

Education >

Teaching beyond textbooks: How CSF is bringing joy and AI literacy to Indian classrooms

From foundational learning to AI literacy, this Delhi-based nonprofit is helping reimagine what inclusive, joyful, and equitable education looks like in India's public schools.



Saranya Chakrapani

453 Stories



SS

Add a preferred

III

SOCIALSTORY

Brands ▾ | Resources ▾ | Stories ▾ | YSTV ▾

can be heard singing lessons aloud, with their teacher Babita Verma playing conductor. This is just one of the ways Verma makes foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) enjoyable and accessible.

Verma's methods are inspired by Mission Ankur—a state-level foundational learning programme launched by the Madhya Pradesh government in 2022 and supported by Central Square Foundation (CSF), a Delhi-based nonprofit working across 11 Indian states and supporting governments in strengthening foundational learning and numeracy (FLN) through systemic, evidence-driven reform.

Mission Ankur in MP aims to transform the early years of education (Classes 1-3) by embedding joyful, evidence-based practices into the public school system.

Verma started her teaching journey in Palwat, a village in Madhya Pradesh's Barwani district, where she taught for six years. In 2015, she moved to EPES Dugdha. With no easy transport options, she walked nearly five kilometres each day to reach her school. She has remained clear and unwavering about her commitment: to show up for the children in the village, regardless of weather, terrain, or infrastructure challenges.

From building teacher and mentor cadres capacity to enabling **edtech** learning in low-resource contexts, CSF focuses on ensuring that every child—regardless of background—can gain strong foundational skills in reading and numeracy.

As the operational backbone of Mission Ankur, CSF has helped roll out FLN pedagogy materials, blended teacher training, and structured assessment frameworks across around 80,000 schools in Madhya Pradesh. In Uttar Pradesh, it has supported over 1,12,400 schools, training nearly 1,93,000 primary teachers, all aligned with the goals of the NIPUN Bharat Mission and NEP 2020.

Also Read

III

SOCIALSTORY

Home can be a classroom too

Through the initiative, it has partnered with Chimple, a Global Learning XPRIZE-winning learning app was implemented by Sutara Learning Foundation and the Bharti Airtel Foundation. The nonprofit noted that a teacher-led home learning pilot across five districts revealed promising results—a 0.25 standard deviation improvement in mathematics among Grade 1-2 students, especially those starting from lower baselines.

“Doing their matching, written and colouring exercises at home, the children learn independently and quickly, without the pressure and anxiety of answering in class,” says Anita Devi, a Class 1 teacher at Satya Bharti School in Karora, Haryana. “As teachers, we also learnt to evaluate each child's strengths differently,” she tells *SocialStory*.

Post-pandemic recovery

In the wake of the pandemic—which severely disrupted learning, particularly in rural India—CSF intensified its work on FLN through state-owned missions.

In Bihar, it helped launch Mission Daksh, which now supports around 30 lakh children in classes 3-8, many of whom are still catching up. In Telangana and Uttar Pradesh, it supported the design of continuous mentoring and classroom observation systems to enable real-time course correction in teaching.

Preparing for an AI-powered future

CSF launched AI Samarth in October 2024 to cater to the educational needs of the future. It is an ambitious AI literacy initiative developed in partnership with Google.org. The programme aims to empower over 5 million students, teachers, and parents in government and affordable private schools to engage meaningfully with artificial intelligence.



SOCIALSTORY

Gupta, Project Director for EdTech at CSF. “AI Samarth marks the first step in equipping them to become active co-creators and future leaders who will shape the next wave of AI and technological innovation.”

The AI Samarth Curriculum Framework, being developed by the Wadhvani School of Data Science and AI at IIT Madras, is based on fieldwork across government and affordable private schools as well as inputs from K-12 teachers. The content stack will include curriculum-aligned videos, lesson plans, teacher guides, and assessments—initially available in English, Hindi, Bengali, Odia, Telugu, and Marathi, with plans to include more languages.

Importantly, the programme recognises that AI literacy must include both teachers and parents. While CSF is currently developing an AI curriculum for educators, it aims to equip parents with accessible resources in local languages to reinforce responsible tech use at home.

As India moves towards its Viksit Bharat 2047 vision of inclusive and technology-led development, CSF aims to create sustained awareness across the education ecosystem, enabling students, educators, and parents to engage with AI responsibly and effectively in classrooms and daily life.

(The copy was updated with corrections.)

Edited by Kanishk Singh

[Free AI Learning ›](#)

[Rural Literacy ›](#)

[EdTech ›](#)

[Mission Ankur ›](#)

III

SOCIALSTORY

[Brands ▾](#) | [Resources ▾](#) | [Stories ▾](#) | [YSTV ▾](#)