communities. As the parents see the child exploring newer things, engrossed in play and not glued to a screen, their hope is to have one such library in almost every locality. A toy library is a community resource where toys, games, and play materials are lent out to children and families, similar to how books are borrowed from a traditional library. They often promote the importance of play in child development, providing a space for children to explore, learn, and have fun in a supportive environment.

NSS team inaugurated a Toy Library at Sama-9 Anganwadi as part of a pilot initiative to promote play-based learning among young children. The concept was first introduced in one Anganwadi classroom in January, where it received an encouraging response from both children and parents. Observing the positive impact, the initiative was gradually expanded, and currently six Toy Libraries have been established, out of which four are actively functioning within community spaces.

The Toy Library serves as a shared community resource where children and families can borrow toys, games, and play materials, similar to a traditional library system. It aims to highlight the importance of play in early childhood development by providing opportunities for exploration, creativity, and joyful learning in a safe and supportive environment. Parents expressed appreciation as they noticed their children engaging in meaningful play activities, exploring new concepts, and reducing screen time. The growing demand from communities reflects a strong desire to establish Toy Libraries across more localities in the near future.





# STORIES FROM FIELD



“STORIES OF GROWTH AND HOPE

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# EMPTY CORNERS TO LEARNING CORNERS

At Anganwadi Centre Sadhli 5 in Shinor taluka, the space once felt quiet and empty.

Though ICDS had suggested creating four learning corners for group play, nothing had been set up. The toys and notebooks stayed locked away in a storage box, and children came only occasionally.

The NSS (Neev Shikshan Sanstha) team saw this as an opportunity to bring change. With guidance from their resource person, Vikram Bhai (PSEI) chose Sadhli 5 and began building the four learning corners with care and purpose. Slowly, each corner took shape, filled with colourful toys, storybooks, puzzles, and learning materials. The once-unused materials were brought out and placed where they belonged.

Soon, something beautiful started happening.

When the NSS team visited again, the Anganwadi was full of life.

Children were laughing, playing, reading pictures, and exploring every corner with excitement. The Anganwadi worker shared how things had been before. Most children didn't come regularly, as their parents took them to the fields to look after younger siblings. Out of 15 registered children, only 7 or 8 used to attend. But now, the story had changed. Children began coming every day, even bringing their younger brothers and sisters along. Attendance grew so much that it crossed the registered number.

The storybook corner became a favourite. Children picked up notebooks on their own, looked at the pictures, and confidently described what they saw. In the play corner, little hands built buildings, DJs, and creative shapes with puzzle blocks, learning while having fun. Even the Anganwadi worker smiled with pride. She shared that earlier she didn't know how to use the materials properly, but through the four learning corners, she too had learned something new.

The once quiet Anganwadi now shines with creativity, excitement, and active learning





# OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM BOX

At Baroda High School, early learning has become more joyful and effective through the innovative efforts of a dedicated teacher who introduced play-based methods for teaching alphabets. Understanding that young children learn best through hands-on experiences, the teacher moved beyond traditional chalk-and-board instruction and designed simple yet engaging activities to make learning fun.

Through games like musical chairs, running races, and bowling pin activities, children were encouraged to recognise and recall alphabets while actively participating. Each activity combined movement with learning, helping children improve their memory, focus, and confidence in a natural and enjoyable way.

As children laughed, played, and learned together, they developed a strong interest in language and classroom participation. This creative approach successfully transformed alphabet learning into an exciting experience, proving that when education is blended with play, it becomes more meaningful and impactful for young learners.

