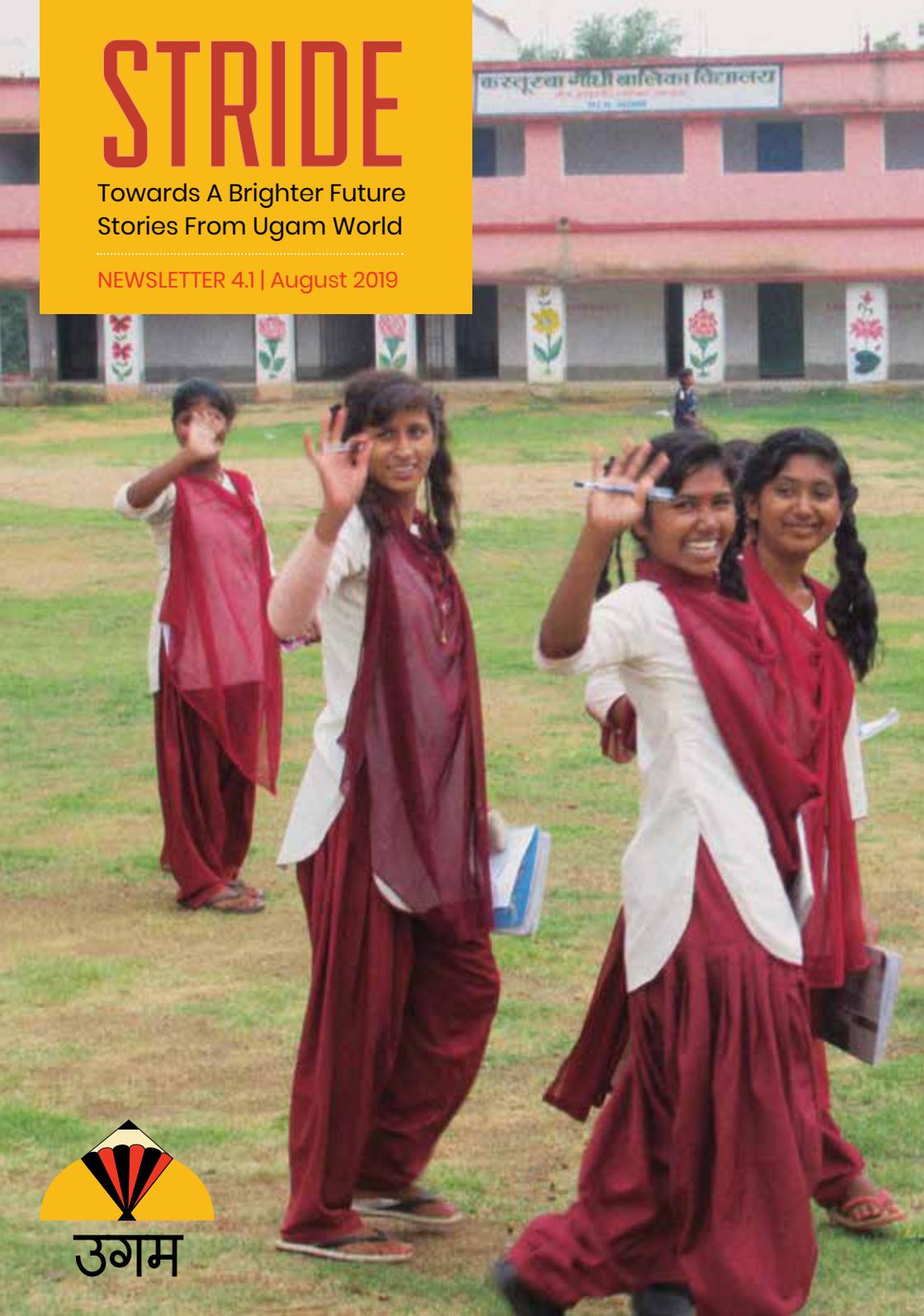
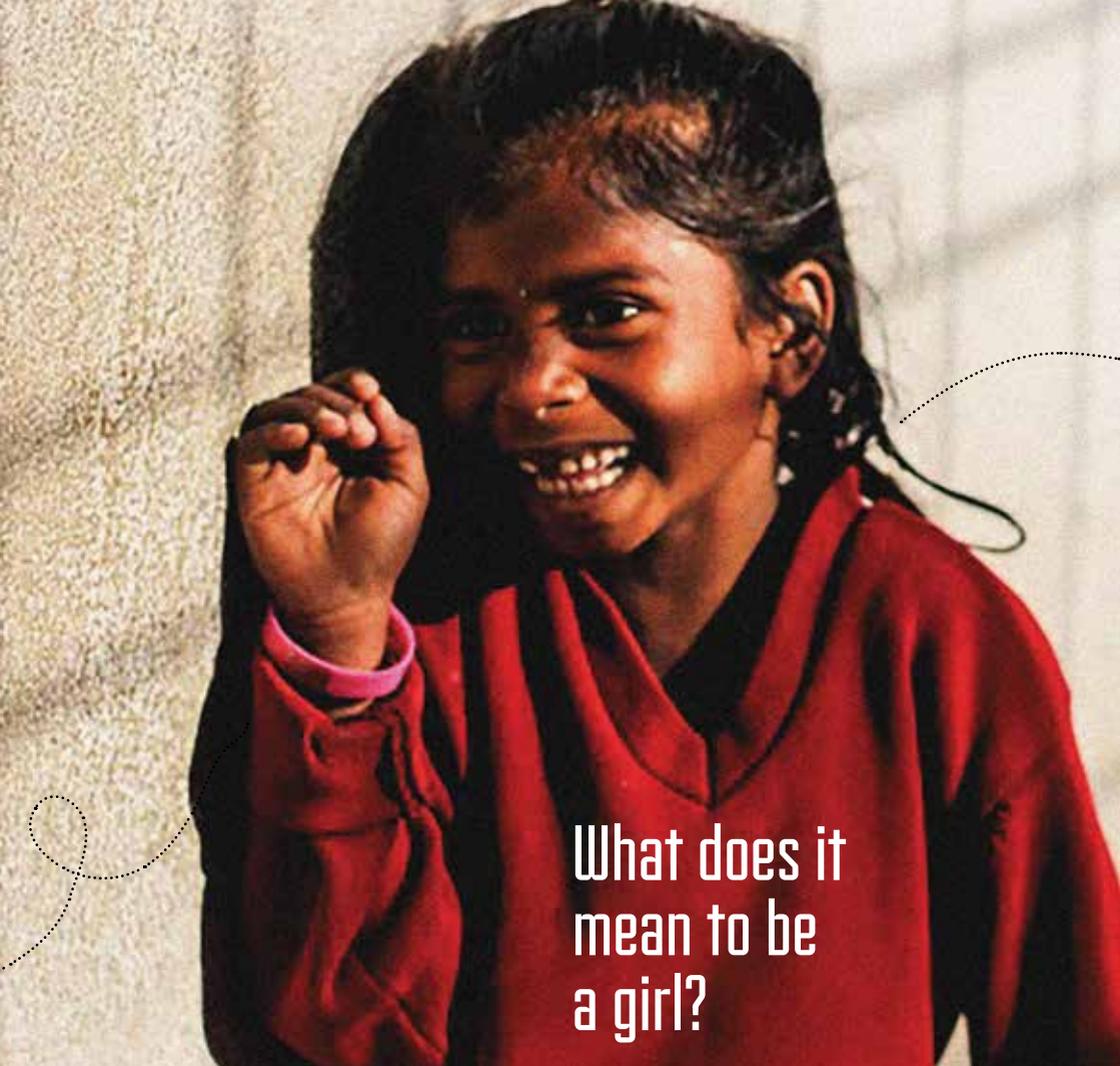


