

# Kurukshetra District Impact Report: A Three- Year Journey of Systemic Civic Learning (2022–2025)



Empowering Schools and Communities through Civic Learning



# Message from the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Haryana

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the contribution of Janaagraha in enhancing education, community engagement, and local governance in Kurukshetra district through its Civic Learning program.

Rooted in the district's long-standing tradition of knowledge and democratic values, this initiative has helped students develop an understanding of civic rights, responsibilities, and constitutional principles. By fostering sakriya (active) citizenship, it has encouraged learners to participate thoughtfully in school and community matters. Civic that it complements the existing education framework in a practical manner. Learning has been integrated within regular academic and co-curricular activities, ensuring

The district administration has played an important role in enabling this program by aligning it with school systems, academic calendars, and institutional processes. Support from block- and district-level officials has facilitated the adoption of civic learning practices by teachers and school leaders, ensuring sustainability and relevance.

The experience in Kurukshetra underscores the potential of constructive collaboration between civil society and government institutions in strengthening education and civic engagement. I am committed to exploring opportunities to build on this synergy and expand the reach of such initiatives across Haryana, enabling more students to benefit from structured civic learning and fostering informed, responsible, and engaged citizens throughout the state.

**Mr. Nayab Singh Saini**  
**Hon'ble Chief Minister, Haryana**



# Foreword

Civic learning is a critical foundation for preparing young people to participate meaningfully in a democracy. Over the past three years, the Civic and Social Action Project (CSAP) in Kurukshetra has shown how civic education, when integrated into the regular functioning of schools, can move beyond textbooks and become a lived experience for students and teachers.

Implemented in partnership with the District Administration, the Department of Education, DIET, and Janaagraha, the initiative has strengthened the facilitation capabilities of teachers, principals and DIET trainers to deliver experiential learning. What has been most encouraging is the shift we have observed among students: from noticing issues in their surroundings to taking initiative, engaging with Panchayats and local institutions, and working collaboratively to solve them. These changes reflect growing confidence, responsibility, and civic awareness among our learners.

Kurukshetra's experience offers useful insights for areas emphasized in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasises experiential learning, values education, community linked projects for life skills development. The district's journey demonstrates that when civic learning is embedded systematically—through teacher training, school-led projects, and regular reflection—it strengthens classroom learning as well as community participation. It also offers insights that may be valuable for the state as it explores ways to deepen value-based and participatory education across government schools.

This report documents the district's three-year experience and the lessons that have emerged from implementation. I acknowledge the efforts of teachers, principals, BEOs, DEO, DIET faculty and master trainers, along with Janaagraha as the district's knowledge partner. Kurukshetra's progress reflects what is possible when schools and communities work together to nurture responsible, informed, and active young citizens.

**Mr. Aman Kumar**

**-District Municipal Commissioner (DMC)  
Kurukshetra, Haryana (Year) 2025**



# Table of Contents



- Section 1. Why Kurukshetra? – The Starting Point**
- Section 2. The Three-Year Journey – From Pilot to District Model**
- Section 3. Stories of Change – Voices from the Ground**
- Section 4. Measuring Impact – What Changed**
- Section 5. Building Belief – The Human Side of Change**
- Section 6. From Classrooms to Systems – Institutionalising Civic Learning**
- Section 7. Looking Ahead – From District Proof to State Pathway**



Civic Learning Beyond Classrooms, Into Communities.- From Lessons to Lived Action





# Section

## 1

## Why Kurukshetra?

Kurukshetra, the land of the Bhagavad Gita is known more for its spiritual legacy than for its civic systems. A district where pilgrims visit temples and ghats in large numbers, and where fields of paddy and wheat stretch endlessly, Kurukshetra has long been associated with heritage and faith. Yet beneath this legacy lies a very different reality, one that reflects the urgent and complex civic challenges facing many districts across India today.



Rooted in Heritage, Responding to Civic Realities.



## 2

# Kurukshetra's Hidden Civic Realities



Kurukshetra today sits in Haryana's groundwater "red zone", with reserves sinking more than 30 metres in certain areas. Over-extraction for paddy cultivation, combined with erratic rainfall patterns, has pushed the water table to unsustainable depths. In villages across Pehowa and Shahabad blocks, borewells have gone dry, forcing farmers to dig deeper each year.

Compounding this is the annual cycle of stubble burning, which surrounds the region in smoke and particulate pollution every winter. Along with open waste dumping and unplanned urban growth, these practices have severely strained local ecosystems and public health. Rapid urbanisation has brought visible changes like expanding residential colonies, rising waste volumes, and stressed civic amenities. Urban reforms are underway, but the pace of growth has introduced new vulnerabilities in both towns and villages.



"We realised our children talk about pollution, but few connect it to their own surroundings their street, their drain, their air. That's where civic learning needs to begin."

**Mr. Vinod Kaushik**  
– District Education Officer (DEO) Kurukshetra

## 3

## The Enabling Conditions for Kurukshetra's Civic Learning Journey



**Institutional Commitment to Civic Learning :** The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) formalised a shared vision to strengthen civic learning in the district. The MoU was signed by Mr. Shantanu Sharma, Deputy Commissioner; Mr. Baljeet Singh Malik, District Education Officer; Dr. Namita Kaushik, DIET Principal; Mr. Shivkumar Menon, Program Head and Mr. Jitesh Pandey, Program Manager, Janaagraha

Even as these challenges intensified, Haryana emerged as one of the most reform oriented states in India's education landscape. The state was among the early adopters of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, embracing competency-based and experiential learning. The Saksham Haryana initiative aimed at improving learning outcomes through systemic reforms and demonstrated the state's commitment to innovation within public education.

In 2021-22, nearly 90,000 students shifted from private to government schools in Haryana, signalling growing public trust in the government school system. This momentum created an enabling environment for a program like CSAP (Civic and Social Action Program) that connects academic learning with real-world participation.

Kurukshetra, in particular, had a strong administrative ecosystem and a forward looking education leadership that was open to experimentation. The Deputy Commissioner, District Education Officer, and District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) jointly recognised that the civic and environmental challenges faced by the district required deeper behavioural change that is starting with young people. With over 770 government schools serving more than 3.2 lakh children, Kurukshetra offered both the scale and the diversity to test CSAP in real educational conditions from rural primary schools to semi-urban secondary schools.

## 4

## Understanding the Starting Point: The Civic Education Baseline in Kurukshetra

Before CSAP began in 2022, a baseline study was conducted to understand what students and teachers already knew about civic issues and where the gaps lay.

A survey of participating schools revealed critical gaps in civic awareness and participation:

- Only 14% of students identified air pollution as a civic issue.
- Barely 2% could correctly explain the concept of climate change.
- Less than half could identify the roles and responsibilities of an active citizen.
- Fewer than 50% reported having ever participated in any community or civic issue.

Students often associated civic learning only with morning assemblies, Swachh Bharat drives, or groups like NSS/NCC reflecting a fragmented understanding of what citizenship truly means. Teachers, too, lacked structured tools to help students connect civic issues with their everyday realities.

This was the starting point when Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy approached the district with an idea: to pilot a comprehensive, classroom embedded model of civic learning that went beyond awareness, one that nurtured reflection, problem-solving, and local action.



Listening to Classrooms Before Designing Solutions.- Students participate in the baseline survey to map civic awareness and engagement before CSAP implementation.

## 5

# Why Kurukshetra Was the Right Testbed for Civic Learning



"Unlike India's metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, or Kolkata that often dominate civic education conversations, Kurukshetra represents the typical Indian district:

A complex civic ecosystem where educational institutions, local governance and community life intersect, governed through close district-level coordination between education and administration."

## A District That Mirrors India's Civic Landscape.

Its manageable scale, combined with strong governance structures and a receptive teaching community, made Kurukshetra an ideal testbed for developing a model that could be scaled across Haryana's 22 districts. The challenges it faces like groundwater depletion, waste management, and environmental degradation mirror those of many other districts in the state.

