

# THE DESH APNAYEN

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | APRIL 2023

*Creating alert, informed and active citizens*



**ACTiZEN**<sup>®</sup>  
An initiative by DESH APNAYEN

**DESH  
APNAYEN**



# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A remarkable group of men and women laboured with extraordinary courage and dedication to produce the magnificent Constitution of India. The Constitution that they created was both an optimistic and a realistic one. It was a testament to their deep love for our country and respect for all its citizens.

However, the Constitution is as effective as we make it. Quite like an individual, no country is perfect. The ability to tell right from wrong, the courage to acknowledge that a wrong has been committed and the collective resolve to fix it - these are all crucial for the health of a nation.

Our country celebrated its 74th Republic Day on 26th January. A republic must, at the very least, have perpetually vigilant citizens who act as watchdogs, monitor their representatives and retain the right to contest any law or policy made on their behalf, constructively and with a collaborative, problem-solving spirit. This is what will give depth to our democracy, taking us closer to our vision of realising Democracy 2.0.

Desh Apnayan's avowed intention is to create such ACTiZENS. We have been working hard to shape and nurture students from all kinds of schools across the country. In this newsletter, we present to you stories of change reported by the students we work with in some of the private schools of Mumbai. Also included are snippets from The Annual Desh Apnayan Awards Ceremony, which was held recently to recognise the efforts of our partner schools, amidst several dignitaries.

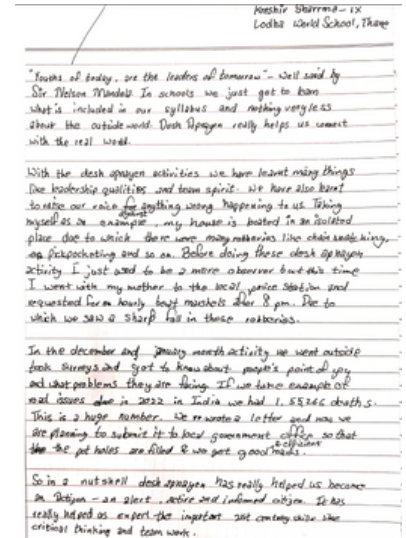
## STORIES OF CHANGE

In the month of January, we met with the President and Vice President of The ACTiZENS' Club along with some Club members from five of our Mumbai-based partner schools. Pawar Public School generously hosted the gathering, which was aimed at collecting specific examples of how the Club members may have grown or benefitted from the monthly activities.

While a large number of students reported an improvement in certain skills, such as communication and collaboration, we were heartened to learn that some of them took actions to help someone in need or to solve an issue that needed attention.

Presenting below some of the ACTiZENS:

### A CATALYST FOR CHANGE



**Kreshiv Sharma**, a resident of Thane's Balkum area, is a student at Lodha World School. He was concerned about the increasing incidents of street robbery - chain snatching and mobile phone thefts - in his locality. He urged his mother, Suhani Sharma, to visit the local police station and request help. After discussing it with other building residents, Kreshiv's parents and neighbours wrote a letter and submitted it to the Kapurbawdi police station, requesting regular beat marshall patrolling for the safety of residents.

Ms. Sharma told us, "I am not sure where Kreshiv got the idea from but I am very happy that he thinks beyond academics and is proactive about creating change. Beat marshall patrolling began in our area and we did not hear of robbery incidents again."

Reflecting on the incident, Kreshiv emailed us:

"Desh Apnayan Sahayog Foundation's ACTiZENS' Club has influenced my life significantly. Before participating in the Club activities, I was merely an observer and was afraid to speak against violations of our fundamental rights. But now I am an ACTiZEN - an alert, informed and active citizen - who raises his voice when something goes wrong."

*Kreshiv's simple act highlights the power of active citizenship and the impact that individuals can have on their communities. Kudos, Kreshiv!*



Yuvanshi Modi



Anvay Tambe



Jheel Gandhi



Vihaan Mulik



Smayan Panjwani



Lesha Jain



Neel Sanghavi



Riya Khandelwal



Anushree Koli



Eshita Dhuwad

## "FROM A LITTLE SPARK MAY BURST A FLAME." - DANTE ALIGHIERI

Sometimes it only takes one tiny spark to ignite a fire of change. **Yuvanshi Modi** from Pawar Public School, Dombivali wrote, "While doing one of the activities, I began feeling guilty about the ways in which I might be contributing to the waste-related problem in the country and that's when I decided to change. I have started segregating waste now."

Her schoolmate **Anvay Tambe** wrote, "Before becoming a member of The ACTiZENS' Club, I would look at the waste around and say our country is full of waste. But now, I pick up the waste and try to create awareness."