STRIDE

Towards A Brighter Future
Stories From Ugam World

NEWSLETTER 4.1 | August 2019





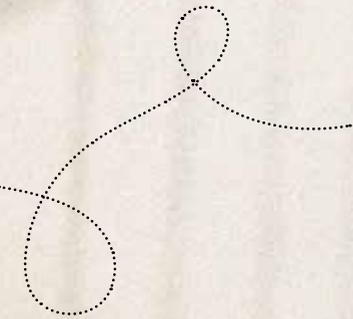
What does it mean to be a girl?

Even as campaigns to promote strong young women get national headlines and more girls get enrolled in schools an alarming trend happens to many girls when they hit adolescence.

Our conversations with adolescent girls in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas in the last few months have

allowed us a peek into their world.

We asked them, "What does it mean to be a girl?" After the long, initial silence some girls spoke up. Someone said—if I am a girl my father will have to pay dowry, being a girl means I can't do as I please, being a girl means I may not be able to study after class 12.



“But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.”

Maya Angelou

Speaking entirely from her subjective experience, the response carried with it not so much an accurate identity of who she is, as much as an accurate representation of her experience of being a ‘girl’.

With one line, she spoke volumes on why she considered herself outside the circle of voice and agency.

This incident offers us some deep learnings about adolescent girls who live on the margins -- who represents them? What are they excluded from? It’s a phenomenon called “losing their voice,” where even the most audacious girls are likely to become more cautious about

speaking out and less likely to assert themselves.

The residential school space can become the place where girls experience what it means to collectively engage with processes of critical reflection and to analyze their life situation, with the freedom to play and do things together as a group.

This unintended collective of young women brings together members of marginalized groups in ways that enable them to articulate their realities and strategize for individual and social change.

