



उक्ति

Towards A Brighter Future
Stories From Ugam World

NEWSLETTER | AUGUST 2021





Launch of Sashakti Fellowship Program

The lethal second wave of covid hit us again and schools closed down from April 2021.

Since the first pandemic in 2020, copious research articles have highlighted the deep learning gaps caused due to school closures and the digital divide. We helplessly witnessed the immense efforts of teachers to bridge the gaps proving to be inadequate. Unfortunately, students from primary and middle school grades received scant attention.

In the midst of these despairing times, we discussed our concerns with some wardens , teachers and KGBV district coordinators. The outcome of those discussions was the launch of our **fellowship program Sashakti for KGBV graduate girls.**



The idea is to continue the journey of learning and empowerment for the young women, as they develop into resources for education in the communities. Sashakti bears the elegance of combining the vision of empowered women and educated communities.

With the support from the wardens and the **KGBV Coordinator Ms. Bindu Jha, we contacted the**

KGBV graduate girls from East Singhbhum district.

Ugam team spent long days and sleepless nights making hundreds of phone calls, explaining to the girls and their parents and fielding their questions.

Finally, on **May 15th in the presence of East Singhbhum KGBV Wardens, teachers and Sashakti fellows, Ms Bindu Jha kickstarted the program.**

Our zoom screens came alive with more than a hundred participants and their bright, eager faces.

Telling stories, singing bal geets, debating gender roles, discovering self, practising English - these

Sashakti bears the elegance of combining the vision of empowered women and educated communities.

We dedicate our newsletter to the indomitable spirit, resilience and courage of the young women from the KGBVs who are part of Sashakti Fellowship.



and more as Ugam facilitators pushed the rigor in every session with the girls.

Under the leadership of **SDM Ramgarh, Ms Keerthishree G. and with the support from the wardens in Ramgarh we launched the Sashakti program in Ramgarh on July 8th, 2021.**

Our work with the wardens and district leaders continues with review meetings and virtual staff meetings.





My Diary, My Friend

Sephali Soren, our fellow was leading the session on using diary writing as a tool for self reflection.

Sephali has been writing a diary since she was 14 years old. This made her the perfect person to facilitate this session. During her session, Sephali mentioned that she writes in her diary every day. She writes a diary because
It helps her to relive fond memories.
It helps her modify her thought process.
It helps her understand herself better.

Sephali showed a page in her diary where she had written about her dreams. She asked the fellows to start writing in their own diaries about:

- Their positive experiences*
- Points that motivate them*
- Their goals and ambitions*

She calmly answered many questions asked by the fellows. She told them that she writes her diary at night because it helps her calm herself after the buzz of a busy day. She insisted that it is not necessary to write a diary daily but it is important to write it regularly.

Sephali's greatest reason for writing a diary is that it keeps her true to herself. She says, "You may lie to others even those closest to you but your diary is the friend you would never lie to."

Choti si baat

Choti Soren is a passionate 18-year-old fellow. She performed the role of a Master Trainer recently and facilitated a session about menstrual hygiene. Choti was inspired by her experiences in the hostel where her friends would be embarrassed to talk about menstrual hygiene. This would lead them to ignore adequate hygiene and care.

What is adolescence?

What are periods?

The embarrassment that surrounds the subject.

How to manage periods?

How to spread awareness about periods in the community?

These were the topics covered by Choti in her session.

The fellows began by discussing the physical, behavioural and social changes that happen during the adolescence phase with both boys and girls. Many fellows listed the multiple superstitions around menstruation.

"Are periods pure or impure?" was an important question another fellow asked Choti. Her answer was, "A process that allows us to create another human being, take care of it and help it grow, how can it be impure?"

Choti advised the fellows well about taking care of themselves during menstruation. She asked them to eat well, drink lots of water and do light exercise if their body allows them. She also urged them to use a clean, dry cloth and underwear and to wash it and dry it in the sun. She introduced them to the menstrual cup and said that it is a cheaper, cleaner and environmentally better option than sanitary napkins.



