

# An E-Newsletter of DEVI Sansthan

TRANSFORMATION IN EDUCATION



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## DEVI Sansthan presents Leadership Circle 5 – A Roadmap for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy



Lighting of the lamp by delegates



Dr Dinesh Sharma addressing the conference



Shri Sandeep Singh voicing his thoughts



Dr Sunita Gandhi, Founder DEVI Sansthan & Convenor of the programme

Two-day educational meet 'Leadership Circle 5' organised by DEVI Sansthan under the leadership of Dr Sunita Gandhi, Convenor & Founder of DEVI Sansthan took off to a grand start on 5th May 2026 at the World Unity Convention Centre, City Montessori School, Kanpur Road, Lucknow. In his inaugural address, **Chief Guest, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Basic Education, Government of UP, Mr Sandeep Singh** confirmed the state's commitment to expand ALFA across all districts in U.P. He noted that UP has moved from 23rd to 7th position in the national education rankings, upgraded 96–97% of its 1.34 lakh government schools across 19 infrastructure parameters, and introduced holistic report cards and digital curriculum tools. He distributed stationery gifts to the children on stage and called foundational literacy "not charity, but a moral imperative."

Guest of Honour, **Dr Dinesh Sharma, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, (Uttar Pradesh)** said that Foundational Literacy and Numeracy skills can vastly be improved through ALFA teaching methods. He praised Devi Sansthan's work in pedagogical innovation and connected foundational learning to national progress, value-based education, and India's demographic dividend, and called for a KG-to-PG roadmap that keeps quality and employability at its centre.



**Earlier, Mr Nixon Joseph, Group Executive, Devi Sansthan, welcomed delegates from 18 states** — from Jammu & Kashmir to Kerala, Mizoram to Maharashtra — all united by a single purpose: ensuring every child in India can read, write, and do basic mathematics with confidence and dignity. He called attention to the NIPUN Bharat Mission's goal

of universal FLN by 2026–27 and outlined how Devi Sansthan's ALFA (Accelerating Learning for All) pedagogy, validated by Harvard through a Randomised Control Trial in Shamli, UP, represents a proven and scalable answer.

In a thought-provoking and informative address, **Dr Sunita Gandhi, Founder & CEO, Devi Sansthan**, traced ALFA's journey from its origins in Shamli, where 10 pilot schools became a Harvard-cited case study, to its current reach across 14 Indian states and 33 world languages. She said that four states of India have now fully adopted ALFA, and five new aspirational districts in UP—Babraich, Balrampur, Chitrakoot, Siddharth Nagar, and Sonbhadra — have been added this year. She underscored that the teachers are the true change-makers; ALFA gives them a better tool.



Dr Sunita Gandhi with Special Guest Mr Parth Sarthi Sen Sharma, IAS & others

Panel discussions took place in which **Panel 1** discussed the need for strengthening FLN (Foundational Literacy and Numeracy) Policy, its implementation and accountability in School Education. The moderator in this discussion was

**Dr Madhukar Gupta, IAS, (Retd), Director of Partnerships, DEVI Sansthan**, while the panelists included –Chandrashekhar B, Senior Program Officer, Samagra Shiksha Karnataka; Ms Angela Zothanpuri, Director, Education, Mizoram; Mr Bijesh Kumar Saxena, Deputy Director, Education, Delhi; Ms Sreekala KS, ASPD, Kerala; Dr Shankar Kumar, Asstt Director, SCERT, Punjab; Dr Taneya Singh, Consultant, Gr I School Education, NITI Aayog; Mr Harshit Mishra, Deputy Commissioner, KV Sangathan, J&K; Mr Parmendra Saklani, Additional Director, SCERT, Uttarakhand; Ms Sandra M. Nongdiej, Associate Professor & Nodal Officer, FLN, Meghalaya.

Master Trainers **Tom Delaney and Milita Haldar** led an Ascending & Descending Order activity, with delegates forming numbers using paper slips (1, 3, 7) and sorting all six possible



Chief Guest Shri Sandeep Singh with the children

three-digit combinations. The session demonstrated how ALFA builds place value understanding, number sense, and mathematical reasoning simultaneously — without pen or paper.

**Special Guest Mr Partha Sarthi Sen Sharma, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, U.P.**, expressed his profound thoughts saying that education alone makes man superior to other beings and



Exhibition of Hands-On material

innovation and experimentation in education must be encouraged.

Children from Prathmik Vidyalaya Chitragupt Nagar, Lucknow, brought an ALFA classroom live to the auditorium stage

— showcasing random pairing, teacher-student demonstration, student-student demonstration, and whole-class peer learning.

