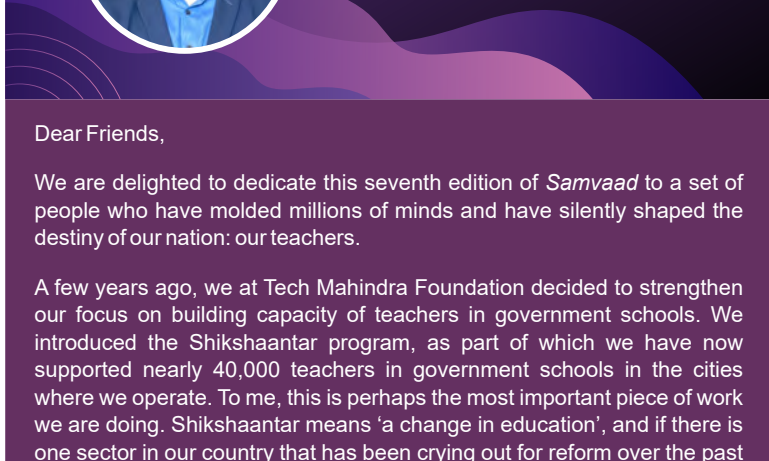


**KEYNOTE**



Dear Friends,

We are delighted to dedicate this seventh edition of *Samvaad* to a set of people who have molded millions of minds and have silently shaped the destiny of our nation: our teachers.

A few years ago, we at Tech Mahindra Foundation decided to strengthen our focus on building capacity of teachers in government schools. We introduced the Shikshaantar program, as part of which we have now supported nearly 40,000 teachers in government schools in the cities where we operate. To me, this is perhaps the most important piece of work we are doing. Shikshaantar means 'a change in education', and if there is one sector in our country that has been crying out for reform over the past decades, it is the education system. And we strongly believe that teachers are absolutely central to the idea of education reform.

Over the last year-and-a-half, our teachers have been put to the ultimate test of having to embrace a mode of teaching they had scarcely been used to. As schooling went online, globally, we realized the need to assist teachers to help them cope with the rigors of teaching through the virtual mode. As days and weeks of the pandemic turned to months, we sensed the requirement to introduce mental wellness sessions for teachers. The perilous task of safely navigating through cyberspace – and the threats that come with it - led us to improvise a training session on cybersecurity for teachers. And since the online mode of training allowed us to transcend the barriers of geographies, we were able to expand the footprint of Shikshaantar to teachers in the states of Uttarakhand, UP, Bihar, and even Tripura in the northeast.

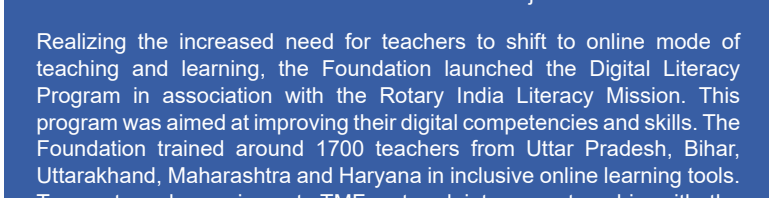
Teachers have truly been the unsung heroes of the pandemic. They have demonstrated remarkable ability to adapt to a completely new way of operating, shown amazing resilience and forbearance in ensuring that our children are not completely deprived of learning, and have also attended to the nation's call for helping out during the times of crisis. COVID has been particularly harsh on schools – while most other aspects of our lives are now getting back to a semblance of normalcy, our schools have understandably been cautious in reopening. Our children were already facing a severe learning deficit; what we are now confronted with is a full-blown learning crisis, as despite the best efforts of the teachers, children's learning – especially of the early years – has scarcely been able to cope with the enormity of this pandemic. Getting our children back on the learning curve will be an astoundingly humongous task, and at the forefront of this battle will be the teachers. We at TMF are both humbled and privileged that we are geared to work with the teachers, albeit in a small way.

You will read about all these efforts in Shikshaantar in this edition of *Samvaad*, and will also meet with an accomplished practitioner in the teacher development space, Dr. Romila Soni from the NCERT. We have also recently launched a special program that would help teachers respond appropriately in case of a medical emergency situation in schools – this too is featured in this edition. And as we look forward to seeing our classrooms and school playgrounds come alive with the delightful sounds of children once again, we are committing ourselves to redoubling our efforts and ability to support the teachers in the process.