Kurukshetra's successful pilot could therefore act as a proof of concept and demonstrating that when civic learning is embedded within the school system, it can strengthen community participation and civic responsibility from the ground up.



# 6

## Linking Kurukshetra's Initiative to Haryana's NEP-Led Reform Agenda

Kurukshetra's choice was also shaped by Haryana's broader commitment to education reform. Over the past few years, the state has invested heavily in strengthening teacher capacity, improving learning outcomes, and promoting experiential pedagogies through the Department of School Education and SCERT. Haryana's DIETs, including Kurukshetra's, were already engaged in competency-based training and classroom innovation.

This created a fertile ground for a program that links classroom learning with real-world application. Within this environment, civic learning aligns naturally with the state's priorities helping students not only understand civic issues but also practise agency, collaboration, and problem-solving.

Kurukshetra's administrative leadership and district education ecosystem made it a strong site to demonstrate how such an approach can work inside government schools. Together, these conditions placed Kurukshetra at the intersection of state reform momentum and district readiness making it a credible place to test and refine a civic learning model.



Kurukshetra as a Living Lab for Civic Learning in Government Schools



# Section 2

1

## The 3-Year Journey – From a Pilot to a District Model

When the Civic and Social Action Program (CSAP) began in Kurukshetra's government schools in 2022, it started small a few teachers, a handful of schools, and a shared goal: to make civic learning part of everyday teaching and action. Over the next three years, that modest start grew steadily, reaching more schools, training more teachers, and gaining stronger support from the district administration each year.

Over the next three years, the program expanded steadily, turning classrooms into spaces of dialogue, teachers into facilitators of change, and schools into hubs of active citizenship. The program's evolution from a small pilot to a district-ready model was marked not by scale alone, but by a deepening of trust, ownership, and systemic credibility.



Empowering Teachers, Activating Classrooms, Strengthening Democracy.

## Year 1: The Pilot — Testing the Idea, Building the Foundation of Trust



Students and teachers engage in early CSAP classroom activities, exploring civic issues through discussion and small, action-oriented projects during the pilot year.

The first year of CSAP in Kurukshetra began as a pilot across a small cluster of government schools with a few trained teachers. The focus was to test how civic learning could be integrated into classroom practice through activities, discussions, and small action projects.

The pilot was designed to be exploratory, not prescriptive. Sessions on civic themes like participation, empathy, and responsibility were introduced through activity-based learning, reflection, and classroom discussions. The early days, however, were not without hesitation. Teachers, accustomed to syllabus-driven instruction, found the open-ended, dialogue-based format unfamiliar. Students too were unsure how to engage with abstract ideas like active citizenship or collective responsibility.

At first, it was difficult to get students to talk about civic issues. But when we linked it to their everyday lives like waste, water, school discipline then they began to understand that being active citizens starts here, shared one early adopter teacher.

Small wins began to shift this uncertainty.

In one school, students organized a cleanliness drive after a class discussion on shared responsibility. In another, they formed groups to discuss how to keep school water taps from leaking. These early actions were modest, but they demonstrated something powerful that civic learning could inspire action when grounded in lived experience.

## Trust as the First Milestone

By the end of Year 1, teachers were not only implementing sessions but experimenting with them. The District Education Officer (DEO) and DIET faculty observed that children were becoming more expressive and collaborative. These visible changes are however small but built trust in the model.



The pilot phase surfaced three clear insights that shaped the district's conviction in CSAP.

1. Civic learning is strongest when it is rooted in students' lived realities.

Students showed markedly higher understanding when sessions connected climate change, waste, and local civic issues to their immediate environment.

Evidence: Awareness of air pollution increased from 14% to 84%, understanding of climate change improved from 2% to 20%, and students' ability to identify solutions rose from 42% to 67%.
2. Participatory, discussion-based facilitation significantly deepened engagement and comprehension.

Teachers consistently reported that students grasped concepts better when encouraged to discuss, reflect, and problem-solve in groups rather than only receive information.

Evidence: Critical thinking improved from 63% to 88%, and problem-solving abilities rose from 20% to 31%, demonstrating the value of dialogic learning over traditional lecture formats.
3. Trust and consistency were essential enablers of early adoption.

Regular classroom visits, on-call academic support, and responsive mentoring helped ease initial teacher hesitation and build acceptance for a new subject domain.

Evidence: 88% of students expressed a desire to attend more CSAP sessions, and teacher feedback indicated growing confidence in facilitating sessions across the term.

## Year 2: Deepening the Program — From Facilitation to Ownership

The second year of CSAP was about scaling the program and transforming the block into a centre of excellence, with a stronger focus on strengthening systems and institutionalising the program within schools. The learnings from Year 1 guided us to refine our approach and empowering teachers to lead activities and embedding CSAP into the regular functioning of schools.



From Trained Teachers to Civic Mentors- Scaling Civic Learning Through Teacher Leadership.

### From Trained Teachers to Civic Mentors

Building on the pilot's momentum, Janaagraha invested in deeper capacity-building. Teachers were trained not just to deliver sessions but to facilitate dialogue, mentor students, and co-create civic action plans. The Civic Learning modules were refined to make them adaptable to local contexts that further connecting themes like waste, water, gender, and participation to community realities.



## **The Emergence of Bal Sabhas**

Teacher-led reflection sessions and block-level review meetings created new feedback loops. The DEO's office became an active participant, reviewing progress and recognizing teachers who demonstrated innovation. Community participation also grew organically parents were invited to observe Bal Sabhas and participate in school cleanliness drives.



*"When students took charge, we saw genuine change — not because they were told to act, but because they wanted to."*

**Mrs. Nirmala Mamoria- Head Teacher GSSS Kasithal**



## Strengthening the Ecosystem

Year 2 marked a key milestone where the introduction of Bal Sabhas (student assemblies). These were not ceremonial events, but platforms where students discussed issues, proposed solutions, and collectively acted. For many schools, Bal Sabhas became a mirror of participatory democracy in action where children debated, voted, and implemented solutions.



Bal Sabhas: Citizenship in action



"By the end of Year 2, the program had moved from being facilitator-led to teacher-driven. Civic learning had stopped being Janaagraha's program it was now our program."

**Mr. Rishipal Mishra- Teacher GSSS Beholi**

## Year 3: Consolidation and Maturity — From Scale to Systemic Readiness

If Year 1 was about proving the concept, and Year 2 about deepening roots, then Year 3 was about maturity through consolidation.



## Teacher Leadership as the Core Engine

Teachers now led the full cycle of civic learning from classroom sessions to Civic Action Projects (CAP) and Live Action Projects (LAP). Many had begun mentoring peers, integrating civic learning themes into other subjects, and linking Bal Sabha learnings to real-world community issues.

In several schools, civic projects went beyond the classroom addressing issues like waste segregation, water conservation, and community awareness. These projects were not just symbolic; they represented students exercising agency, and schools acting as catalysts of local change.



When Young Voices Are Recognised by the System Deputy Commissioner Mr. Shantanu Sharma engages with students during the Bal Sabha, acknowledging their communication skills and student-led civic action projects.

## Systemic Signals of Change

Government ownership deepened. DIET faculty and Block Education Officers began anchoring training sessions, signalling an institutional embrace of the model.

Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks were strengthened with data showing measurable gains in student participation, collaboration and civic awareness. The District Education Office's continued endorsement of CSAP as a model for holistic learning positioned it within ongoing state-level education reform dialogues.

By the close of the third year, CSAP was not just a district intervention it was a proof of concept for how civic learning can be embedded in public education systems.