The **2nd Panel Discussion** was on the theme- “Role of CSR in Strengthening FLN-Partnerships, Priorities and Proof of Impact.” This was moderated by Mr Nixon Joseph, Group Executive, DEVI Sansthan and the panelists were Ms Sheena Gandhi, Assistant Vice-resident, BSE Ltd; Savita Mundhe, Head, CSR, JSW

Foundation; Mr Prakash Reddy, Editor & CEO, Corporate Social focus Magazine; Mr Anil Parmar, Senior VP, United Way, Mumbai; Priyanka Behera, Director, Samhita-CGF; Rishika Puri, CS & CCO, SBI Factors Ltd and Preeti Munjal, Executive Director, IIMPACT.

**Dr Bharti Gandhi, Chairperson, DEVI Sansthan**, offered a deep personal reflection on the purpose of education — to build world citizens grounded in values and capable of contributing to a more humane world. She blessed the gathering and energised delegates with her characteristic warmth and wit.

Tom and Milita facilitated rapid-fire testimonials from teachers across UP, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Teachers described ALFA as “teacher-friendly,” praised random pairing for eliminating classroom fear, and shared stories of previously silent children becoming active participants. One teacher from Himachal Pradesh sang a celebratory local song from the stage.

**Panel 3** was moderated by **Major General Manoj Tiwari (Retired), Director, Outreach, DEVI Sansthan**. The theme was “Mobilizing CSR towards FLN-Strategy, Scale & Sustainability.” The panelists were Mr Sahista Moh. Iqbal, CSR Lead, Glaxo SmithKline; Dr Suresh Reddy, Director, SRF Foundation; Ms Anushka Bonia, CSR Lead, Johnson Matthey, India; Mr Krishna Kant Rai, Founder & Director, BBIC; Mr Puneeti Bali, FLN & Education Consultant; Mr Sujeet Ranjan, CEO, United Way, Delhi; Ms Anamika Srivastava, Founder & CEO, Development Consortium and Dr Arun Kumar, Deputy Director, Government Institute of Advanced Studies in Education, Rajasthan. A Samman Samaroh was organized in which Block Education Officers, SRG members, government officials, and CSR partners were honoured on stage. BEOs received certificates to distribute to their teachers — recognising the frontline workers driving change in classrooms every day. A Cultural Musical Night was organized before dinner—a fitting close to a full and energising first day. Chief Mentor of DEVI Sansthan Dr Bharti Gandhi delivered the Vote of Thanks with warmth and gratitude, acknowledging every delegate who travelled from across India to be part of this movement.



Dr Bharti Gandhi, Chairperson, DEVI Sansthan



It's a One World after all! Participants of 2 day Educational Meet 'Leadership Circle 5'

## 2nd Day of Leadership Circle - 5

organized by DEVI Sansthan at CMS Kanpur Road

“Quality Education is the world’s best investment.”

-Dr Joseph Emmanuel, Chief Executive & Secretary, CICSE



Address by Chief Guest Dr Joseph Emmanuel



Dr Bharti Gandhi, with our Most Revered Guests



Address by Guest of Honour Shri Pankaj Chaudhary

“Quality in Education can never be compromised. Otherwise, a whole generation of students stands affected. Foundational learning is the key to all learning. Data shows that we need to do a lot at the primary level. Today what I saw on stage, reflects NEP 2020 principles in action.” These thoughts were expressed by the **Chief Executive & Secretary, CICSE Board, Dr Joseph Emmanuel**. Dr Emmanuel further said that “India's 2009 PISA performance (second last) happened because learning was disconnected from real life—ALFA reconnects it.” Dr Joseph Emmanuel strongly urged scaling this model across the country's formal school system.



Dr Sunita Gandhi felicitating Chief Guest Dr Joseph Emmanuel

Dr Emmanuel was speaking as the Chief Guest on Day 2 of the Leadership Circle 5 educational meet held at CMS Kanpur Road Auditorium. The event was organised by **Dr Sunita Gandhi, Founder of DEVI Sansthan**, a non-

profit organisation based in Lucknow, India.

Earlier, **Mr Nixon Joseph, Group Executive, DEVI Sansthan**, greeted the audience and welcomed them to the 2nd day of this august gathering of enlightened minds. A video was shown of DEVI's journey on the threshold of progress. A live demonstration of ALFA in action in Government School, Sorwa II, BKT Block gave an inside view of the programme and how quickly children learn from this unique teaching pedagogy. It may be mentioned that DEVI Sansthan has become the first NGO from UP to be registered on the BSE Social Stock Exchange, and is planning to float a public bond by June to fund ALFA implementation in Ranchi's government schools.