With best wishes of peace & well-being for each one of us, and a huge word of gratitude for our teachers,

Chetan Kapoor

**DIGITIZING TEACHING-LEARNING**



In the midst of the pandemic, when connecting with students remotely was a challenge, the education team at TMF supported around 12,000 primary teachers from East and North Delhi Municipal Corporation in creating the student worksheets and assessments across all subjects.

Realizing the increased need for teachers to shift to online mode of teaching and learning, the Foundation launched the Digital Literacy Program in association with the Rotary India Literacy Mission. This program was aimed at improving their digital competencies and skills. The Foundation trained around 1700 teachers from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra and Haryana in inclusive online learning tools. To create a larger impact, TMF entered into a partnership with the Government of Tripura as well as with Quest Alliance in Bihar, to achieve this goal.

Upskilling of 150 teachers from Uttar Pradesh on issues related to cyber security included digital citizenship, preventive online measures, online safety for children and guidelines for parents. At the same time, this transition to online teaching took a toll on the mental health of teachers and to address this concern around 500 teachers from East and North Delhi Municipal Corporation were trained on various aspects of mental health. Sessions on child safety, social and emotional well-being were conducted with 1500 teachers in line with the objective of creating happier and safer classrooms.

**TEACHERS AS UNSUNG HEROES**

The pandemic not just led to learning crises in schools, but also created social and emotional crisis amongst teachers. Many teachers faced personal grief but put up a brave face while teaching in the classrooms. Teachers in government schools were assigned duties to distribute dry-rations and cooked meals to migrant workers and to create ration baskets to ensure proper distribution and documentation in various communities. The teachers' fraternity engaged in tasks they had never done before, such as contributing their time at airports, vaccination centres and even morgues. They also accompanied ASHA workers in data collection for vaccination surveys, and to maintain records for future reference.

With this, we were reminded of the industriousness, resilience, and dedication that teachers bring to their work, and how they are not just the builders of a nation's future, but also the unsung soldiers who rise to the call of duty in a nation's hour of need. To acknowledge their commitment in each sphere, TMF expressed gratitude to all its In-service teacher cadre on the day of Teacher's Day by extending heart-warming personal notes as a token of appreciation.

**TEACHER TESTIMONIAL**

*"I've been working as a teacher with Municipal Corporation of Delhi schools for the past 23 years. Never did I imagine the world turning upside down due to Covid-19. For people like us, it meant stepping out of our comfort zones by switching from conventional teaching practices to teaching online. Thanks to the services provided by Tech Mahindra Foundation, I'm able to understand and use the online teaching platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet and Microsoft Teams proficiently."*