A number of factors have bred a culture of habitual littering in our country. It takes honesty and courage to admit one's mistakes and to change one's behaviours.

Here's a special shout-out to three students from Pawar Public School, Kandivali - **Jheel Gandhi, Vihaan Mulik and Smayan Panjwani**. When we invited the Club members from their school to narrate the shifts they may have experienced after taking part in our programme, they wrote that they had stopped throwing empty plastic wrappers on the street.

"Earlier, I used to throw the empty chips and chocolate wrappers out of my kitchen window. But after doing one of the Club activities, I decided that I will never do it

again. Now, I search for a dustbin when I am out and even pick up plastic bottles and packets that are lying on the road and put them in the dustbin. This is my story of change." – Smayan Panjwani

**Lesha Jain** from Lodha World School, Thane wrote that earlier, when she came across garbage on the street, she ignored it but now she tries to pick it up and throw it in the nearest bin. **Anushree Koli** shared, "I have now realised the importance of little things. I now remember to turn off the lights when not in use."

The impact of The ACTiZENS' Club does not seem to be limited to its members alone. **Neel Sanghavi and Riya Khandelwal** have begun speaking up, gently encouraging litterers to be more responsible. **Eshita Dhuwad** has convinced her family to minimise their use of plastic, demonstrating how our flagship programme's interventions have sent ripples beyond its primary members.

"Desh Apnayen Foundation has helped me become an ACTiZEN. I now try to stop people from wasting food and electricity. I encouraged my mother to stop using plastic bags." - Eshita Dhuwad

## THE POWER OF INFORMATION



Shourya Gavankar



Rishabh Sohoni

As **Shourya Gavankar** from Pawar Public School, Kandivali participated in one of the monthly activities - about legal documents that Indian citizens are required to have, it empowered him to explain the potential benefits and steps to enrol for Aadhaar to his building security guard. He added, "[Also, I spotted my 15-year-old neighbour driving a car. So, I went up to him and conversed about the minimum age for driving being 18 years.](#)"

Similarly, **Rishabh Sohoni**, also from the same school, initiated a conversation around the ration card with the daughter of the gardener who looks after a nearby lawn tennis court that he frequents. His mother, Nitisha Sohoni, told us, "[I am glad that my son talks to and plays with children from different socio-economic backgrounds. Not all children do that.](#)"

## AN EDUCATOR'S TESTIMONIAL

"I can do things you cannot.  
You can do things I cannot.  
Together we can do great things."  
- **Mother Teresa**

Clubs aim to provide a platform for children to showcase their skills and talent and gain more knowledge. Desh Apnayan's ACTIZENS' Club has also helped teachers to enhance students' learning through interaction and discussion.

Activities like 'Mock Elections' gave our students hands-on experience. It sensitised them on electoral rights and familiarised them with the electoral registration and voting process. I remember when the activity was on, the atmosphere was full of excitement

and curiosity. On D-day, as new voters, children were enthusiastic; they had lined up near the polling stand and were nervous about who their new leader would be.

As a teacher, I recall that during the 'Pass the Bill' activity, my students learnt about the different stages involved in the process of a bill becoming an act in Parliament. The activity helped the students hone their communication, conflict-solving and decision-making skills.

I also find it important to highlight 'The ACTIZEN Pledge Challenge' activity where students shared their perspectives with their classmates regarding the social and environmental issues they pledged to address. The students made a commitment on several topics, including safeguarding cultural heritage locations, advocating for girls' education and improving waste management practices. Moreover, they started segregating school waste into three dustbins, i.e. dry, wet and recyclable.

The activities also allowed students to take on leadership roles. It helped them evolve and expand on the skills that the National Education Policy 2020 speaks of - communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, innovation, global citizenship, cultural citizenship and social responsibility.

As an educator and facilitator, I could see drastic changes in their approach towards certain things in society. Children have become agile and dynamic in their attitude. They have learnt to value others' viewpoints. Through the 'Interdependence' activity, they realised how dependent they were on others for minute things.

Principal ma'am, Ms. Revati Wali has always been part of the activities and shared her anecdotes to help children relate more with the activities. I would like to sum up by saying that Desh Apnayan's programme has enabled us educators to instil various skills in students to build a



better future for them. It is a place to learn and grow, a place where great futures start each and every day.

**Ms. Shaili Shah**  
Assistant teacher,  
Pawar Public School,  
Kandivali





# The Desh Apnayen Annual Awards

As part of The ACTiZENS' Club, students from our partner schools participate in a new activity designed by us and conducted by their teachers every month. The monthly activities culminate in an awards ceremony.