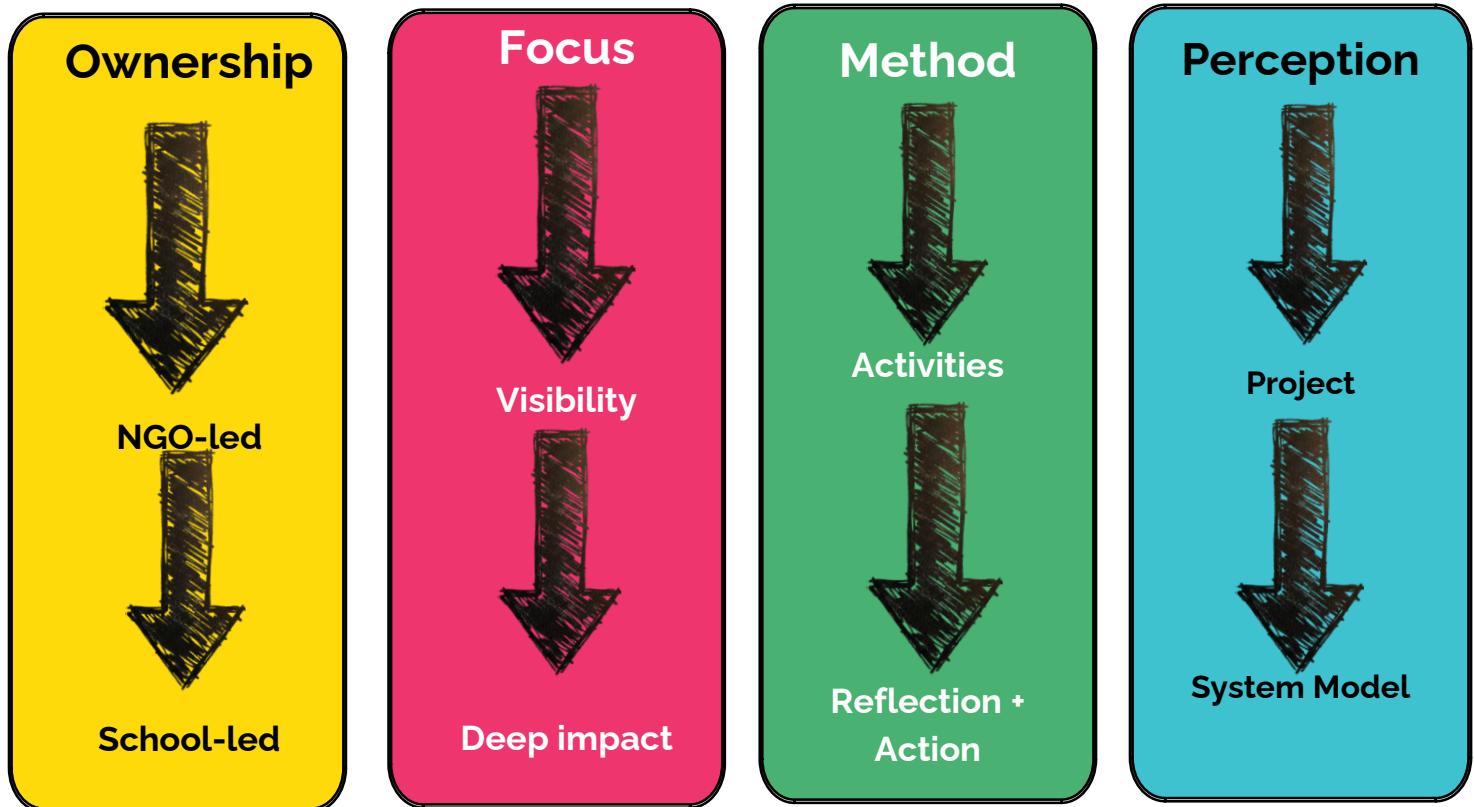
"The biggest shift is that civic learning is no longer seen as an extracurricular experiment. It is being recognized as essential to quality education."

**Dr Namita Kaushik- DIET Principal, Kurukshetra**



## Key Pivots Across the Three Years

The district began to engage more actively from supporting implementation to contributing ideas and leadership.



## How Learning Shaped the Journey

Throughout the three years, continuous evidence and feedback informed every evolution. Baseline and endline studies, teacher reflections, and student assessments helped identify what worked and what needed to evolve.

The learning loops were not just tools of evaluation; they became a way to continuously improve the program's design using real feedback from classrooms.

When data revealed gaps in student understanding of environmental issues, content was adapted. When teachers sought simpler facilitation aids, the program redesigned its manuals. Each iteration made CSAP more grounded, relevant, and credible.

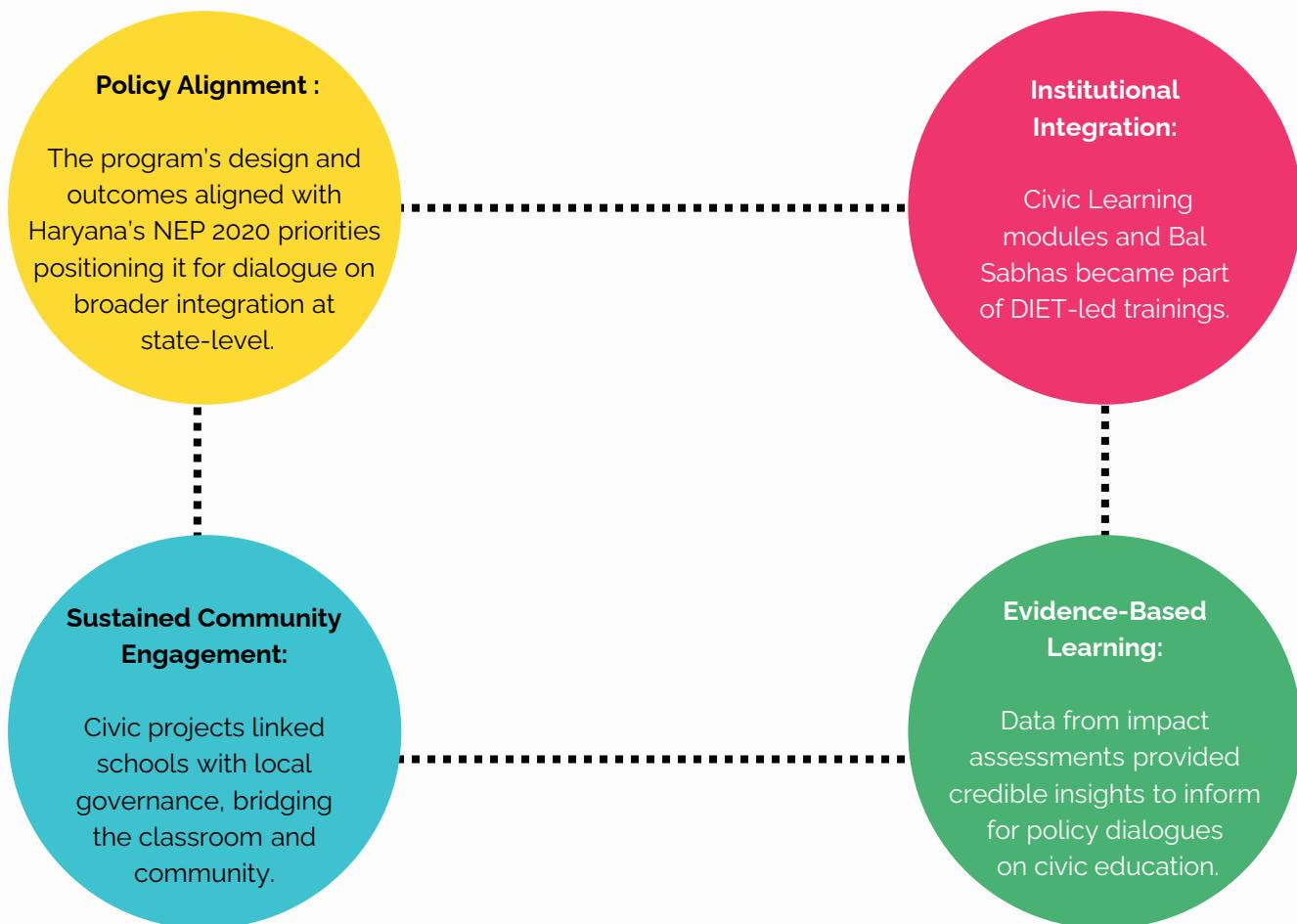
"It's not just that the program evolved it listened, adapted, and grew with us, shared by teacher who had been part of all three phases."

