



VISION

Our experience has taught us the value of Education, Mentoring, Life Skills and Community Service. Basing our Fellowship on these key pillars, we aim to enable the professional aspirations of future women leaders in their areas of choice.



The KARM Fellowship is unique in many ways-in recognising that employability has many more complex facets than just grades and degrees and in allowing young women with promise to go past their constraints and dream big.

For the first year, twenty bright young women have been selected, with the Fellowship providing each one with the following-

- Internship Opportunities through their years at college
- Life skills learning through workshops, talks, experiences and courses
- Volunteering and Social work avenues that allow for creativity, empathy and team building
- Personal Mentoring through the course of the Fellowship
- Thinking and Articulation classes to help build informed perspectives and responsible opinions
- Encouraging reading as a critical skill
- Personal laptops with dongles
- Financial support to ensure the pursuit of university education

As I ruminate

Upon meeting with the girls during interviews for the Fellowship

By Vinita Johorey, Fellowship Head



Nothing had prepared me for this. The depth of thought, the breadth of vision and the reach of the goal; each conversation a nuanced uncovering. The limited resources had emboldened the dream, the difficult circumstance had fueled the drive and the everyday challenge was propelling a desire to want a change. And I was magically there. To listen in and absorb. And watch the magic unfold.

'Vinita ma'am, how busy are you?' - an innocuous enough question. A muddled response and soon I was in the middle of it all. A tall vision, a taller thought - the ability to see it through, and the want to make a difference. It was as if everything I had ever done, was preparing me for this day - that day in Sewri in Bombay, when I had wept uncontrollably because I could do nothing to help. And then in the Wadala suburb, watching the woman recount her horror with domestic abuse. When I had just sat. The years of teaching and learning, the Counselling diploma in far-off London, the practice sessions at VIMHANS, all somehow coming together. Each poem expressed, each essay edited and each workshop delivered. This was it.

So here I was. Listening with rapt attention - to Salma as she spoke of MS Dhoni as her hero, and also of the debilitating impact of domestic violence on families and to fearless Akriti Sharma who stood against a green field, dreaming of the world that she could see clearly. The feisty Pooja whose father is a daily wage worker and Shreya Shriti who wants to study Geography to understand meteorology. The pretty Afshan whose Afghani heritage hides many a story and the courageous Sunaina who society has failed. Jahnavi and Suhani, who showed us what sunshine meant and Divya, whose vivaciousness touched my happy chords. Anupreet, the academic superstar and Suparna the mis-fit. The pretty Assamese who studies Mandarin and the progressive Shirin who looks after her brother with special needs. Parmeet, Devika, Zoya and Meeta - each one unique, powerful and true. Driven and ambitious, never mind the pink tiles, the shabby curtain and background noise.

We have much to do. Many a hand to hold and to be held by - much to write and speak about.

For the girls to show us the way - to the new India that they will build; to the safety that they will foster and the community that they will create. To all the questions that they will ask and the answers that they will demand; to the horizons that they will widen and to the obstacles they shall face; to the men that they will threaten and the women who they shall challenge; to the children that they shall mother and the partners that they will choose; to the professions that they grace and the learning they imbibe; to the role models that have held them and the teachers that have steadied their path - I doff my hat.

For it is my privilege.

Program Report



We launched the Fellowship in October 2020 amidst the cloud of Covid, excited and determined. We designed admission forms, discussed who the KARM Fellow really was, spoke with potential mentors and systematically began our outreach. We received 477 applications from across Delhi Government and CSR funded schools, an overwhelming number for year one.

Reading personal stories as we sifted through the forms was an emotional experience with so many common threads of hardships. And then there were a few that stood out for their grit and resilience- Mansi, who lives in a shelter home because her mother has been in judicial custody for the past three years; Natasha, who had to make a 'dramatic speech on girl education' to her unlettered parents to allow herself admission into high school; Kanika, who works in the school canteen to earn enough to subsist; Garima, who had to fight her family in eastern UP to reach Lucknow where she now works as a house-help while continuing her schooling. These and so many more. Needless to say, at that point in time, we felt at a loss, as we grappled with the gravity of the need.

We were also excited at the possibilities that lay ahead - in our quest to nurture women role - models..

The following observations stood out-

- The pandemic has affected the livelihoods of many, putting girl education into deeper peril.
- The heartening news of the Delhi Government having gifted tablets to bright young women allowing for their formal schooling to continue, despite the covid induced lockdowns.
- That gender disparities continue to underlie our society, with very few mothers being financially self-reliant.
- That there is enduring impact of great minds - a big number of girls looked up to the former President, Dr. Abdul Kalam.
- That Civil Services is the most desired for, employment goal.

