Press Release

Sampark Foundation Chairman Vineet Nayar and Anupama Nayar pledges INR 10 Cr to ensure NO CHILD IS LEFT BEHIND

• Investment to safeguard uninterrupted learning of 1 Crore disadvantaged children in government schools amidst corona virus scare

• Introduces one of India's largest free learning and development platform “Baithak” in Hindi for primary government school children to make learning fun and interactive for children at home

New Delhi; 16.04.2020: The Coronavirus crisis has suddenly upended lives across the world, with schools, colleges shut as a precautionary measure, affecting the education of millions of children, who are forced to sit at home. As a result, children are losing precious learning time. Global agencies such as WHO and UNICEF have asked schools and authorities to consider remote learning as an immediate step to ensure education. Responding to the crisis, Vineet Nayar, Chairman Sampark Foundation and Ex CEO of HCL Technologies has been working hard with a group of inspired AI developers, Educators, Child Phycologists, Game designers and Graphic Animators around the world to develop a platform that would ensure that the learning of 1 crore disadvantaged children in government schools does not stop despite Corona Virus.

This unique collaboration amongst 28 top-notch professionals working the nights in Noida, Sydney with core testing in Bangalore, led to development of Baithak with core investment of INR 10 Cr by Anupama and Vineet Nayar through their foundation. Baithak is one of India's largest “free” learning and development platform in Hindi for primary government school children making learning fun and interactive for children while at home.

The Nayars’ commitment to innovation-led, large- scale social change over last 7 years inspired these 28 senior professionals working in some of the best research universities and corporations across the world to join hands with Sampark Innovation Lab to make a difference by leveraging design thinking, technology, child psychology and advances in pedagogy across the world.

This platform followed rapid development and testing process over just 5 weeks and was anchored by the core team at Sampark Innovation Lab. This platform is being rolled out across 6 states in India through collaboration with the state governments to ensure rapid deployment on the phones of 1 crore parents assisted by 200,000 trained teachers and over 76,000 School management committees. The application already has over 100,000 downloads.

Shri Vineet Nayar, Founder and Chairman, Sampark Foundation, said, “The parents who can afford are enrolling their children in online learning platforms. However, most parents of children studying in government schools can’t afford these private online platforms. Secondly, most of these platforms are in English and not in language of teaching in government schools.
And third, most of the content on these online learning platforms is not mapped with the state curriculum and textbooks. We wish to ensure that every child gets an equal opportunity to continue their education during the coronavirus crisis.”

For children and parents, Baithak provides access to thousands of teaching-learning resources in Hindi including, Sampark Smart Shala animated video lessons, Rhymes, Stories, interactive and engaging games and classroom activities, worksheets, quizzes, all mapped to state textbooks, and developed in accordance with the states’ syllabus. This app allows users to download the content for free and view without internet.

This is also a unique hub of crowdsourced classroom innovations and community creation that serves as a social platform to interact with teachers and ask questions for community members to solve. It is also a platform for teachers to learn from other teachers and add to the collective knowledge about classroom practices of the community.

To engage children in learning, the app has a unique feature—there will be live sessions where Sampark Didi, our mascot, will reach all children while they are at home from 9-11am and share daily lessons mapped to state textbooks in form of animated videos, engaging activities and live Q&A. The program is called “Sampark Didi Ke Sath -Nau se Gyarah.” Since the children know Sampark Didi we expect excitement to come back to learning as she reaches their homes through “Sampark Baithak” App.

Nayars believe that large-scale social change is only possible if it leverages advances made in reward and recognition loyalty programs mastered by global retail brands. This platform leverages that insight and offers incentives such as certificates on clearing courses, badges for active members of the community who contribute in the growth of other members, notification and recognition when posted content finds widespread acceptance. The platform is customised for each state, each district and each member in that state.

The other unique feature of the platform is a tab where the state leadership interacts directly with the parents and teachers by posting circulars, schedules, guidelines, suggestions and interesting content. The state gets monthly insight on usage, contribution and views in each village, cluster, district to drive increase in leveraging the platform to reach more and more children sitting at home through their teachers.

Sampark Baithak app, is a new addition to Sampark Foundation’s Sampark Smart Shala program, which is empowering more than 2,00,000 teachers and helping improve learning outcomes for 7 million children studying in 90,000 government primary schools across 6 states—Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.
About Sampark Foundation:

Sampark Foundation was founded by Anupama Nayar and Vineet Nayar (Former Vice Chairman and CEO of HCL Technologies and author of Harvard Business Press bestseller "Employees First, Customer Second") with a belief that “frugal innovation” and its effective implementation in partnership with the government can drive large-scale improvement in learning outcomes.

We are currently working with 90,000 rural schools, 7 million children in 6 states (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand) along with 2,00,000 teachers. A third party assessment in 2018-19 by Feedback Consulting showed a remarkable increase in the percentage of children who answered grade level questions in Math & English: 68% in Chhattisgarh compared to 29% in 2017-18, 54% in Jharkhand compared to 18% in control group with no intervention, 70% in Haryana compared to 23% in control group with no intervention.

About Vineet Nayar:

Vineet Nayar is Founder, Chairman of Sampark Foundation and former CEO of HCL Technologies, a leading IT firm whose transformation was architected from $0.7 billion in 2005 to $4.7 Billion in 2013 by Vineet, which led HCL’s management practices being taught as a case study in Harvard Business School. He is also author of the highly acclaimed management book, “Employee First, Customers Second – Turning Conventional Management Upside Down which has sold 100,000 copies till date. Vineet has been cited in “Forbes 48 Heroes of Philanthropy 2016 for the pedagogical innovations the Foundation has brought into classrooms. He is also an acknowledged management visionary and a radical thinker and has been included in the elite “Thinkers 50 List” in 2011-2012 which is a listing of the world’s top 50 business leaders.

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