**Mr. Ram Behal- Teacher GSSS, Teora**



## 2 Signals of Systemic Maturity

By the end of the third year, CSAP had reached a new threshold one that extended beyond individual schools.



# 3

## From a District Model to a State Opportunity

Kurukshetra's story is not one of expansion alone; it is a story of depth, conviction, and collective leadership. In just three years, the district has demonstrated how civic learning can become both a pedagogical innovation and a systemic reform lever.



Proving What's Possible—From One District to the State.

"The idea of an active citizen is no longer a chapter in a textbook — it's becoming a lived experience in our schools."

**Mr. Vinod Kaushik- District Education Officer (DEO) Kurukshetra**

# Section 3

## 1 Stories of Change – The Heart of CSAP

CSAP's impact in Kurukshetra is reflected not only in numbers but in everyday stories from classrooms, schools, and communities. From the moment students first noticed overflowing water tanks in their schools to the collaborative problem-solving with local panchayats, these stories show how civic learning is slowly building a culture of active citizenship that is taking root as students, teachers, and community members work together to improve their surroundings. Its empathy in action.

At the core of CSAP's work is the belief that children, when equipped with knowledge, guidance, and platforms, can influence adults, communities, and systems. Students began to see themselves as stakeholders in their environment and society. Early hesitations gave way to curiosity, confidence, and the courage to speak up about issues that matter. They learned to observe their surroundings critically, identify gaps, and propose feasible solutions, all while navigating the challenges of limited resources and systemic constraints.

Teachers, too, have undergone a remarkable transformation. Initially, many were tentative about facilitating civic action, unsure how to guide students through real-world challenges. Through capacity-building workshops, Master Trainer-led sessions, and ongoing mentorship, teachers evolved into champions of civic learning. They not only guided students but also led initiatives that engaged communities, collaborated with local governance, and experimented with pedagogical innovations. This shift has been crucial: teacher ownership has amplified the program's reach, depth, and sustainability.



## 2

## Transforming Students: Agency, Confidence, and Civic Voice

In Kasithal village, students observed water overflowing from their school tank daily, wasting hundreds of litres each week. Instead of waiting for someone else to act, they mapped water points, fixed leaks with local plumbers, and launched a poster campaign urging conservation at home. Within weeks, water use dropped visibly, and the Panchayat invited the students to present their ideas for the village.



"At first, we never imagined that our voices would be heard—by the school principal, our parents, or the wider community. Today, we are known as the 'Water Warriors' of Kasithal."

**Jashan – Grade 8th Student , GSSS Kasithal**

Similarly, at GSSS Thol, students used nukkad nataks (street plays) to raise awareness about water conservation, blending props, slogans, and dramatic storytelling to communicate the urgency of water scarcity. They showcased the limited drinking water available using a simple bucket to represent Earth's total supply, making an abstract crisis tangible to villagers.



"When we perform, people stop and watch. It makes them think about everyday issues in the community."

**Komal – Grade 8th Student, GSSS Thol**

In GSSS Kirmach, students addressed a polluted village pond and rising thefts. Guided by their teacher, Babita Kumari, they organized community clean-ups, set up dustbins, and engaged with the Panchayat to install CCTV cameras. The students' proactive approach inspired ongoing community collaboration and visible change in public spaces.



"CSAP taught us how to communicate with the Panchayat and involve the community. Now, when I walk past the clean pond or see the cameras, I feel proud."

**Rhavya - Grade 10th Student, GSSS Kirmach**

# 3

## Teacher Champions: Mentorship, Innovation, and Civic Passion

Teachers like Mr. Anshul Khuranna (GSSS Thol) have also been transformed. A PE (Physical Education) teacher with a lifelong commitment to social causes, Mr. Khuranna saw CSAP as a platform to transfer knowledge, foster leadership, and spark innovation among students. He guided initiatives like water conservation projects, school cleanliness drives, and plans for composting and e-waste management.

“CSAP has taught the children how to lead, talk to adults confidently, understand government systems, and take ownership of their surroundings. It's shaping their personalities and their futures.”

**– Mr. Anshul Khuranna - Teacher, GSSS Thol**



Another example is Mr. Jagpal Singh, whose innovative pedagogy involved real-world civic exposure, helping students connect classroom learning with district governance, public funds, and local problem-solving. Students developed critical thinking and confidence while engaging in civic initiatives, reinforcing the link between knowledge and action.



“I see students approaching challenges not just as tasks but as opportunities to create change. They are learning responsibility, collaboration, and leadership.”

**Mr. Jagpal Singh- Teacher, GSSS Kasithal**

# 4

## Communities as Partners: Dialogue, Collaboration, and Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

CSAP's impact has extended beyond schools into villages and community structures, creating collaborative spaces where parents, Panchayats, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, teachers, and students come together. These forums allow communities to discuss pressing issues, co-create solutions, and witness the potential of young voices.



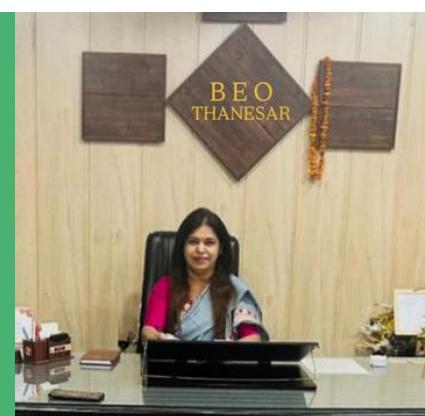
"The students' ideas carry weight now. When they present solutions to water scarcity or waste management, adults listen."

**Mr. Roshan Lal Ji – Sarpanch Baraut**

Bal Sabhas have become a critical platform for student voice and leadership, showcasing innovative solutions to local issues like deforestation, water scarcity, waste mismanagement, drug abuse, and gender inequities. Students present their work through gallery walks, debates, and interactive discussions, receiving feedback from SDMs, BEOs, nodal officers, and Sarpanchs. These interactions reinforce accountability and the importance of collaborative problem-solving.

"It was inspiring to see students identify real problems and propose feasible solutions. They are learning to think creatively and take responsibility for their communities."

**Ms. Aparna – Block Education Officer (BEO)  
Thanesar**





# 5

## Learning Loops and Program Evolution

CSAP's growth has been guided by iterative feedback and evidence. Early challenges in engaging teachers and students led to the inclusion of additional thematic modules, such as climate change, gender issues, and drug abuse. Focused Group Discussions (FGD) with teachers at the start of each cycle informed curriculum updates, training content, and LAP scheduling.

The program scale was strategically adjusted: from 50 schools in earlier phases to 25 schools with higher teacher-student ratios, ensuring depth over breadth. This pivot allowed CSAP to focus on schools with the infrastructure and commitment needed to implement meaningful Live Action Project (LAP), resulting in stronger outcomes and richer learning experiences.

Impact studies conducted by SATTVA, revealed notable gains in student participation, civic awareness, and collaborative problem-solving, particularly among early grades. Older students, while more aware of systemic complexities, sometimes struggled with action-oriented engagement. These insights are now driving teacher training on agency, empowerment, and addressing apathy, ensuring that every student can participate meaningfully.



Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and impact evidence informed key program decisions strengthening curriculum design, teacher training, and the depth of student civic action.

### Ripple Effects: Beyond the Classroom

The stories of CSAP reveal a ripple effect across schools, communities, and governance structures. Students bring lessons home, teachers influence peers, and Panchayats adopt student-led solutions. Every cleaned pond, nukkad natak, or water conservation campaign exemplifies the cumulative power of small, sustained actions. CSAP demonstrates that when education is designed thoughtfully, it can reshape civic consciousness, values, and behaviors, leaving an enduring impact on society.