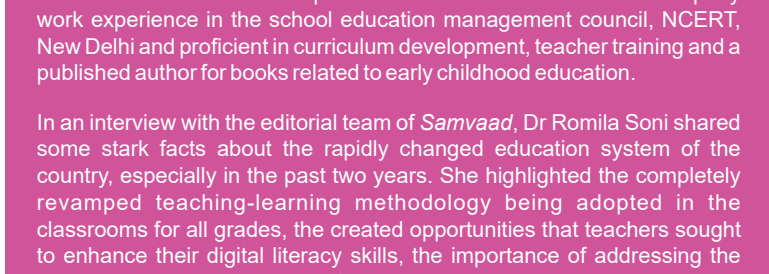
**- Kiran Sardana**

**PRIORITIZING MENTAL WELLBEING OF TEACHERS**

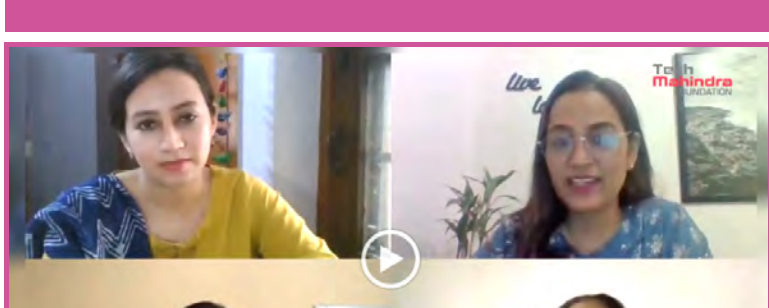
Our educators are perhaps the most important stakeholders in the public education system. In pre-pandemic times the teaching-learning process in a classroom was simpler. With online classes, adapting to newer methods of teaching became a challenge. The situation worsened in the absence of specialized courses for teachers to help cater to the emotional needs and well-being of the students. The manifold challenges faced by teachers required resilience and better mental preparedness. With schools still closed there is a heightened need to address this issue.

Schools being shut for over a year-and-a-half also has its own set of implications. Students of the same age group and classes can be found at different levels in terms of their learning competencies and also poor in their social and behavioural skills. Hence schools should reopen with proper planning to accommodate the social and emotional learning (SEL) component in their learning framework. A well-planned curriculum on SEL which caters to various needs of parents-students-educators can play the role of a catalyst in reviving the lost synergies.

Towards this end, TMF is planning to come up with a certificate course in Mental Health Counselling for teachers and facilitators.



**THE साम्वाद INTERVIEW**



Dr Romila Soni is an accomplished Associate Professor with exemplary work experience in the school education management council, NCERT, New Delhi and proficient in curriculum development, teacher training and a published author for books related to early childhood education.

In an interview with the editorial team of *Samvaad*, Dr Romila Soni shared some stark facts about the rapidly changed education system of the country, especially in the past two years. She highlighted the completely revamped teaching-learning methodology being adopted in the classrooms for all grades, the created opportunities that teachers sought to enhance their digital literacy skills, the importance of addressing the students' needs and the role of parents in early childhood development. She stressed on some of the initiatives taken by NCERT to address the learning gaps. Those include creating an alternate academic calendar, designing home assignments, connecting foundational literacy and numeracy to other developmental milestones of children and last but not least conducting online teacher training through NISHTHA - National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement -an initiative to build capacities of teachers and school principals at the elementary stage.

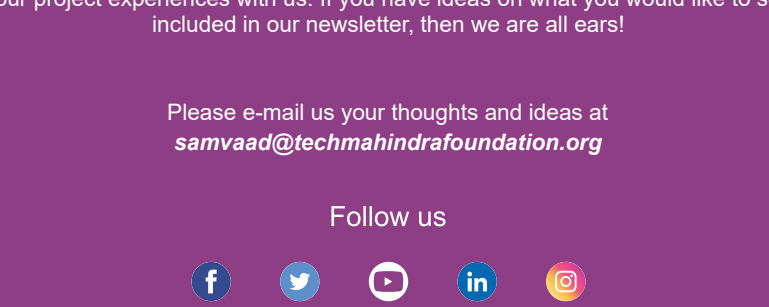


**SAAJHI SAMAJH**

The fourth edition of Saajhi Samajh organized on 13th September 2021 was dedicated to the theme 'First Aid in Schools: Role of a Teacher'. This was in line with the theme of 2021 'World First Aid Day' to spread awareness on first aid among teachers. Tech Mahindra Foundation released a research report *First Aid for Improving Safety in Schools: A Teacher's Perspective* focusing on how school premises can be developed as safe and conducive learning spaces from the point of view of teachers. The discussion around first aid and related topics such as CPR helped pave the way for conceptualizing a school safety programme for teachers as a way forward.



**ACCOLADES**



In recognition of the Foundation's efforts towards the Covid-19 humanitarian response, Tech Mahindra Foundation has recently received a host of awards. These include 'Mahatma Award', 'Rotary CSR Award' and bronze and silver awards in 'IHW Council CSR Health Impact Awards 2021'. These awards are also a tribute to the dedicated and unstinting support of TMF's healthcare warriors who were on the frontlines and supported society during a global crisis.

*Samvaad* is a quarterly e-newsletter. You can participate by writing an article or sharing your project experiences with us. If you have ideas on what you would like to see included in our newsletter, then we are all ears!

Please e-mail us your thoughts and ideas at  
[samvaad@techmahindrafoundation.org](mailto:samvaad@techmahindrafoundation.org)

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