Our Team



Radhika and Kartik Bharat Ram - simply put, believe in both the transformative power of higher education and in giving back. KARM is their calling and their effort.

To help build the effort, the Fellowship needed a team. Vinita Johorey came in with the experience of working with young adults and a strong want to work in this space. As we forged ahead, Chesta Bisht to run with the actual day to day functioning of the Fellowship and Anya Walecha joined us to ensure social media presence.

While we know where we wish to reach, we need guidance and support through our journey. Gratitude in no small measure to Amitav Virmani for ratifying our thoughts and showing us the path; Dr. Suresh Reddy for simply having been there and done that so effectively and convincingly before we could and Shaheena Attarwala, for reinforcing our belief.

We thank you for being our Advisory and righting our path.

[Do read more about our Team.](#)



Meeting the girls



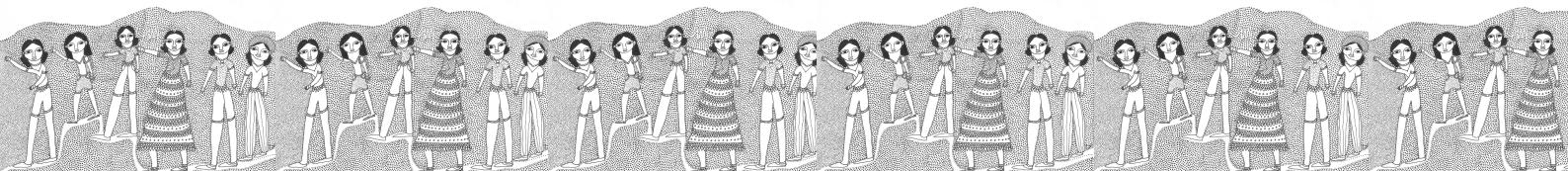
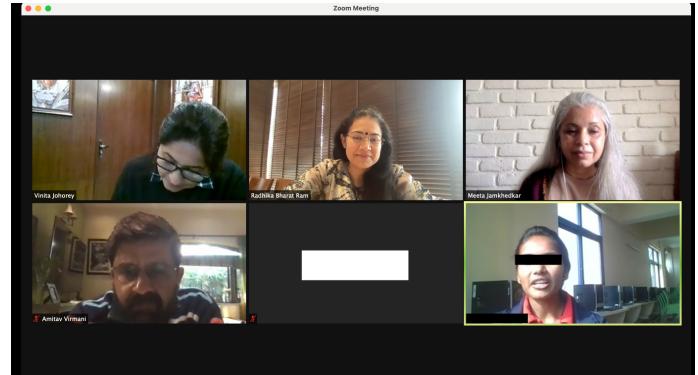
Selection time came by and we had to do so differently, settling for virtual meetings. Here, we met with the 77 chosen ones over ten days in February and were bowled over, with each meeting being educational, moving and enriching, each day an emotional see-saw. While we teared up hearing some stories, others compelled us to clap and cheer.

Meeting the girls was exhilarating.

We see leaders in each of them-their views on gender disparity, women's safety and education had us enthralled! Five of these girls are from the Shiv Nadar Foundation schools, nine from Delhi Govt schools, two from the NGO-Vidya, two from the EWS category of Salwan schools, one from the same category of DPS, Ghaziabad and one from Kendriya Vidyalaya.

We would like to share that we have gone further and initiated a new program under the KARM umbrella - the KARM Scholarship. We are delighted to announce that we have selected 14 girls - they will be given tuition fee (on actuals) along with a grant for books and stationary.

Our selections are now done and Fellows have been shortlisted. We await university admissions to welcome the young leaders into our fold. Shiny new laptops, a customized curriculum, experienced mentors and an excited KARM team await the young leaders.



Moving ahead...



With regard to the start of the Fellowship, we are waiting-for the CBSE to announce its results, (tentative date-July 31st) for the University to initiate it's admission process. We will close our final list of Fellows (tentative dates - 3/4 weeks post school results) once they take admissions into their chosen courses.

We on our part, are ready with our next steps.

We plan to host the first three-day workshop face-to-face (COVID situation permitting) within a week of the admissions being known to us. This will be focused on Self-Awareness, Team Building and Personal Narratives. We have woven theatre into the flow and hope that the girls will not only enjoy this time but will come away richer for the experience. Mentoring will begin soon after. We are grateful to our Mentors for being a part of KARM.

About our Mentors

KARM Fellowship gratefully acknowledges the support of individuals, foundations and corporations who have championed our efforts at nurturing future women leaders!

We truly are on our way.



Original Painting by Teju Ben, Jogi / Dot Painting Artist, Ahmedabad



Catch up with us on social media!