“When we cleaned the pond, set up dustbins, or performed our play, we saw that change is possible when everyone works together. CSAP showed us that our voices truly matter.”

**Deeksha –Grade 10th Student, GSSS Kirmach**

## 6

## Reflections: Learning Across Contexts

Through CSAP, the contrast between elite and government schools has taken on new meaning. While resources and exposure may differ, the program has demonstrated that civic agency and leadership can flourish anywhere when students are given a voice, teachers are empowered, and communities are meaningfully engaged.

Across Kurukshetra, CSAP has shown that when learning connects with real-life action, it transforms not just classrooms but entire school ecosystems. Students identify and act on issues within their schools and communities, turning lessons into lived experiences. Teachers, through training and reflection, integrate civic values into daily classroom practices. Schools begin to see CSAP not as an external intervention but as part of their culture and rhythm.

The engagement of parents, panchayat members, and local institutions deepens community ownership, while ongoing collaboration with district and block education officials strengthens system-level support. Together, these efforts move civic learning beyond isolated initiatives towards a sustainable, scalable model for reimagining civic education across the country.



# Section 4

1

## The Numbers Behind the Change

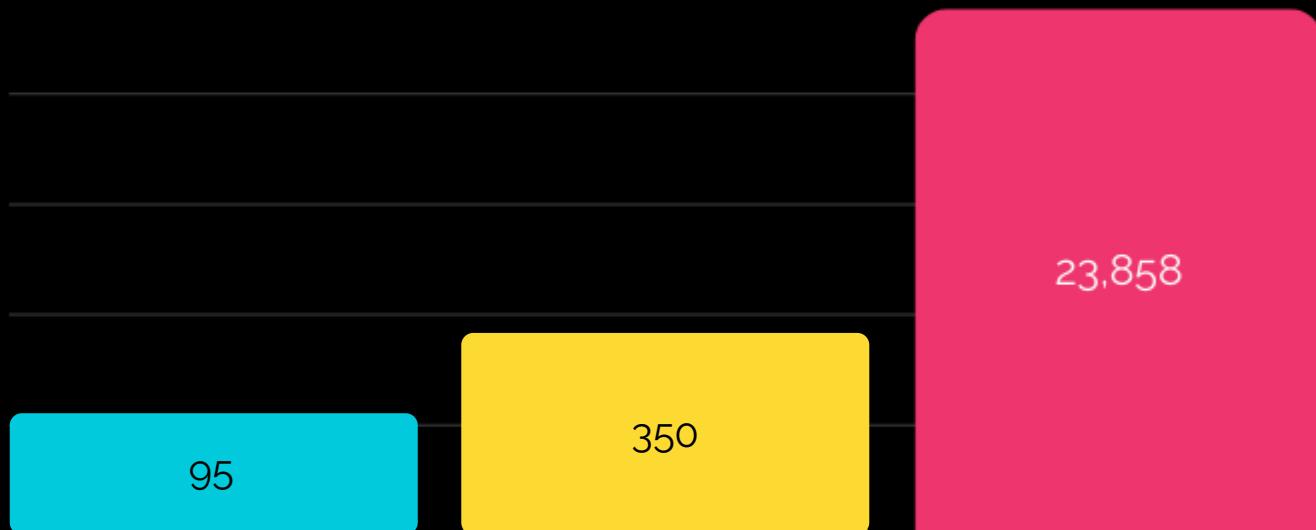
In its first year, the Civic Social Action Project (CSAP) was piloted in 20 schools, laying the foundation for civic learning and student-led action. In the second year, the program scaled up to 50 schools, focusing on both expansion and strengthening school systems. By the third year, CSAP deepened its engagement in 25 schools, emphasizing qualitative improvements and developing a comprehensive module to enable systematic integration of civic learning into the education system.

Over these three years, CSAP has engaged more than 23,858 students and over 350 educators, including teachers, heads of schools, and master trainers transforming civic learning from an idea into a district-wide movement in Kurukshetra. Behind these numbers lies a deeper story of systemic transformation of schools that have become spaces for participation, of teachers who have rediscovered purpose, and of students who now see themselves not as passive learners but as Sakriya Nagrik (active citizens) capable of shaping change within their communities.

CSAP's journey demonstrates that when civic learning is embedded meaningfully within the education system, it can do more than build awareness it can strengthen democracy from the ground up.

### CSAP 3 Years Total Engagement

● Schools    ● Educators    ● Students



## 2

## From Classrooms to Communities: A Living Curriculum

Across Kurukshetra's government schools, civic learning has moved beyond textbook civics to lived citizenship. Through Local Action Projects (LAP), more than 180 student-led initiatives have taken shape from climate awareness rallies to school-based waste management drives and health campaigns. Students across grades have engaged with distinct themes that link curriculum with real life:

- Grade 6: Water Conservation
- Grade 7: Climate Change
- Grade 8: Waste Management
- Grade 9: Health, Well-being, and Drug Abuse
- Grade 10: Gender and 21st-Century Issues

Each theme gave children the opportunity to identify issues within their own surroundings, analyze causes, and design collective solutions. Through this process, civic learning became experiential, nurturing critical thinking, empathy, collaboration, and problem-solving.

What began as isolated classroom activities soon spilled into corridors, assemblies, and communities. Parents and local bodies began to take notice of the children's civic actions, and schools emerged as micro-hubs of social awareness.



## 3

## Teachers as Catalysts of Change

At the heart of CSAP's success is the commitment of educators over 350 teachers, heads of schools, and master trainers who have transformed their classrooms into laboratories of active citizenship.

Teachers embraced civic learning not as an additional workload but as a pathway to more meaningful teaching. They began facilitating discussions on community issues, encouraging students to lead campaigns, and reflecting together on social responsibility.



"Heads of schools noted improvements in attendance, peer collaboration, and student confidence. The introduction of Master Trainers added an institutional layer of support, creating local champions capable of sustaining the model within the education system."

**Mr. Sanjeev Kumar– Head Master, GSSS Mangoli Jattan**

This educator-led ownership marks a critical shift from programmatic participation to systemic adoption. It reflects growing trust and belief that civic education strengthens not only students but also the culture of schooling itself.

## 4

## Strengthening Systems for Scale

The expansion of CSAP across Kurukshetra was not just a matter of reach, it showed how the program slowly integrated into the district's existing structures and routines. The program aligned seamlessly with the existing school ecosystem, co-curricular frameworks, and the broader vision of National Education Policy (NEP 2020).

Three key enablers drove this integration:

### Embedding, not adding:

Civic learning was woven into existing subjects and activities, ensuring it enhanced, rather than burdened, school processes.

### Capacity and mentorship:

Regular training of teachers, heads, and master trainers fostered confidence, reflection, and innovation in pedagogy.

### Building visibility and appreciation Institutional recognition:

Culmination events, student showcases, and teacher-led presentations built motivation and demonstrated value to education officials.

As a result, the district moved closer to a "district-ready model" one that can be scaled within government systems without external dependence. The evolution from 20 schools to 50 and finally 25 deeply engaged schools represents not contraction but consolidation a move from breadth to depth, where quality and ownership took centre stage.



## Scaling Within the System, Strengthening It from Within





# 5

## Signals of Mindset and Behavioural Change

While numbers capture reach, the real story of CSAP lies in the subtle but powerful shifts it has ignited:

- From awareness to action: Students are no longer passive recipients of information; they are designing and executing change projects.
- From instruction to facilitation: Teachers are guiding inquiry, not dictating answers.
- From isolation to collaboration: Schools are engaging parents, panchayats, and local communities as partners in learning.

Early evidence from internal reflections and partner evaluations points to improved civic awareness, empathy, and participation among students, alongside greater teacher motivation and a sense of purpose. These behavioral signals represent the strongest argument for scaling civic education showing how policy goals can translate into real change when supported by shifts in mindset and practice.



# 6

# A District Ready for the Future



Kurukshetra's experience demonstrates that civic education can be scaled within the public system through evidence, ownership, and alignment. As CSAP matured, it cultivated a culture of reflection, innovation, and shared accountability.

