



Recommencing the TARA Akshar+ Programme

In view of the spread of COVID-19, the adult literacy programme, TARA Akshar+ had paused temporarily and is now opening up back again in all four geographies – Aurai, Lalitpur and Babina in Uttar Pradesh, and Bhagwanpur in Uttarakhand. In the last decade, the ICT based programme has enabled more than 2,30,000 women in rural India with literacy and numeracy skills, empowering them to become better decision-makers and strong social capital.

With the various private and public spaces now opening up all throughout the country, the team is working to restart the classes which were suspended due to the lockdown imposed by the government in lieu of the pandemic. After taking permissions from the District Magistrates and Chief Medical Officers for all the geographies, the teams are ready to commence the TARA Akshar+ (TA+) centers and Gyan Chuapali (GC) sessions to complete the literacy programme for women.

The team is working together to draw up a plan to ensure that the classes run with all precautionary measures as laid down by the State Governments to prevent the spread of the virus. For this, the team has supplied the learners with masks. Further, learners at the TA+ centres and GCs are being screened regularly. The TARA Saheli's have been provided with an infrared thermometer, liquid soap and sanitizers too.

Additionally, following the norms of social distancing, a seating plan has been drawn up so that all the learners are sitting at least two yards apart in the classes. To ensure this, the learners have been divided into groups and are being asked to attend the classes on alternate days.

The classes are set to start on 9 November 2020 for which all systems are being put in place and are being put to test. On reaching the centers, the learners will be asked to first wash their hands, then the

TARA Saheli will check their temperature, and finally allow them to enter the class where they will be asked to sit on the markings.

Since the programme is restarting after seven months due to the pandemic, the TARA Saheli's and instructors have been given refresher trainings. Additionally, they are going door-to-door to formulate a list of all the women who are willing to attend the classes. Close to 4,000 women are being addressed in 127 centers.