

Buses, not bikes, in Mewat

By Rachel Curtis - Development Manager



Mausmin

Mausmin is a pretty lucky 14 year-old. She rides a bus every day to eighth grade, where she ranks 5th in her class of 40 students. “I don’t find it too difficult, especially since my brother, who is in year 9, helps me,” she says.

One of three children, Mausmin’s family is notably smaller than Mewat district’s average family size of eight. Her mother, Jubeda, lost three children in labor, a tragedy that is all too common in Mewat. Perhaps because they have less mouths to feed and bodies to clothe, Mausmin's parents are supportive of the children’s formal learning for the long term. “We will educate the boys as long as they wish to remain in school,” says Jubeda. “And Mausmin as long as she is safe.”

By “safe” Jubeda means on a bus. Mausmin’s school actually gave bicycles to children who lived several kilometers away, but this simply isn’t good enough for girls - there are empty fields and isolated outhouses on the path. “We cannot possibly ride to school on a cycle alone, even if it is less than 3 kilometers,” says Mausmin.

“We heard that a girl from a nearby village going to school on her bike was surrounded by a group of boys,” recounts Mausmin. “She only escaped because some villagers helped her. There’s no way my parents, or any others for that matter, agree to girls going to school by bicycle.”

Mausmin herself, in fact, didn’t expect to attend eighth grade. At the beginning of the school year, she was at home helping with chores. She had heard of the Blossom Bus and asked to be chosen, but had heard nothing back. Finally, after two weeks as a dropout, she got the news that the Bus was coming to her village.

“I was very happy to know that I could take the Blossom Bus,” she says. “Four of my girl cousins dropped out last year, and while I encourage them to go back there is little chance without a bus to take them,” laments Mausmin. “But I want to finish grade 12, and I feel that my fate will lead me to a good job.”

“Education is everything,” says Jubeda. “It’s the only way to get employment, become independent and teach girls to think for themselves.”

Mausmin, Jubeda and all of us at Lotus Outreach thank you, the Blossom Bus donors, for making sure this young woman, and dozens of others like her, have a chance to be the first in their villages to finish high school.



Mausmin and friend studying by kerosene lamplight



With her friends, siblings and mother

