

Entrepreneur Khushboo Awasthi embarked upon the journey of solving India's education-inequity challenge in 2013 along with her husband Santosh More. The couple started Mantra4Change with a vision to transform public education in India and its school going children. As Awasthi says, "We believe in solving sustainably, and hence our answer to one of the most critical challenges in education has been — developing leaders and leadership in the education system."

Describing the journey of Mantra4Change, she says, "The idea and belief in development of education leadership that inspired us to initiate our work in Karnataka with three schools in 2014, has now become a game changer in five states with 284,000+ education leaders who are transforming the reality of 266,000+ schools in India."

In 2017, Awasthi also co-founded another initiative, called ShikshaLokam which is an education



Developing Education Leadership

Khushboo Awasthi, Co-founder & Director, Mantra4Change, on the need for quality equitable education, and how technology can be leveraged for this

leadership platform. Describing the work being done there, she says, "Digital infrastructure has a big role to play in any large-scale transformation journey. At ShikshaLokam, we develop shared and open digital technology infrastructure that can be used to enable the leadership development among actors in the system."

On the issue of challenges, she points to education inequity on three pointers:

Scale - We are a country with 250 million school-going children, 8.5 million teachers and 1.5 million schools

Quality - 18/28 Indian states register subpar performance on Sustainable Development Goals indicators (Quality Education) by the United Nations.

Urgency - The percentage of children who drop out at high school level increases to 42 per cent from 29 per cent at primary school level. Over 200 million young individuals learning in this manner would be out of the education system by 2030.

She says, "Our approach at Mantra4Change is to address these challenges systemically - at scale with speed leveraging technology, system (actors and institutions) and ecosystem."

Further, she emphasises the need for "an inspired, enabled and transformed group of leaders at all levels in the education system who can lead with vision and drive improvements in their own context, beyond systemic constraints." She can take a bow, for she qualifies to be in that grouping. **DM**