

Beyond the Blackboard: How Vedanta Aluminium is Reshaping Learning in Rural Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Inside a government school classroom in Odisha's Kalahandi district, a group of curious students watch a complex scientific concept come alive vividly on a large digital screen. Topics that were once confined to chalk diagrams and rote explanations in text are now visually engaging, and easier to grasp. This shift from passive learning to active engagement, made possible through Vedanta Aluminium's support, is transforming classrooms across rural Odisha.

In districts like Kalahandi, Sundargarh and Jharsuguda, where literacy levels are at around 59%, 73% and nearly 79% respectively (as per the 2011 census), large sections of students are first-generation learners, and educational access in these regions has been largely characterised by limited teacher availability, weak foundational learning, and low classroom engagement. In such a context, learning outcomes are shaped less by access to schools and more by the quality of instruction within them.

Vedanta Aluminium has been working to address this gap through a phased approach, first strengthening classroom-based teaching, and then augmenting it through digital learning tools, ensuring that technology strengthens rather than replaces strong academic foundations.

Vedanta Aluminium has launched Project Gyan Jyoti in the Sijimali region across Rayagada and Kalahandi districts, in collaboration with Areti Learning. Covering 6 government schools and benefiting over 600 students, the initiative is supporting learning through digital classrooms, solar-powered infrastructure, and community engagement, helping improve access to quality learning environments in remote rural areas of Odisha.

Under Project Vidya, launched in 2025, the company's focus has been on improving teacher-student ratios and strengthening core subject learning in Mathematics, Science, and English. Through the deployment of 20 additional teachers across 17 government schools, the initiative has

supported over 1,800 students across Sundargarh and Jharsuguda.

The impact has been immediate and measurable. Attendance in intervention areas has increased from 64% to 76% in Lakhanpur block and 66% to 82% in Hemgir block, while overall student achievement has improved from 42% to 64%. Targeted academic support through reference books, is also helping students access opportunities beyond their immediate geography.

In regions where many children are the first in their families to attend school, this progress is also driving change at the household level. Regular attendance, improved learning, and structured guidance are reshaping how families view education as a pathway to opportunity. Binita Soren, a parent from Hemgir, reflected on this shift, saying, "Earlier, we only wanted our children to go to school. Now we want them to study well, acquire a good education, and move ahead in life. Vedanta's projects have made a difference in how confidently they learn and speak."