



# GRASSROOTS ACTION PROGRAM

*VOLUME 4*

August-December 2025



STRENGTHENING  
PARTNERSHIPS



AMPLIFYING VOICES



## In This Edition:

- MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN
- FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK
- UPDATED REPORT OF FIRST PHASE STUDY CIRCLE
- STUDENT ASSOCIATE ENGAGEMENT
  - A. ORIENTATION SESSION
  - B. MEETING WITH NAVJYOTI TEAM WITH STUDENT'S ASSOCIATES
  - C. SESSION ON IDI AND FGDS GAP
    - a. Professor Emily F. Henderson
    - b. Fieldwork Glimpse
- GAP Core Team

# MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Respected Advisors, Colleagues, and Friends

As we bring out the fourth edition of the GAP initiative research newsletter, we feel a quiet sense of fulfillment of something long envisioned taking deeper root while establishing its presence at grassroots, community level.

My own journey into academia as in-practice scholar began through the absorption of ethnographic fieldwork, where inter-subjective observations in research were acquired through listening, silently observing, more listening, and then writing about the lived experiences of communities as they navigate through the challenges and possibilities of everyday life, often in the most precarious of neighborhoods and living conditions. In the same vein, we have committed at GAP with a spirit of engaging with all from the ground up. The experiences gathered from the grassroots action program has shaped our belief that a university must also be more than an institution of instructional learning; it must be curated and nurtured as an interactive space that builds long-term, bottom-up relationships with local communities while closely understanding and engaging with the realities of those often left at the margins, without an agency or institutional voice to advocate their views.

This initiative now represents not just an academic exercise but a living, evolving conversation between students, researchers, practitioners, and communities. It is deeply encouraging to see a cohort of young minds and collaborators who are willing to take the slower, more careful route: one that prioritizes depth over speed, presence over performance and accountability over abstraction.

When we first began shaping this initiative, I imagined the university as a site not only of intellectual rigor but of ethical responsibility a space equipped with material and cognitive resources that could be offered in service of collective reflection and social change.

This is not about the university taking an upper hand. It is about learning to take a responsive, responsible position to listen before we speak, and to think with those whose lives are too often spoken for.

I am especially glad that the first round of engagement in Bawana JJ Colony has reached this important milestone. I have closely followed the process from the design of the baseline survey to the field-level interactions, and the reflections that followed. At every stage, I saw not just data collection, but the quiet labour of relationship-building, humility, and learning.

The long-term vision has always been to nurture a research environment that does more than publish findings it must give back to the community, sharpen our ethical imagination, and equip our students to carry that forward. We may be at the early stages of this path, but I believe we're moving in the right direction.

This edition is a testament to the possibilities of that vision and the many hands and minds that are bringing it to life.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deepanshu Mohan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DEEPANSHU MOHAN

DEAN, IDEAS

O P JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

# From the Editorial Desk

---

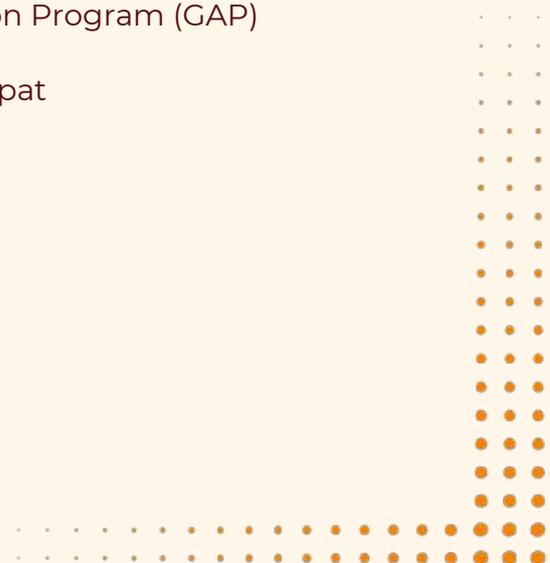
Our time and energy during this phase have been devoted to updating the first-phase report in light of the feedback received from scholars and experts in the field, planning the second phase of the qualitative study, recruiting Student Associates, developing the research proposal, conducting pilot exercises, and building rapport with respondents as well as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working closely with the community in Bawana JJ Colony.

The second phase is more deeply oriented towards sustained engagement with youth and parents. Through this process, we have come to realise that longer-term engagement—through research, dialogue, and continuous conversations by researchers located within a university—can play a significant role in strengthening linkages between educational institutions and the community. Such engagement helps create shared spaces of knowledge production, awareness, and mutual support, fostering an organic and trust-based connection that goes beyond short-term interventions. It also enables the research process to remain attentive to lived realities, local aspirations, and the evolving concerns of the community, thereby enriching both academic inquiry and community engagement.

