

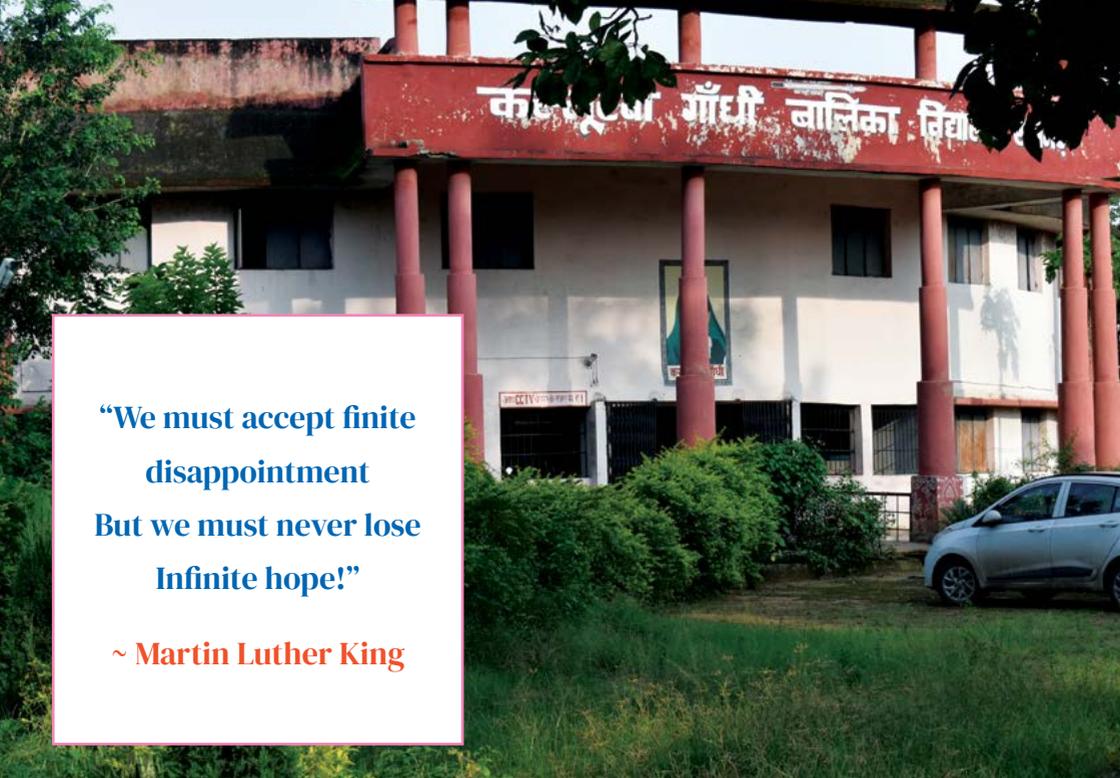


# उkti

Towards A Brighter Future  
Stories From Ugam World

NEWSLETTER | December 2020





**“We must accept finite disappointment  
But we must never lose  
Infinite hope!”**

**~ Martin Luther King**

## New Shoots...

The last few months taught us what these lines mean.

While the pandemic continued and with it brought its set of complex challenges; we also had a new beginning!

### Ramgarh

Ramgarh was made a district on 12 September 2007. It was carved out of erstwhile Hazaribagh District. It lies at the heart of the Jharkhand State. It is a mining, industrial and cultural hub.

At the invitation of the district leadership under Ms Keerthishree, we started work in Ramgarh.

It has **four KGBVS and 2 JBAVs** (Jharkhand Balika Awasiya Vidyalayas).

**Four wardens and 45 teachers support the education of 2000 adolescent girls.**

We kickstarted our work after initial visits to the KGBVs and meetings with the wardens and other district education officers, on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.

Putting together all our previous experience in Hazaribag and East Singhbhum, we adapted to the needs of Ramgarh.

We started with the phone call system, sharing of our **Tarang program** worksheets and training of teachers and wardens.

We look forward to exciting and meaningful work under the leadership of Ms Keerthishree in Ramgarh.

## Heroine

This small poem was written by a young child;

**You might think a hero wears a cape,  
Tied around their shoulders with a tape.**

Mrunalini Pusty, Rajali Tudu, Tuhina Giri and many others like them make for unlikely heroes. But the sari-clad, sometimes bespectacled women – and teachers – are in the front-line of rural education.

This year, Covid-19 has uprooted their lives, burdened them with new responsibilities and dented their morale. Many reports indicate that teachers are reporting higher levels of stress and anxiety during the pandemic: “Covid-19 has turned the education sector upside down”.

These women (and a few men) teachers have been constantly working – adapting to technology, contacting girls, recording educational videos, attending trainings, making assessment sheets and supporting the girls on their emotional ups and downs. As the year comes to a close, educators across the country

are grappling with how they will begin the 2020-2021 academic school year amid our current public health crisis. Some school districts are taking a hybrid approach, others are staying completely remote, and for schools in low-risk areas they are welcoming students back into the classrooms with strict social distancing and hygiene protocols in place to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Of course, it’s tempting to ask if there is something inherent in the success of female leadership in this pandemic, be it the calm and clarity of

**So heroes stay strong and proud  
The sun is behind every cloud,  
It won’t be long before your work is done  
And you will be back at school having lots of fun!**

New Zealand’s Jacinda Ardern, or the effective management of Taiwan’s Tsai Ing-wen.