**Mr Pankaj Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State for Finance, Govt of India and UP BJP President** was an honoured guest at

this conference. His dignified presence and words of wisdom greatly motivated the participants. He called ALFA "a magic wand" after witnessing Class 2 children reading newspapers on stage. "FLN is not just academic achievement — it builds confidence, which is life-changing," he opined. He framed education as "the most important national



Warm Welcome accorded to Shri Pankaj Chaudhary

investment", not expenditure. Further, the Hon'ble Minister highlighted government schemes: 10,000+ Atal Tinkering Labs (5,000 more coming), Eklavya Model Residential Schools, Kanya Sumangala Yojana (26 lakh+ girls benefited), 81 medical colleges in UP. "When a child in a village learns to read, it doesn't just change that child's future — it changes the entire country's future." He praised DEVI Sansthan's BSE Social Stock Exchange listing as a mark of professional credibility. As a kind gesture of appreciation, he gifted all the children a stationery kit personally



Renowned dignitaries from various states of India

The highlight of the programme was an Ed Tech Launch of India's first AI powered Hindi Literacy Chatbox "Padhai Pal" presented by **Mr Tom Delaney**, an Expert from Australia,



Demonstration of an ALfA classroom

associated with Dr Sunita Gandhi for the past 8 years.

**Special Guest Prof. Indrani Bhaduri, CEO & Head PARAKH, Head Educational Survey Division, NCERT, Ministry of Education** showed through video message that PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024 data shows UP's FLN outcomes are trending positively and called on the community to move "beyond criticism into co-creation"

ALfA India Impact Report ("FLN: What Works — India") was launched. It was unveiled by Dr. Sunita Gandhi alongside SPDs and state partners.

Panel discussions were held on the themes like: The world's best investment: Education vs other development priorities, Data to delivery: How Government Systems can accelerate FLN outcomes; Multiplying Impact: CSR Beyond Cheque Embedding FLN in Corporate Giving Strategies. A quiz was conducted on the ALfA system of education and a musical programme on Kaise Sundar ho Hamara Gaon.

**Master Trainer Milita Haldar** led the ALfA Bengali Hands-On Session. Two Hindi-speaking volunteers with zero Bengali knowledge learned to read Bengali words within minutes using



Mr Pankaj Chaudhary giving gifts to the children

the ALfA known-to-unknown approach. The entire auditorium (2,000+ people) then read Bengali words together. She also explained how the same phonics method unlocks English reading — "CAT" isn't C-A-T but the sounds kh-a-ṛ. The event coincided with Rabindranath Tagore's birthday (May 9). The session ended with a rousing chorus of "Ekla Cholo Re"

**Panel 4 was moderated by Mr Nixon Joseph.** It was based on the theme "The World's Best Investment — Education vs. Other Development Priorities." Among the participants were Sachi Kant Tripathi (RSB Foundation and others).

**Panel 5 was moderated by Dr. Sunita Gandhi** on the topic: "Data to Delivery — How Government Systems Can Accelerate FLN Outcomes." Scholars and educationists from various parts of India participated in this session and expressed their views.

**Panel 6 was moderated by Dr. Madhukar Gupta (Retd. IAS).** The theme was "CSR Beyond Cheques — Embedding FLN in Corporate Giving Strategies." Dr. Archana Mittal, Murali Valliveti (GETA); Mohd Asim Khan (Cadence); Sanjib Kumar Das (Bandhan Group); Harshit Mishra (KV Sangathan); and others gave their views in this session. Key message was given by Dr Sunita Gandhi: who informed that 15,000 teachers trained in HP online, for near-zero cost. "\$1 literacy" is real. CSR should fund what actually works, not what's visible.

Telugu FLN Book Launch was held with DEVI Sansthan unveiling a Telugu-language edition of its literacy toolkit, with the



Dr Bharti Gandhi greeting some of the delegates

Telangana team celebrating with a cultural Bathukamma flower performance

Samman Samaroh was held after this: Model school certificates and mementoes were presented to outstanding schools and delegates from all participating states — J&K, HP, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Telangana, and all UP districts.

Multiple commitments were made to scale ALfA — J&K, expanding state-wide, Uttarakhand moving to 3-district pilot, multiple CSR commitments were initiated

A musical performance with the closing song: "**Aa Uu, Kaisa Sundar Ho Hamara Gaon**" was held and much appreciated followed by "**School Chalo**" song by the children on stage.

Dr Sunita Gandhi, Founder of DEVI Sansthan thanked the distinguished guests, government officials and participants in making the programme a success with their cooperation and contribution saying that this was a definite step in expanding educational research and training.

Dr Bharti Gandhi, Chief Mentor of Leadership 5 organized by DEVI Sansthan congratulated the participants for giving a new direction in education and delivered the final Vote of Thanks.