



# A cultural transformation: Kranti Nagar

Kranti Nagar, Thane- This settlement accommodates around 800 families. Majority of the community includes Muslim families. When SA started working in this settlement towards implementation of its OHOT model, we faced tremendous amount of difficulties & challenges during our mobilization activities. It was observed that mobilizing children was relatively easier whereas it was not as easy for mobilizing women and adolescent girls. This was mainly due to the conservative approach that's borne by the community in general and we could feel the resistance being expressed by the community towards their engagement in mobilization activities especially with women & adolescent girls. Typically, girls and women would refrain from talking or interacting with men other than their family. Women failed to get permission from their husbands to attend any mobilization activities during the initial phases of our work here. We started with mobilizing the adolescent girls first through the FGDs and workshops to get them talking and to assure them that this initiative was only going to benefit them in all respects. The community also lacked a common gathering space.

The only community space available in this settlement was the mosque. According to Muslim conventions, mosque is a sacred place where women and young girls are not permitted to enter. The Moulavi of the Mosque was also reluctant to grant permission for any activity to be conducted here. We eventually went on to discuss with the Moulavi and requested him to allow us to use the upper storey of the mosque.



Activity being conducted in the mosque

This upper storey was earlier assigned for giving religious teachings to the children within the community. We were successful in convincing the Moulavi, that the adolescent girls would only enter the upper floor that too for activities which were to bring betterment to them, their dignity, health & safety along with privacy and on the longer run be more able women to take care of their families and live a better upgraded standard of living! Since that day we were fortunate enough to have his support for conducting activities here with children & adolescent girls and they would also let in our staff which comprised of 2 women. This has proven to be a major transformation and a huge cultural change that has been observed here in Kranti Nagar. It has not only widened the vision of the community but also brought about a great transformation in their ideologies and the way they look at their culture!