But when we ask why people become heroic, research doesn’t yet have an answer. It could be that heroes have more compassion or empathy; maybe there’s a hero gene. We don’t know for sure.

The same young poet writes at the end:



## Events

### AUGUST

We continued to work with the wardens and teachers of East Singhbhum and facilitated virtual staff meetings and district review meeting.

Ugam team coached every warden prior to the meeting. Each warden led and facilitated their staff meeting. The chorus of voices as they sang hum honge kamyaab to start the meeting felt wonderful.

Teachers participated in our training on basic grammar (English).

Our periodical Urja reached the schools and many of the girls.

For Independence Day we asked the girls to share their responses to the question— aapke ke liye aazaadi ka matlab kya hai?

In case you missed their responses earlier, see them here: <https://youtu.be/mp5XTeZC5G0>

Ugam team visited all the KGBVs in Ramgarh and interacted with the wardens and teachers to develop an understanding of ground realities.

### SEPTEMBER

Having set up the virtual staff meetings system, Ugam focussed on the need for training.

We facilitated trainings on the use of basic technological features to create educational

videos. Teachers had expressed a need for the creation of these videos to support the learning in santhali and some other remedial topics.

More than **75 teachers participated in the training and close to 50 videos were made and shared with the girls.**

Ugam formally launched its work in Ramgarh on 2<sup>nd</sup> September at the SDM Office in the presence of SDM Ms. Keerthishree, DEO, ADPO, Wardens and accountants.

The teachers in Ramgarh too participated in the video creation training. Ugam shared a basic checklist and rubric with the teachers to evaluate their own videos. Many of the videos have been shared and

uploaded on the E Pathshala – a district e learning initiative.

One the inspiring teacher stories from East Singhbhum got printed in IDR Ground Up (also shared in this issue).

In Ranchi, our virtual staff meeting and training continued with KGBV Mandar.

### OCTOBER

With October , notionally the first term of the school year came to a close. Teachers felt they wanted to assess the students.

We facilitated a training on the use of google forms to use as brief assessment tools. Teachers in East Singhbhum used this extensively and completed assessments.

**67 teacher videos created in**

**Ramgarh and 47 uploaded on Ramgarh e-pathshala.**

Please watch our short clip about International Day of the Girl Child (October11th): [http://youtu.be/7v6\\_j3ixpG0](http://youtu.be/7v6_j3ixpG0)

### NOVEMBER

As school level action quietened with Durga Pooja and Diwali , we focussed on team reflection.

We gathered the data and analysed it.

We focussed on the creation of our new website. **Please visit us at [www.ugamedu.org](http://www.ugamedu.org)**

Our new issue of Urja and newsletter Ukti.

We realized the enthusiastic



response of the girls to worksheets of our adolescent program **Tarang** (we are sharing some images of the girls worksheets above).



## Far and Near East Singhbhum, Jharkhand

Like millions of students across the country, the education of girls attending the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya in Musabani block, East Singhbhum district, Jharkhand, was also severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (or KGBVs) are government-run, residential secondary schools for girls from marginalised backgrounds. Due to lockdown-related school closures, all the girls left for their homes at the end of March.

As a result, learning shifted online. Some teachers used WhatsApp to connect with their students, while other students continued their learning through educational programmes on Doordarshan. However, what concerned the KGBV Musabani warden Pinky Kumariji the most, was a group of Adivasi girls, who lived in remote hamlets in hilly, forested areas and didn't have access to a phone or a TV. So, she devised a solution to connect with these girls.



Pinky roped in Bhojo Singh Banara, the karate teacher at the KGBV, whose village Kotopa is near the Adivasi hamlet. Bhojo Sir has an Android smartphone, and to ensure that the girls continue to learn, the warden sends him the necessary material via SMS or WhatsApp. Once Bhojo Sir gets connectivity, he downloads the material. He also collects hard copies of textbooks from the KGBV or the block office.

Then, he trudges up and down hills for 6-7 kms and reaches the girls' homes. Bhojo Sir talks to them, supports them, distributes textbooks, makes them listen to audio clips by other teachers, and shares the warden's motivational messages. Bhojo Sir has made this journey every week since June, come rain or sun.

During this crisis, it is not the internet nor TV that is directly supporting girls' education in remote hamlets, but their teachers, a smartphone, and textbooks.



Goodness may surround us,  
In the least expected place,  
Anonymously given  
And left without a trace.

A favor from a neighbor,  
Food left by the door,  
A funny joke that's sent  
And leaves us hoping for some more.

## Appeal

To love, raise and support  
It takes

To cry, teach and praise  
It takes

To laugh, learn and grow  
It takes

To be free, survive and thrive

It takes-  
YOU!

Do you hear what we are saying?  
When you support a vulnerable  
girl, it pays forward generation  
to generation, lifting families out  
of poverty, empowering children,  
increasing health and turning  
victims into champions.

## We Thank Our Donors

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- Our anonymous donors

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