The journey from a pilot to a district-recognized model illustrates how government partnerships can drive change when anchored in mutual trust. The participation of teachers and local officials has ensured that civic learning is no longer seen as an external project but as an intrinsic part of what good education looks like.



Students Generating Evidence to Understand Local Civic Issues.

## Key Takeaways

- Cumulative Reach: 23,858 students | 350+ educators (teachers + heads + master trainers)
- Student-Led Projects: 184 Local Action Projects across themes from Water and Climate to Gender and Health
- Systemic Shift: From activity-based projects to an institutionalized civic learning approach
- Behavioral Impact: Improved student confidence, collaboration, and sense of social responsibility
- Institutional Readiness: Kurukshetra emerging as a district-ready model aligned with NEP 2020



## A Call to Action



The story of CSAP in Kurukshetra is more than a program report; it is a statement of possibility. It shows what happens when schools become spaces of participation, teachers become mentors of democracy, and students become change-makers in their own right.

The next step is clear: to take this tested, evidence-backed model and scale it across districts and states, making civic learning not an exception, but an expectation within India's education system.

Because when civic learning thrives, democracy deepens.

And when students learn to act for the common good, the future of citizenship is already here.

# Section 5

1

## How the Change Happened

When CSAP first entered Kurukshetra's classrooms, it did not begin with enthusiasm. It began with questions.

Teachers wondered if this was yet another short-term project that would fade away once the team left. Principals asked how it would fit into their already full schedules. Some even expected Janaagraha facilitators to conduct the sessions themselves.

“We thought you would take the classes, one teacher admitted later. We didn't know civic learning could be our responsibility.”

**Mrs. Jyoti Mishra - Teacher, GSSS Kirmach**



This initial hesitation was not resistance it was fatigue. Government school teachers had seen many programs come and go, often promising transformation but leaving behind paperwork. To them, CSAP seemed like one more initiative, until something began to shift not through presentations or reports, but through presence, consistency, and empathy.

## 2

# From Doubt to Dialogue

The first step toward change came not from instruction, but from conversation.

Instead of demanding compliance, the CSAP team listened to teachers' constraints, their aspirations for students, their struggle to connect learning with life. The program's design respected their professional agency, offering support rather than supervision.

Classroom visits evolved into mentoring spaces. Instead of "checking," facilitators sat beside teachers, reflecting with them on what went well and what could improve. These small gestures built trust. Teachers began to see CSAP not as an external imposition but as a shared experiment one that valued their experience and judgment.

"The difference was that they didn't come to tell us what to do, said a headteacher. They came to work with us."

**Mrs. Seema Arya- Head Teacher, GSSS Thol**



Through this dialogue, scepticism changed into curiosity. Teachers started trying out activities in their own ways, adapting civic lessons into local contexts water conservation in drought-prone villages, waste segregation in school compounds, and discussions on health and drug abuse among adolescents.

# 3

## Principals and Block Officials: From Gatekeepers to Champions

For any systemic shift, the role of school leaders and district officials is critical. In the early stages, principals and Block Education Officers (BEOs) were cautious observers. Many viewed CSAP as an external engagement with limited relevance to the academic calendar. That perception changed once they began witnessing the energy in classrooms. When principals saw students leading morning assemblies on civic issues or organizing rallies in their villages, they realised this was more than co-curricular work it was character-building in motion.

That perception began to change once principals and teachers witnessed the energy unfolding in their classrooms. At THOL School, teacher Anshul Khurana took the initiative to make morning assemblies more meaningful by encouraging students to speak on civic themes such as waste management, water conservation, and gender equality. What started as a small idea in his classroom soon caught the attention of the principal and other teachers, who began to adopt the same approach across grades.

The assemblies transformed from routine announcements into powerful spaces for reflection and expression, where students led discussions and shared their ideas for improving their school and community. This shift not only deepened students' understanding of civic issues but also turned civic learning into a daily practice of character-building in motion.

Block officials, too, began to notice patterns. Schools participating in CSAP reported higher attendance and teacher engagement. They saw that students who once hesitated to speak now confidently addressed panchayat members.



When School Leadership Sees Civic Learning Come Alive- Student-led morning assemblies on civic themes demonstrated that civic learning is an integral part of everyday education, not an add-on.



"These children speak with such conviction, a BEO remarked during a Bal Sabha. They remind us what education should truly mean."

**Mr. Bijender Singh -Block Education Officer (BEO), Shahbad Kurukshestra**

Gradually, these leaders moved from permitting CSAP to owning it. They began convening school clusters to share experiences, nominating teachers for training, and integrating civic learning into their own review meetings.

Gradually, these leaders moved from simply permitting CSAP to truly taking ownership of it. They began bringing together school clusters to share experiences, nominating teachers for training, and including civic learning updates in their regular review meetings. What started as cautious approval grew into active support and promotion of the program within the education system.

## 4

## Turning Points of Belief

Every systemic transformation has moments that shift belief and for CSAP, these turning points came from lived proof rather than persuasion.

One such moment was the first District Culmination Event, where students presented their Local Action Projects before education officials, community members, and peers. The event became a mirror for what the program stood for confidence, collaboration, and community voice.

Principals who once saw civic activities as distractions now watched their students speak fluently about water conservation, waste management, and gender equality. They saw teachers beam with pride, and officials taking notes. The applause in that hall carried a message this was real learning.

"When I saw my students on stage, recalled a teacher, I realised they had learned something we could never teach from a textbook belief in their own voice."

– Ms. Narinder Kaur, Teacher, GSSS Ismailabad



These visible changes converted sceptics into believers. Teachers began forming peer groups to plan their own projects. Principals offered time for CSAP activities within the timetable. The district office began integrating civic action updates into official reviews. Each action reinforced another, building a culture of shared ownership.



## 5

### The Role of Mentorship and Recognition

While design gave CSAP its structure, mentorship gave it life. Regular interactions, classroom reflections, and recognition of teacher efforts played a vital role in sustaining engagement. When teachers saw their innovations being celebrated in meetings, newsletters, or district events they felt seen and valued.

This sense of recognition turned responsibility into pride. Teachers who once hesitated to take on extra tasks began volunteering to lead ToTs (Training of Trainers). Heads of schools encouraged other staff to adopt civic learning. Some even began documenting their experiences for the District Education Office, helping institutionalise reflection within the system.



"It stopped being their program and became our movement, one principal said at the final review meeting at block level."

**Mr. Ashwani Kumar- Head Teacher, Thanesar Kurukshetra**

## 6

## A Culture of Trust and Shared Purpose

Perhaps the most profound transformation CSAP brought was not in the curriculum or the classroom, but in relationships. Between teachers and students, between schools and communities, between the education department and its partners.

Community members who initially viewed civic action as school activities began participating helping fix leaking taps, joining waste campaigns, or supporting gender awareness events. The School Management Committees (SMC) became allies, amplifying the children's efforts within villages.

This collective action built credibility where words could not. Teachers felt supported, communities felt included, and officials felt accountable to results emerging from within their own system.



# 7

## From Compliance to Ownership

By the third year, Kurukshetra's education ecosystem no longer saw CSAP as an external project. It had become a shared vocabulary for active citizenship. Teachers began mentoring each other; principals linked civic learning to school improvement plans; officials positioned CSAP as part of the district's broader education strategy.

The transformation was quiet but powerful built not through mandates, but through belief.

We started with training, a Block Education Officer reflected, but what we built was trust. In the beginning, a few teachers joined the sessions with hesitation, unsure of how CSAP would fit into their daily work. Over time, as they began implementing classroom discussions and student projects, they started sharing their experiences during review meetings and even guided others in their clusters. That's when I realised it was no longer just a training program it had become a network of teachers learning from and trusting one another.

### Key Takeaways

#### **Mindset Shift:**

From scepticism and fatigue to pride and ownership among teachers and officials.

#### **Systemic Buy-In:**

School leaders and BEOs evolved from permission givers to champions.