Let us support these girls who have lost their voice to sing again!



60-70

visits to
KGBVs



200

girls watched
motivational
video



400

girls completed a
baseline assessment
for Menstrual Hygiene
management

Events

APRIL

Traveling on bumpy roads through the heat, our teams got busy visiting KGBVs. 60-70 visits in the past few months and many conversations with the stakeholders helped us build an understanding of the needs.

Parallely we were completing the accounts and preparing the Annual Report for Ugam.

MAY

The Lok Sabha Elections meant a time of hectic work for officers.

We focused on the girls— 200 girls from Ichak, Vishnugarh and Barkagaon watched a motivational video and participated in the discussion thereafter. Before the girls went home for holidays we suggested they write diaries during their holiday at home. The idea was received warmly and we waited for June to discover how many girls had actually used the diaries. We shared our Annual Report with all supporters.

JUNE

Fresh rains brought new energy. Several girls had written interesting diary entries—many were about their routine, day to day lives but some were insightful. Our team observed classes, shared feedback, demonstrated assembly activities that increase student voice and expression. We got involved in the Menstrual Hygiene management with the girls and completed a baseline assessment with 400 girls. Consolidated our partnership with Hazaribag district education department.



400

girls completed a
baseline assessment
for Life Skills Session

JULY

At the invitation of the District Collector, Ugam visited East Singhbhum— their schools, KGBVs and met with a thoroughly professional and energetic Education department team.

Our visits to Dhenkanal district resulted in the consolidation of our partnership with the education department there.

In Hazaribagh, our team conducted KGBV level orientation on Gyan Setu program with teachers to support the implementation of the remedial program. We kickstarted our Life Skills sessions with a baseline assessment with 400 girls. The sessions are now conducted by Ugam team and carried forward by the teachers and senior girls through the week.

Ugam launched its presence on Instagram!

My Journey Begins....

Sometimes life offers you great instances and connects you with amazing people in interesting ways. For me, meeting Lopa is one of them. I was interested in working with adolescent girls in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas and Ugam provided the opportunity.

Through our beautifully designed life skills sessions I get to interact with 60 girls on a daily basis. Listening, observing and talking to these girls is giving me tons of valuable experience.

We often tell the girls to think about the “why” aspect of anything to open the doors of their minds. I apply this to myself and think “Why do I find it interesting to work with these girls?” The reason is my childhood. I can relate with their shyness, hesitation, fears and their struggle with themselves. It was all the same for me, though I grew up with better everything. Many a →



Field Stories

One warm Saturday evening in April the girls at Vishnugarh KGBV were surprised at the session in the evening assembly.

The girls giggled, felt awkward and embarrassed as the teachers broached the topic of Menstruation. The teachers had decided to tackle the culture of shame around menstruation. From planning, designing to execution each and every process was managed by the warden and teachers with the constant support from Team Ugam.

As our baseline progressed we found out that the girls and teachers had very limited awareness about Menstruation. We screened "Period: end of sentence" movie for the warden and full time teachers at the school. The movie screening involved intimate discussions by pausing at crucial moments in the film.

At Vishnugarh KGBV, teachers took a lot of time to open up about their feelings and emotions.

What happens because of this shame culture? And lastly how at school, by coming together we can stop this?

The evening assembly where the teachers are sharing about Leucorrhoea

Nisha is a girl from class 9th. Nisha shared with our facilitator, that she liked writing the pre test and then the session. When the facilitator asked her the reason she said that no one talks about these things but it was a good feeling to write about her experience.



times I feel why didn't I have anyone like myself during my childhood. This makes me even more driven towards these girls. I want to be there for them.

The other day I was reading a book "What did you ask at school today?" by Kamla V. Mukunda.

It's a beautiful fusion of Psychology and Education. As I was going deeper through the pages, the experience became very relatable. I can recall my sessions.

It's important to understand how the girls make meaning of each and every word that I share with them. I enjoy going deeper and deeper in understanding their fears, hopes, likes, emotions and ambitions.

I am on a journey where I am trying to reach from "why can't they understand a thing?" to "how their mind works?" At Ugam I get the perfect environment for exploration. My sincere gratitude to our team for pushing me onto this joyful journey.

Kena Holkar, Program Manager



Our Team grows....

Kena Holkar, joins team Ugam as Project Head for the Yuvati program. Kena attended APU after completing her engineering in computer science. She is the recipient of the Wipro Sustainability Fellowship. She has worked on Community Institution Building, Livelihood enhancement and Women Empowerment in Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.

Hiteshbhai, with his more than two decades of experience, joins our team to support the accounts function.

Maitreyi Doshi supports Ugam in a part time capacity as a communications and graphic designer.

We Thank Our Donors

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Drishti Team

Madhu Jayakumar

Vineethbhai

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