



Ashraya Initiative
for Children



OUR STORY

In 2004, two university students who often spent time at the city's railway station for a college project, befriended a group of beggar children.

Initially, their interactions were casual, but during one of the more deeper conversation, the children revealed that they belonged to the **De-Notified Tribes** of the Sikhligar and Waghri communities, living on society's fringes without access to education, healthcare, or stable homes.

Moved by their stories & resilience, who despite all hardships dreamed of a better future, the 2 students were inspired to act. Along with like-minded friends, they founded the Ashraya Initiative for Children (AIC) to address the systemic issues that kept these communities trapped in poverty.

Their first step was enrolling out-of-school children back into schools, giving them a chance to break the cycle of begging. However, they soon realized that a more holistic support was need of the hour.

What began as a chance encounter has since grown into a transformative initiative, empowering thousands of children and families to build self-reliant futures and break free from poverty.



THE WHO

- **De-Notified communities** have faced systemic exclusion for centuries. Under British rule, the **Criminal Tribes Act of 1871** labeled them as “hereditary criminals,” leading to forced settlements and constant police surveillance.
- Though repealed in 1952, they were **excluded from SC/ST reservations**, depriving them of education, employment, and welfare benefits, trapping them in poverty.
- This exclusion has perpetuated poverty, restricting their access to government welfare schemes and opportunities for socio-economic mobility. Once skilled blacksmiths, traders, & artists, these DNT communities lost their livelihoods post-independence, forcing them into unstable jobs.
- With limited opportunities, many community children are pushed into begging at traffic signals, temples, and railway stations to support their families.
- Lack of access to education and social welfare keeps them in a cycle of deprivation.

There are estimated to be 60 million members of De-notified tribal (DNT) communities in India with no access to constitutional rights - Census 2011

18 million street children in India are children of marginalised nomadic tribes

There are around 3,00,000 children begging on the streets of India right now.” Thomson Reuters

DNT communities contributes to 9-12 percent population of Maharashtra – Census 2011

Waghri, Sikligar, Mahar, Matang and Pardi communities are among the most marginalized DNTs

THE PROBLEM STATEMENT



OUR VISION

Ashraya is dedicated to improving the lives and shaping the futures of vulnerable children in Pune, India by advancing educational opportunities, nurturing holistic development and building healthy, empowered communities.

INTRODUCTION

Ashraya Initiative for Children works with residents of 6 urban slum communities, who belong to De-notified tribal (DNT), Notified Tribal, Mahar, Matang, Pardi and other marginalised communities in India. With the prejudices they face and a lack of government aid, most of these communities live in abject poverty, due to their traditional livelihoods of selling old clothes, iron utensils, sweeping and manual scavenging with extended families of ten or more to live on a collective household income of less than Rs 150 per day. Illegally tapped electricity connections, outdoor communal taps that provide water for only a few hours each day, and overcrowded, unsafe public toilet blocks are a given. Ashraya views the women and children as the key to the future of these perpetually impoverished communities and invests its resources accordingly to ensure that the next generation has all the tools it needs to transform and empower these communities. Ashraya's core programs focus on empowering women and children through holistic measures and creating first-generation learners to create a sustainable future.



ASHRAYA'S HOLISTIC NEED BASED APPROACH



Education Outreach

- Pre-School Support
- Whole school support
- After-school support
- Healthcare support
- Nutrition support
- Counselling support
- Transport



Community Sustainability

- Adult literacy
- Gender equity
- Livelihoods and Employability
- Access to govt. schemes and resources
- Legal support and Advocacy