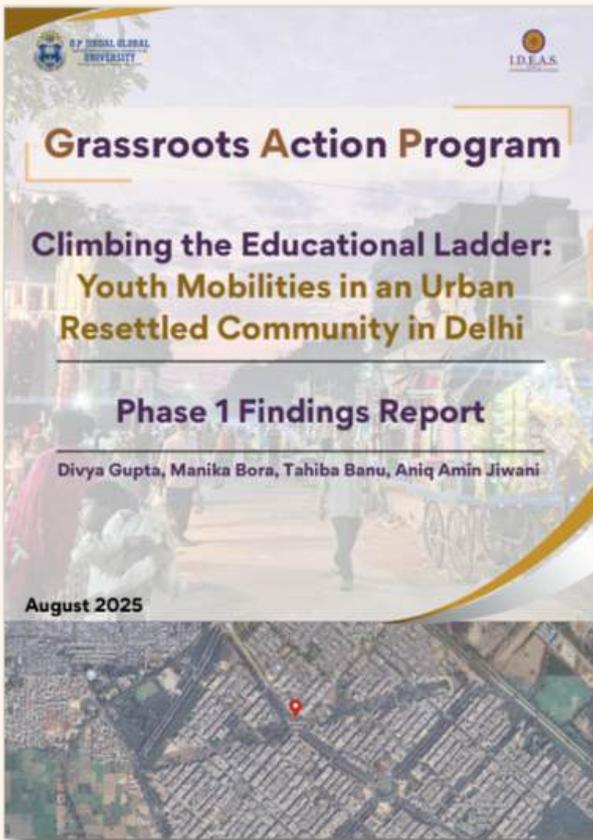


**Ms. TAHIBA BANU**

Editor, and Lead, Grassroots Action Program (GAP)  
Lecturer, I.D.E.A.S.  
O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat



# Updated Report of First Phase



A dedicated team from the Grassroots Action Program (GAP)—an initiative under the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies (IDEAS)—in the month of June presented their assessment report titled "Margins and Pathways: Mapping Educational Trajectories and the Role of Navjyoti in Bawana JJ Colony."

Led by Dr. Manika Bora (Assistant Professor, Jindal Global Law School), Dr. Divya Gupta (Associate Professor, Jindal Global Law School), and Tahiba Banu (Lecturer), the report offers critical insights into the educational experiences of youth in Bawana JJ Colony and the transformative role played by Navjyoti India Foundation.

Click here: <https://jgu.s3.ap-south-1.amazonaws.com/ideas/GAP+Report+Phase+1.pdf>



# Student Associate Engagement

## A. Orientation Session

The Student Associate (SA) Orientation Session was attended by Prof. Deepanshu Mohan, Dean, Office of Interdisciplinary Studies (IDEAS); Prof. Namesh Killemsetty, Associate Director, IDEAS and Mentor, GAP Phase 2; Ms. Tahiba Banu, Lead, Grassroots Action Program (GAP); and GAP core team members Ms. Nasima Sultan and Mr. Najam Us Saqib

The session introduced student associates to the objectives, scope, and evolving trajectory of the Grassroots Action Program. Students were oriented to the work conducted by GAP in Phase 1 and the transition into Phase 2, with particular emphasis on the nature of engagement in Bawana JJ Colony. Discussions focused on the field context, ethical considerations, and the importance of sustained and sensitive engagement with community members.

In addition to field-level expectations, students were briefed on the backend research processes, including data documentation, transcription, analytical note-writing, and coordination work that supports field-based research. The orientation aimed to situate students within the larger research ecosystem of GAP, helping them understand both the visible and invisible labour involved in community-based research.



