

## Vikranta's Story

Cholapur, Uttar Pradesh, January 2017



Vikranta, aged 15 years, lives in *Rauna Kala* village near Cholapur in Varanasi. Unlike other kids his age, Vikranta faces a lot of challenges in everyday life because of his speech impediment. As a person who stutters, Vikranta has trouble in expressing his thoughts to the people around him and gets easily picked up by bullies. Despite growing up in incredulity, Vikranta was optimistic when Jalina, a member of SSK (Sahbhagi Shiksha Kendra), convinced him to attend a Kadam Badhate Chalo (KBC) meeting organized in his village. Vikranta found the KBC meeting very informative where all the young boys and girls were encouraged to openly discuss the issues of gender inequality, Violence against Women (VAW) and illiteracy.



KBC meetings had a positive influence on Vikranta, as a result of which he decided to continue to be a part of the program. As a small step in promoting this program, he decided to spread the word about this program and its objective to help the young boys and girls of his age. After a lot of persuasion, Vikranta managed to get two of his friends to attend the KBC meeting. But to his surprise,

his friends found the meetings to be boring and a waste of time. Vikranta was disappointed by this incident and realized that involving youth in this program is going to be a daunting task.



During one of the KBC meetings, it was announced that as part of phase two of the KBC program, a Sports Leadership Workshop will be held in Cholapur block of Varanasi. This announcement filled the meeting room with a lot of joy and enthusiasm and Vikranta, being a sports lover, thought of it as an opportunity to convince his friends again to become a part of this program. Moreover, he was excited to

learn and play together with his youth group members. Vikranta shared the information about the upcoming sports workshop with the same friends he asked to attend the meeting. Thinking of it as a trick to convince them, his friends kept on denying the fact that a sports workshop where girls and boys will participate and play together will be held in Cholapur.

On the first day of the workshop, Vikranta was motivated to know that the workshop will train the participants develop skills which will help them to drive a change within their community. The workshop created a lot of noise around Cholapur and many people gathered around the field to see girls and boys play together. This news also reached to Vikranta's friends. After the first day of the workshop, Vikranta met his friends and told them about the workshop and how it is fun playing along with girls and also learning skills like leadership, communication and teamwork. Seeing the excitement on Vikranta's face and a confidence in his stuttering voice, his friends were almost convinced to attend the workshop. But since they had their school exams the next two days, they could not join him for the workshop. But, on the final day of the workshop, Vikranta's two friends came for a half-an-hour session at the end of the workshop and played two games 'Dragon's Tail' and 'Group Up'. They had a lot of fun while playing these two games. Even happier was Vikranta, seeing his friends enjoying being a part of the KBC program. At the end of the workshop, Vikranta summed up his experience and learnings,

"During the meetings I used to look up to Jagdish, Afsar, Sama, Satish and other members and always admired their politeness and patience during all the discussions in the meetings. Seeing them perform so well in the workshop is no surprise as they have that quality in them. I am also trying to be like them, so that I can further help the cause of this program. I believe trying is important as we can only learn from our failures."

*\*The above quote has been translated in English, from Hindi, in which it was originally narrated.*