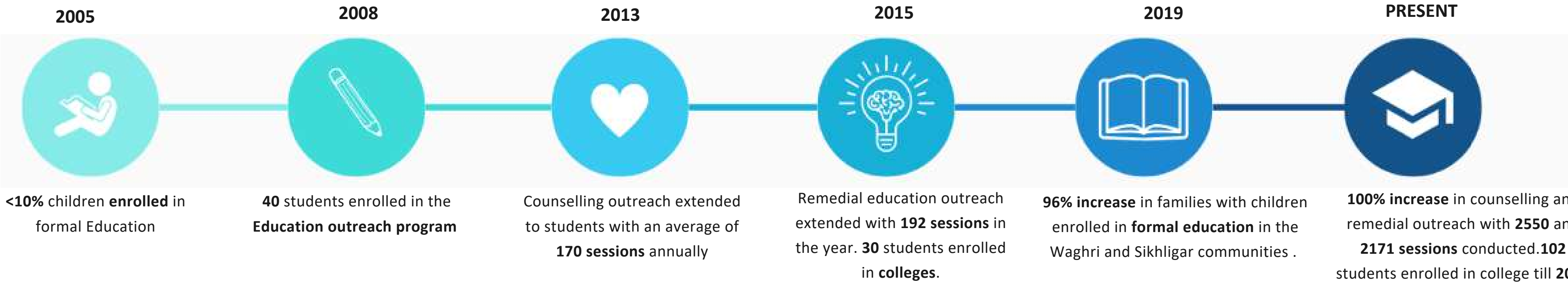


Health Outreach

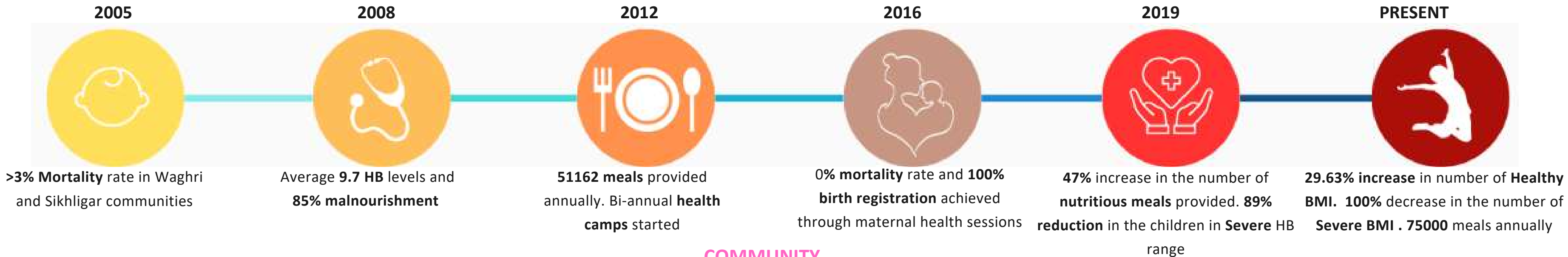
- Preventative Healthcare
- Physical Healthcare
- Mental Healthcare
- Maternal Healthcare
- Nutrition Support

IMPACT NUMBERS

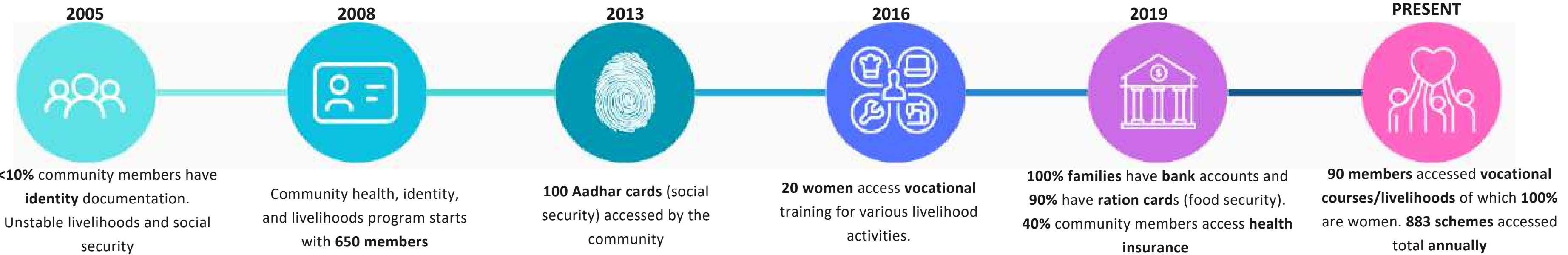
EDUCATION



HEALTH



COMMUNITY



HAMARI SHALA EDUCATION PROGRAM

PHILOSOPHY

Ashraya believes that children learn best when they are free and can actively explore the world around them. Through a balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities, we strive to enrich a child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development. We provide hands-on learning experiences through maths, science, art, value education, and literacy activities in order to encourage children to become lifelong learners.

Ashraya believes that in addition to being well-qualified and passionate, educators should be trained and experienced in positive classroom management, interactions and relationship building with students to help children build the 21st century skills, communication, problem-solving and relationship skills being the essentials.

Ashraya actively promotes partnership/collaboration/collective decision-making with the families of our students. We encourage families to communicate with us regularly, visit often, and participate in their child's daily classroom activities. Keeping sustainability in mind. We consciously provide leadership opportunities to the students to be a part of the whole system & solve problems and make decisions for the betterment of their community!

MISSION STATEMENT - HAMARI SHALA

Hamari Shala Program is committed to building hard-working, responsible, and empathetic human beings by engaging the students, community, and teachers in value-based, rigorous, and experiential curriculum and inspiring & collaborate with other organizations to reach out to more students.

We at HSP have the objective of creating a space where one discovers himself/herself and acquires the knowledge and skills to fulfill their purpose in life and give back to society.



CASE STUDY-Empowering Change: From Beneficiaries to Leaders

“It is a fulfilling experience to give back to the Community that supported me and to inspire the next generation of designers.” - Bhagyshree Ghodke

I am a Fashion Designer and trainer with a three year degree in Fashion Designing. Through a combination of theoretical learning and practical experience, this course provided me with in depth knowledge of design principles, textile materials, and garment construction techniques.

I have been a part of Ashraya's programs since I was in nursery. Over the course of my tenure with Ashraya, I was not only able to recognize my passion, but I was also able to learn supporting skills that would turn my passion into a sustainable career option. While I faced challenges with my family's financial situation and balancing my studies with extracurricular activities, time management was crucial and with the support and guidance of my mentors at Ashraya, I managed to overcome this hurdle.

Post my degree, I was approached by Ashraya's Education team to develop a tailoring curriculum for the students. I am grateful for the opportunity to work at Ashraya and I am currently teaching the Tailoring subject at Ashraya. This role allows me to share my knowledge and skills with others, helping them learn and grow in the field of fashion and tailoring.



**THANK
YOU**