#### **Community Credibility:**

Parent and SMC participation strengthened legitimacy and visibility.

#### **Sustainability Signal:**

CSAP became embedded in local routines a part of how education happens, not an add-on.

## A Human Lesson in Systemic Change

The journey of CSAP in Kurukshetra shows that lasting change happens when people take ownership the program simply creates the space and support for it to unfold.

The real success was not in the number of schools reached or projects completed, but in the transformation of belief: when teachers stopped asking Who will do this? and began saying "We will.

That shift from compliance to conviction is the invisible infrastructure that sustains every visible impact. And it is this human foundation that will carry civic learning from one district to many, one belief at a time.



### Students as Drivers of Local Governance: Civic Learning in Action

In a government school in Thol, a student applied his civic learning to address a persistent streetlight issue in his neighborhood. Instead of waiting for external intervention, he identified the responsible authority and approached the village sarpanch to request timely repair demonstrating a practical understanding of local governance.

This instance reflects how structured civic education can lead to organic, system-level outcomes. When students are equipped with knowledge of governance processes and decision-making pathways, they begin to engage constructively with institutions. Such actions strengthen accountability and improve the responsiveness of local systems without additional administrative burden.

CSAP enables this shift by embedding civic learning within the schooling system, allowing students to practice citizenship in real contexts. Over time, these everyday actions contribute to a more informed, participatory citizenry supporting the long-term objective of institutional strengthening and democratic engagement envisioned under education reform frameworks.

# Section 6

## Beyond the Classroom – Systems Influence



1

### From Classrooms to the System: A District Learns to Think Civically

What began as a simple classroom initiative to engage students in civic learning has gradually transformed into a district-wide movement that has influenced how Kurukshetra's education system thinks about the purpose of schooling. Over three years, the Civic Social Action Project (CSAP) has moved beyond the boundaries of schools to shape the practices, language, and priorities of the local education ecosystem.

Today, civic learning is no longer perceived as an add-on. It has become part of how teachers teach, how students engage, and how the district administration and education officials view the role of schools in nurturing active citizenship. The transformation is visible not just in classrooms but in district meetings, community spaces, and public events, where civic learning is now discussed as a shared goal. This shift from project to policy conversation signals how belief and ownership built at the ground level can influence systems of governance and education.

## Institutional Recognition and Administrative Partnership

At the very outset when the program was first introduced in Kurukshetra Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy signed a three-year MoU with the District Administration, Department of Education, and DIET Kurukshetra. This marked the official recognition of civic learning as part of school education. Over these three years, CSAP has been successfully implemented across the district, demonstrating how collaboration between government and civil society can strengthen civic learning in government schools.

While the leadership and legitimacy for CSAP came from within the government system, the program's implementation was made possible through the support of multiple donor partners over the years. In the first year, CSAP in Kurukshetra was supported by the Rainmatter Foundation and TPG Capital. In the second year, the partnership expanded to include IDFC FIRST Bank, TPG Capital, L. Catterton, and Sainsons. The continued involvement of the Deputy Commissioner (DC), District Education Officer (DEO), and Block Education Officers (BEOs) ensured administrative depth and strong system anchorage throughout the implementation.

The DC's consistent participation in key district events and public showcases reflected a growing confidence in the program's educational value. During one review meeting, he shared:

This is not an external project it is our district's effort to nurture active, responsible citizens. Schools are the first spaces where that change begins.

This endorsement elevated CSAP's credibility and ensured that every education officer and school leader saw civic learning not as an NGO initiative, but as a district-owned mission that aligns with the goals of the National Education Policy 2020.



# 3

## Bal Sabhas: Building Democratic Culture in Schools

Perhaps the most visible sign of systemic adoption has been the introduction of Bal Sabhas structured student assemblies designed to strengthen participatory and democratic practices in schools. These were introduced through CSAP and were actively accepted, implemented, and celebrated by schools, with participation extending across blocks and the district.

What began as classroom-level discussions soon evolved into a multi-tiered process, where students conducted general elections within schools to select their Bal Sabha representatives. These elected students then participated in block-level Bal Sabhas, where they discussed issues affecting their schools and communities from waste management to safe drinking water, from cleanliness drives to gender sensitivity.

This process not only deepened students' civic understanding but also helped educators and officials witness democratic participation in action. Teachers observed how even quieter students found their voice, and how schools began to see themselves as microcosms of democracy.

"Earlier, our students waited for instructions. Now they plan, lead, and even hold us accountable. The Bal Sabha has changed the spirit of the school."

**Ms. Savita Rani – Head Teacher, GMSSS Khairi**



By creating these formal democratic spaces within schools, CSAP demonstrated how civic learning could be embedded within the everyday functioning of the education system making governance participatory, even at the school level.

## Administrative Alignment and Departmental Engagement

The Department of Education has played a pivotal role in scaling and sustaining the program across the district. Their active participation ensured that CSAP was not an isolated initiative but embedded within regular academic and co-curricular planning.

Block Education Officers began facilitating reviews, monitoring school-level projects, and recognising teachers who led impactful civic initiatives. This active engagement by the department marked a transition from permission to partnership from simply allowing the program to actively steering it forward.

The DIET Kurukshetra, through its inclusion in the formal MoU, added an important layer of academic legitimacy. While DIET's role was not direct in daily implementation, its association lent institutional weight, allowing the program to be recognised as an educational intervention, not just a community project.

Over time, the district education machinery began to see CSAP as part of its own identity a reflection of Kurukshetra's leadership in holistic education.



District Leadership Strengthening Civic Learning-The Deputy Commissioner, CEO Zila Parishad, and District Education Officer review progress, share best practices, and recognise the efforts of school leaders and teachers.

# 5

## Community and Media: Expanding the Circle of Influence

CSAP's visibility grew beyond schools and government offices through active engagement with community stakeholders and public communication channels. The District Information and Public Relations Office (DIPRO) regularly covered civic showcases and culmination events in local media, positioning civic education as a district pride.

These stories of students leading awareness drives, managing waste campaigns, or advocating for clean drinking water — built a positive narrative around government schools. Parents and School Management Committees (SMCs) began to participate more actively, supporting student projects and offering local solutions. One SMC member shared during a culmination event:



From Classrooms to the District: Civic Learning as a Shared Priority Recognised by the Media Person of Kurukshetra



"Earlier, we saw the school as a place for teachers. Now we see it as a place for citizens where even our children are teaching us how to take care of our community.

**Mr. Malkit Singh, Panch Thol**

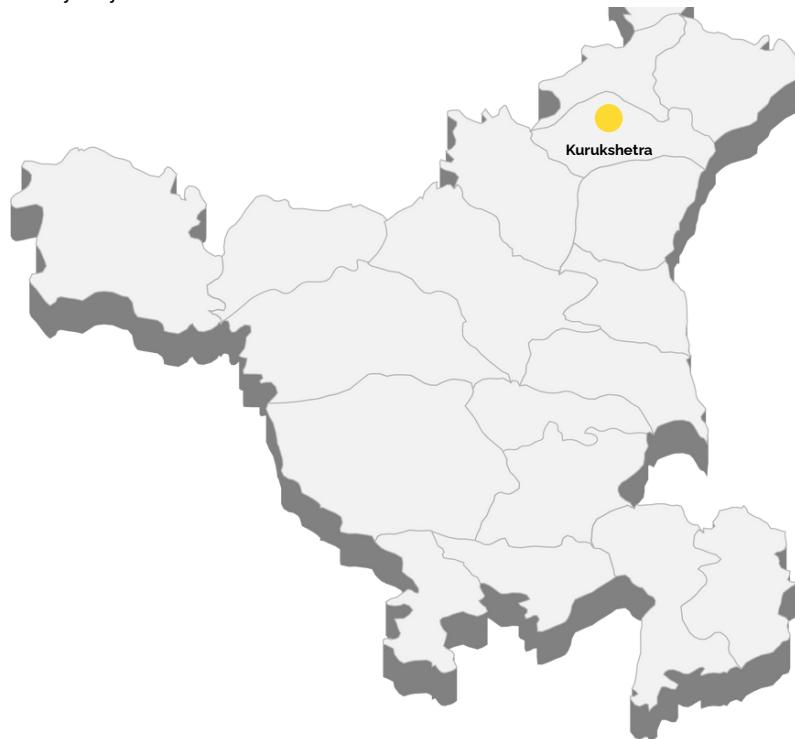
These community linkages have enhanced trust in government schools, creating a collaborative ecosystem between students, teachers, parents, and local leaders.