## B. Meeting with NAVJYOTI TEAM with SAs

---

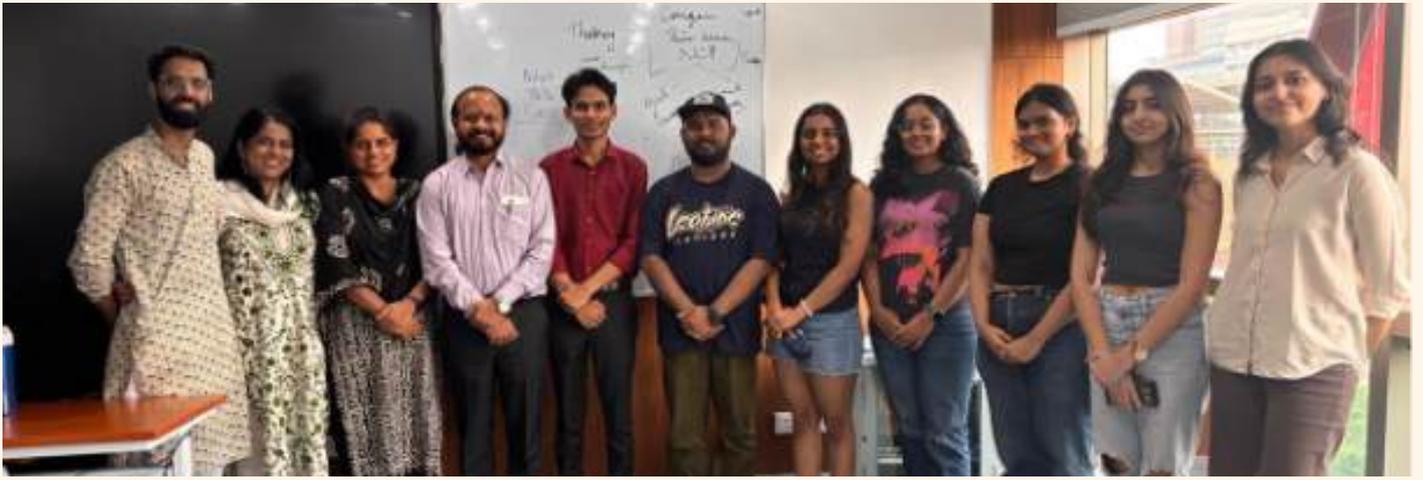
On **30th September**, a team from Navjyoti, led by **Mr. Sushil, Community Engagement Head**, visited the campus to interact with **GAP student associates**. During the session, Mr. Sushil and his team shared their on-ground experiences of working closely with communities and addressing everyday challenges.

The interaction offered students valuable insights into the realities and uncertainties many communities face in accessing and sustaining education. It encouraged meaningful reflection and helped GAP student associates develop a deeper understanding of the social and economic precarities surrounding educational access.

The meeting with the Navjyoti India Foundation team, led by Mr. Sushil, Community Engagement Head, provided student associates with valuable insights into the lived realities of working in Bawana JJ Colony. During the interaction, the Navjyoti team presented field narratives drawn from their long-standing engagement with the community, offering context on everyday challenges related to education, livelihood insecurity, and social vulnerability.

Students actively engaged with the team, raising questions about field access, trust-building, ethical dilemmas, and the complexities of conducting research in precarious settings. The discussion helped bridge theoretical understanding with field realities, allowing students to better grasp the uncertainties, negotiations, and emotional labour involved in community work.

The interaction also deepened students' understanding of the field as a relational space one shaped by long-term presence, responsiveness, and collaboration, reinforcing the importance of working closely with civil society partners in conducting grounded and meaningful research.



## C. SESSION on IDI and FGDs

### GAP Second Phase recap

#### a. Professor Emily F. Henderson

---

We were honored to host Professor Emily F. Henderson SFHEA, Director of Doctoral Education and Academia Research Centre and member of the I.D.E.A.S. Advisory Council, on 8th September 2025 who visited the campus. The GAP team led by Ms Tahiba Banu, Lecturer IDEAS had a meeting with Prof Emily discussing the phase 2 of the study.

**Prof Henderson gave detailed feedback on the work the GAP Team intended to carry on. In addition to that the nature of the field work and distribution of work was also discussed.**



## b. Fieldwork Glimpse

In September, the Navjyoti team organised a Samvad on **“Child, Labour and Education”** at Navjyoti’s office, bringing together community members from JJ Bhawana Colony for an open and reflective discussion. The session was led by **Ms Tahiba Banu, Lecturer, IDEAS.**

The Samvad created a space for meaningful dialogue with children, including school-going students and those who had dropped out, to understand their experiences and the community’s perspectives on child labour. Ms Banu also engaged with women from the community to explore the social, economic, and cultural barriers that affect children’s education, and to better understand how mothers view schooling and its role in their children’s futures.

Overall, the interaction helped surface lived experiences, local challenges, and aspirations around education, highlighting the need for community-informed approaches to address child labour and improve access to learning.



# GAP Core Team

---



**Ms. Tahiba Banu**

Editor and Lead, Grassroots Action Program (GAP)  
Lecturer, I.D.E.A.S.  
O.P. Jindal Global University



**Mr. Najam Us Saqib**

Co-Lead, GAP  
Assistant Director I.D.E.A.S.  
Constellation Fellow, Justice, Urban Systems and Technology



**Ms. Nasima Sultana Choudhury**

Deputy Manager, I.D.E.A.S.,  
Grassroots Action Program (GAP)  
O.P. Jindal Global University