दोस्ती की अदम्य भावना- ये दोस्ती हम नहीं तोड़ेंगे

जैसा कि वे कहते हैं कि एक से भले दो। फेलो रेणुका टुडू और आलोमोनी हेम्ब्रम हमेशा साथ नजर आते हैं। चाहे वह उनका जूम साइनिंग नेम हो, उनकी पढ़ाई हो, बैंक विजिट हो या उनके काम। उन्होंने उगम के सशक्तिकरण अभियान के लिए एक साथ एक पोस्टर भी डिजाइन किया।

कुछ दिन पहले रेणुका के पिता उनके गांव में गंभीर रूप से बीमार थे। रेणुका शहर में थी। आलोमोनी की साइकिल के अलावा उसके पास घर जाने का कोई साधन नहीं था। उस दिन सूरज गर्म था लेकिन उनके संकल्प से तेज नहीं था। रेणुका ने आलोमोनी से पूछा कि क्या वह उसके साथ उसके घर जाएगी? आलोमोनी ने तुरंत हाँ कर दी। दो लड़कियों ने तेज धूप में साइकिल पर अपनी यात्रा शुरू की। रास्ते में वे साथी पद्मा के घर रुके, पानी पिया और अपनी यात्रा पर निकल पड़े।

रेणुका के घर पर लड़कियों ने देखा कि उसकी माँ भी बीमार है। झारखंड में बुवाई का मौसम चल रहा है और परिवार के खेत बुवाई के लिए तैयार थे। एक बार जब आप खेतों को गीला कर देते हैं तो आप देर नहीं कर सकते क्योंकि सूरज मिट्टी को तेजी से सूखाता है। लड़कियों को कठिन विकल्पों का सामना करना

पड़ा। आलोमोनी अपनी सहेली को खेतों में काम करने के लिए अकेला कैसे छोड़ सकती थी? भले ही उसकी फिजिक्स की परीक्षा हो। लड़कियों ने पहले कभी खेतों में काम नहीं किया था। उनके समक्ष यह सबसे चुनौतीपूर्ण कार्य था। दो दिनों की कड़ी मेहनत से, दोस्ती की अदम्य भावना के साथ, हमारी युवा लड़कियों ने बुवाई समाप्त कर दी, जिससे रेणुका के माता-पिता को अपनी बेटी और उसके सच्चे दोस्त पर गर्व हुआ।

बाद में रेणुका ने आलोमोनी को उसकी परीक्षा की तैयारी में मदद की।



Reshmi- woman, girl, bahu, mother....

When you visit a KGBV you often encounter this image. A woman, like the goddess managing many roles and tasks. Reshmivati, our fellow wakes up at 3.30 every morning to complete her sewing orders. Her day is choc-a-bloc with looking after her child and her family.

She is a great cook too. Her chicken samosa and egg roll are the fastest selling items at her husband's shop. She is an active member of her Self Help Group (SHG) too. Her ability to multitask includes attending our sessions and also teaching children near her house.



returned to
Jadugoda.

“अब हमें लोग पहचानते हैं, पापा भी गर्व महसूस करते हैं। महोल्ले के लोग अपनी समस्या लेकर हमारे पास आते हैं।”

@lata @Pushpa

The day begins at 4 am for Lata and Pushpa. Collecting vegetables from their field, cleaning them and making bundles so that their father can sell these in the market.

The lockdown has meant more work for the sisters as they support their father in his business. Their father is very proud of his daughters.

Lata says, “अब तक कोई हमें जानता भी नहीं था, ना कोई हमारी तरफ देखता था।” This changed when the sisters were introduced to twitter. The dynamic duo opened their account and started actively following how to use it. In due course they figured out that they could use twitter to raise their voice and communicate with the District authorities.

They tweeted about getting the community handpump repaired, the DC took action, the handpump got repaired and water supply

Bollywood??

The zoom session was crackling with the fellows’ voices discussing aspirations, freedom, families and social constructs about gender. The trigger was when Ugam facilitator introduced the Bollywood song “Udta Teetar” from the film Saand ki Aankh, during a session.

Many Fellows connected it to their lives and the community they live in. Few fellows mentioned that they felt have very supportive families that nurture their growth. Chhita Mandi was unusually quiet through the discussion. A warm silence descended as she shared her struggles and demonstrated her immense strength through her tears.

Chhita now has a new support group of friends!

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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.

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