## BHOPAL AND GOA

To celebrate the efforts of the 15 government schools of Bhopal that were part of the 2022-23 pilot of The ACTiZENS' Club, we organised an awards ceremony on 7th February. To felicitate the most engaged government schools of Goa, we held a ceremony on 10th March.

We are deeply humbled by the kind and encouraging words spoken by the dignitaries and look forward to expanding the programme to many more schools in Madhya Pradesh and Goa in the upcoming academic year.



*"The work that Desh Apnayen Sahayog Foundation is doing is very unique. Their efforts towards instilling a sense of active citizenship among the students are commendable."*

**- Mr. Nitin Saxena, District Education Officer, Bhopal**

*"Desh Apnayen Foundation has created wonderful activities which involve learning by doing. I hope this collaboration will continue and help our students become engaged citizens."*

**- Mr. Shailesh Zingde, Director of Education, Government of Goa**



*"What Desh Apnayen wants to achieve is the need of the hour. The activities created for the schools and the response from the teachers and students so far is praiseworthy. Our students are delighted to have a platform to express themselves."*

**- Mr. Nagaraj Honnekeri, Director, State Council of Educational Research and Training, Goa**

The screenshot displays a Zoom meeting grid with 30 participants arranged in 6 rows and 5 columns. The participants are as follows:

- Row 1: Vinod Bredhar, Revathy, Irene Nairappa, Saheli Mahto, Secondary Section, Prapti Nachan Dhatade, SRIVIDHYA A.
- Row 2: Anand Gajapathi, RENUKA WADIA Pawar Public, Anshika | Delhi University, Althea Souza | Desh, Shailika Nair (PPSO), PRINCIPAL-OMIS, Sujita Parai.
- Row 3: darpan, Ashu Tiwari (DCMP), Tanzila -HVS global aca., Dr. K. KAMRUL, Shanmuga Priya Jnt cha., KAVITA S, Dr. Gajima Tallang.
- Row 4: Laksh Mishra, Mani Tandon, Nidhi Sood DCMP, Narfay polchenala, SANJAY KUMAR VERMA, Darik (Gopalak), Rajesh Nayak | Desh A.
- Row 5: Rina Anand, Seema Tripathi (CPS), Tulsika, NCPS Bhilwari, divya pracha, Nainrata Nair PPS Kandi, Srividhya Arvindan.

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# THE DESH APNAYEN PLEDGE

आओ हम सब देश अपनायें,  
“चलता है” को दूर भगायें,  
भविष्य बचायें, भाग्य बनायें।

India belongs to all its citizens.  
It belongs to me,  
it belongs to us.

क्षणिक राष्ट्रीय भावना के आगे बढ़ें।  
अगर हम नित्य देशहित के बारे में सोचें तो कठिन दिन  
देखने ही न पड़े!  
क्या आप यह शपथ लेंगे? औरों को भी दिलाएँ।

I have a right to live in peace  
and purposefully.  
But it is possible only if I live responsibly,  
I work for its progress, peace and protection.

भारत देश हमारा है, मेरा है, तुम्हारा है,  
इसकी रक्षा-उन्नति में, भाग्य-विकास हमारा है।

Along with the government meant for such action,  
learn to protest when they need a correction and  
together again till we see the correction.

अगर चाहे सुख-शान्ति और स्वइच्छा का जीवन,  
जरूरी है हम सब पर, कर्तव्यों का भी पालन।

India can remain ahead and great,  
only when we remain great, I remain great.

चुनें हम अच्छी सरकार, और दें उसे पूरा सहकार,  
हो उचित तो करें विरोध, देशहित की यही पुकार।

If I respect the law even if some don't,  
maintain cleanliness even if others don't,  
keep my promises, have quality in all my work,  
respect others' rights and help those without work.

वादों का सच्चा, हर काम हो अच्छा, ऐसा हो हमारा  
नाम,  
पर अधिकार की रक्षा, दीन की सेवा, सर्वोपरि हमारा  
काम।

I am capable, I am strong,  
I belong to East, West, North and South.

कोई करे या न करे, न्याय पालना मेरा धरम,  
गंद नहीं, देर नहीं, ऐसे हो हमारे करम।

I pledge to make our country strong,  
I pledge to make India proud!

मेरा देश सबसे पुराना, फिर बनेगा राष्ट्र महान,  
हम तुम नित्य बनें बेहतर; बेहतर, बेहतर और महान।

मेरा प्रान्त पूरब-पश्चिम, मेरा ही है उत्तर-दक्षिण,  
देश की प्रगति मेरा ज़िम्मा, लेता हूँ ये प्रण-प्रतिक्षण।

जय हिंद। जय हिंद। जय हिंद।



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