# 6

## Signals of Systemic and State-Level Readiness

Kurukshetra's experience is increasingly being recognised as a demonstration model within Haryana for integrating civic learning into government school systems. This recognition was further strengthened when the Office of the Chief Minister appreciated the district's efforts under CSAP, given that Kurukshetra is the Chief Minister's home constituency, and indicated interest in exploring a potential state-level engagement. The district's structured implementation model combining teacher capacity building, student-led civic projects, and strong administrative collaboration continues to exemplify how civic learning can be effectively institutionalised within the public education system.

This growing attention is a sign of readiness for state-level adoption. The approach aligns closely with NEP 2020's emphasis on experiential learning and 21st-century citizenship, showing how values of participation, problem-solving, and empathy can be woven into the daily rhythm of school life.



"Kurukshetra has shown that civic learning is not a side activity it's a way of reimagining education itself."

**Mrs. Neelam Saini**  
– Block Education Officer (BEO) , Ladwa



# 7

## Conclusion: From Initiative to Institution

The journey of CSAP in Kurukshetra represents more than successful implementation; it is a story of systems change built through belief. From initial curiosity to formal collaboration, from isolated classrooms to district-level events, the program has embedded the idea that civic education is essential to building stronger schools and stronger societies.

What began as a civic project in a handful of schools is today shaping district policy conversations, influencing public narratives, and strengthening community trust in government systems.

Kurukshetra now stands as living proof that when civic learning is embedded within systems, it transforms not just students but the institutions that serve them.





# Section 7

1

## Looking Forward – From District Proof to State Model

The next step is to translate this district success into a state-level model for Haryana, one that redefines how education systems approach citizenship, values, and participatory governance fully aligned with the spirit of NEP 2020.

2

## Deepening Kurukshetra's Legacy: Towards Full District Ownership

Before scaling upward, Kurukshetra will consolidate its position as a government-led model of civic learning.

The coming year will see a transition where Janaagraha's role shifts from facilitation to knowledge partnership, supporting the district's education ecosystem from BEOs and head teachers to DIET mentors to lead CSAP independently.

This phase focuses on:

- Integrating CSAP into the District Academic Plan, ensuring civic learning continues across all government schools.
- Institutionalising teacher training structures through DIET and master trainers.
- Embedding monitoring and reflection practices where student learning is assessed through civic participation and problem-solving, not just examinations.

This will position Kurukshetra as Haryana's lighthouse district, a live example of how civic education can be systemically owned and sustained within public schooling.

# 3

## Documenting the Kurukshetra Model: Creating a Blueprint for Haryana

To make this transformation replicable, Janaagraha will develop a comprehensive Civic Learning Framework a state-ready blueprint emerging from Kurukshetra's experience.

This will serve as a guide for policymakers and education planners to institutionalise civic learning across Haryana.

The framework will capture:

- Curricular integration: aligning civic learning with NEP's focus on experiential, value-based education.
- Pedagogical tools: student workbooks, teacher guides, and project-based learning templates.
- Implementation frameworks: roles of departments, timelines, and cost structures.
- Capacity-building pathways: DIET-led training and orientation modules for teachers.
- Monitoring templates: measuring civic learning outcomes through behavioural and participatory indicators.
- Case documentation: narratives and testimonies that reflect system ownership and mindset change.

This playbook will ensure that the Department of Education and SCERT Haryana can adapt and institutionalise civic learning seamlessly within their own structures.



## 4

## Engaging the State: Co-Creating the Pathway for Policy Integration

Janaagraha, as a knowledge partner, will collaborate closely with the Haryana Department of Education and SCERT to co-create a roadmap for integrating civic learning into the state's policy and curriculum ecosystem.

This collaboration will aim to:

- Align CSAP's pedagogy with NEP 2020's vision of holistic education and active citizenship.
- Support state-led development of teacher training modules and student learning frameworks rooted in civic action.
- Create enabling mechanisms within the Education Department's structures to institutionalise civic learning as part of the co-curricular and academic ecosystem.

Early dialogues with state officials indicate a strong readiness for this transition, a recognition that Kurukshetra offers a proof of concept for how civic learning can be scaled without additional administrative load, while enriching the quality and purpose of education.



# 5

## The Vision Ahead: A State of Active Citizens

The path ahead for Haryana is not about replication, it is about rei-magination. The Kurukshetra experience has established that civic learning can thrive within government systems, led by educators, and celebrated by communities.

The next step is to work hand-in-hand with the Department of Education to co-create the state-level roadmap for integrating civic learning within Haryana's NEP priorities and embedding it into teacher training, student engagement frameworks, and school-community partnerships.

Janaagraha's role will be that of a strategic knowledge partner supporting policy design, capacity development, and systems learning to ensure that civic education becomes a cornerstone of Haryana's school transformation journey.

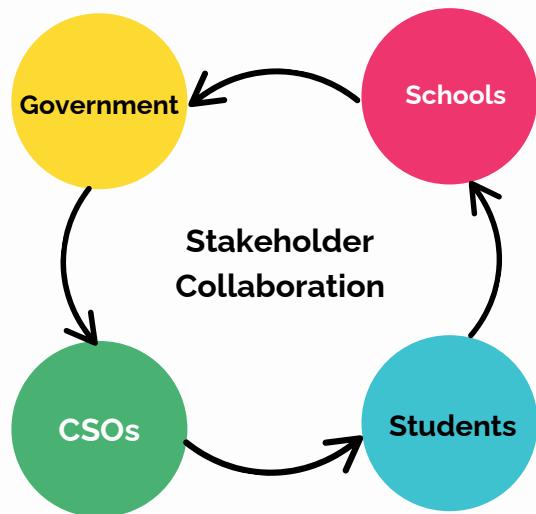
This vision extends beyond classrooms towards a future where every student in Haryana learns to see themselves not just as beneficiaries of governance, but as co-creators of change.

## Reimagining Civic Learning In Haryana

### Roadmap For Implementation



### Civic Learning Ecosystem Overview





"The story that began in Kurukshetra can now redefine what education means for the entire state turning learning into action, and students into active citizens who shape the society they live in."

**Mr. Ranbir Singh, Sarpanch Kirmach**

# Acknowledgments



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# About Janaagraha

Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy is a Bengaluru-based non-profit working towards transforming the quality of life in India's cities and towns through systemic reforms in urban governance. Over the past two decades, it has partnered with governments, citizens, and civil society to strengthen civic participation, improve service delivery, and build institutional capacities for accountable urban governance. In the education sector, Janaagraha's work focuses on deepening civic learning among school students and building the foundations of active citizenship from an early age. Through the Civic Learning program implemented in partnership with state governments it integrates civic education into school systems by training teachers, developing curriculum materials, and enabling experiential civic projects within communities. The program seeks to nurture civic values, a sense of responsibility, and participatory problem-solving skills among young citizens.

**Find out more at** <https://www.janaagraha.org>

## For more information

Please feel free to reach out to:

**Mr. Shivkumar Menon** - Director, Civic Learning  
Email: shiv.menon@janaagraha.org | Phone: +91 99200 81004

**Mr. Jitesh Pandey** - Program Manager Civic Learning  
Email: Jitesh.Pandey@janaagraha.org | Phone: +91 8076 670 359



Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy  
3rd Floor, Sair Bagh, 19/4, Cunningham Road,  
Bengaluru, Karnataka, India – 560052.