

Ugam Education Foundation

**ANNUAL REPORT
2024- 2025**



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2024-25 Snapshot

This year we complete
our tenth year!

Impacted more than
25000
adolescent girls in
One Hundred & Eighty
KGBVs/JBAVs

With a team of
Hundred
dedicated and resourceful
staff and Fellows on
ground in Jharkhand

Including
Sixty Five
Sashakti Fellows: as local
women leaders and role
models

And
Thirty Five
community Fellows- a newly
kickstarted program for
community outreach

In
Eighteen
Aspirational Districts of
Jharkhand



Added our
Tenth
intervention: we added **Mental
Health First Aid** to our existing
interventions for adolescent girls

As part of our
Three
programs: **Transforming
KGBVs, Sashakti Fellowship
and Community outreach and
Anganwadis**

Engage with
Two
new partnerships in collectives:
**Sampoorna for Jharkhand and Life
Skills Collaborative**

So that our
One
belief: every adolescent girl needs
a secondary school, empowering
practices, meaningful learning, role
models and a support network to
change her life and her community- is
realized.

We need
Continuous:
support from all of you. **Join us.
Donate to us. Visit us in Jharkhand
and spread the word around!**

A year gone by

A Decade of Empowerment:
Celebrating 10 Years of
Transforming the Lives of
Rural Adolescent Girls



This year, Ugam proudly marks ten years of dedicated work toward empowering rural adolescent girls—a decade defined by resilience, transformation, and hope. Since our inception in 2015, we have remained steadfast in our mission to create a world where every girl, no matter where she is born, has the opportunity to learn, lead, and thrive.

From our earliest programs in Hazaribag, Ugam has grown into a trusted presence across Jharkhand, reaching over 75000 girls through education, life skills, health awareness, and leadership development initiatives. Our approach has always been grounded and systemic—working alongside education departments, schools, and local women to shift norms and build environments where girls can flourish.

To honor this milestone, we commissioned an independent third-party evaluation to reflect honestly on our impact and learnings. Conducted by Aspire Impact, the assessment involved field visits, interviews, and data reviews across multiple program sites. Their key findings are enclosed in the report.

Behind every data point is a story—a girl who questioned

patriarchal norms, a girl who overcame barriers of shame and fear to talk about menstruation, girls who built foundational reading competencies and young women who are travel independently and are role models to others. These stories are the heartbeat of our work, reminding us why this mission matters.

Looking Forward

As we step into the next chapter, our commitment deepens.

We aim to:

- Expand to underserved geographies where the need is urgent.
- Strengthen our work through partnerships and collectives
- Invest in girl-led initiatives that place agency directly in their hands.

A Note of Gratitude

None of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of our team, the trust and support of our donors and the courage of the girls and families who chose change. Together, we've built more than programs—we've sparked a movement.

Here's to ten years of impact—and many more to come.

From our COO, Sanjay Jha,

उगम दशक: बुनियादी एवं
स्थायी बदलाव के नाम



साथियों, शुरुआत शुभकामनाओं के साथ करना चाहूँगा, क्योंकि हमारी संस्था 'उगम एजुकेशन फाउंडेशन' ने इस साल 10 वर्षों की अभूतपूर्व यात्रा को पूरा कर लिया है। किसी भी संस्था के लिए यह एक महत्वपूर्ण पल है जब वह अपने एक दशक के अनूठे अनुभवों के साथ, उद्घोष करे आने वाले नवीन वर्षों के लिए। हर वर्ष की भाँति इस वर्ष भी जब मैं वार्षिक रिपोर्ट के लिए लेख लिखने बैठा हूँ तब मेरा मन, पिछले एक वर्ष तक सीमित नहीं रह पा रहा है बल्कि अनवरत ही पूरे बीते दशक से गुजर रहा है। गुजरना भी चाहिए, क्योंकि अबतक की यह यात्रा रही है सकारात्मक बदलावों के सार्थक सपनों को साकार करने की, यह यात्रा रही है संकल्पों के प्रति समर्पण की, समाज में समता और न्याय लाने की। जब हमने चलना शुरू किया था तब हमारे पास महज सपने थे, संकल्प थे, जुनून था, एक विज़न था और कुछ लोग थे। यकीनन यह यात्रा खूबसूरत और विशिष्ट बनती चली गयी, आपके सतत साथ और सहयोग से।

यूनाइटेड नेशन की एक रिपोर्ट 'पुरुष-महिला कि बराबरी' के लिए किए जा रहे प्रयासों की 'गति' पर कहती है कि यह प्रयास अगर यँ भी चलता रहा तो इसको संभव होते-होते 132 साल का समय लग जाएगा। व्यक्तिगत तौर पर मैं उगम के इस एक दशक में किए गए विभिन्न प्रयासों से प्राप्त परिणामों के आधार पर, कह सकता हूँ कि दिल्ली इतनी भी दूर नहीं है जितनी समझी जा रही है। हमने जो बदलावों की बयार झारखण्ड में देखी है वो स्पष्ट संदेश है नए युग में प्रवेश करने का। दूर-सुदूर गाँवों की किशोरियाँ, युवतियाँ और महिलाओं ने मूफ़लिसी तथा हालातों के हाथों झुकने, टूटने, बिखरने की जगह कमर कसनी शुरू कर दी है, कंधे और इरादे मजबूत हो रहे हैं। मुझे नहीं लगता है कि, ये समता के लिए और 132 साल रुकेंगी।

हमने अबतक झारखण्ड के सर्वाधिक जरूरतमन्द और विपरीत परिस्थितियों से आने वाली करीब 2000 से ज्यादा युवतियों को सशक्ति फेलोशिप से जोड़ा है और सतत सहयोग किया है कि वो खुद को जाने, खुद पर भरोसा रखें और खुद में रची-बसी संभावनाओं कि कलम से अपने सशक्तिकरण की कहानी खुद लिखें। हमने KGBV तथा JBAV में अध्ययनरत 60 हजार से ज्यादा किशोरियों के साथ उनके सर्वांगीण विकास की दृष्टि से, सशक्तिकरण के तीनों अपरिहार्य स्तंभ 'शिक्षा, शक्ति और अभिव्यक्ति' पर कार्य किया है। शिक्षा जो गुणवत्तापूर्ण हो, क्रिटिकल थिंकिंग को संवर्धित करती हो, शक्ति जो शारीरिक, मानसिक और भावनात्मक रूप से पूर्ण स्वास्थ्य के प्रति

जागरूक करती हो, अभिव्यक्ति जो आत्मविश्वास, संवाद और प्रस्तुति को प्रभावी बनाती हो। इन कार्यक्रमों को प्राप्त प्रतिक्रियाएँ, समर्थन, सहयोग ने इसकी स्वीकार्यता और सफलता को नई ऊँचाईयाँ प्रदान की हैं। हजारों की संख्या में जब किशोरियाँ और युवतियाँ बदलती हुई दिखाई पड़ती है तो उनसे जुड़ा उनका परिवार और समाज भी परिवर्तन की राह पर अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से ही सही पर चलने लगता है। अब तो गाँवों में भी बेटियों के प्रति नया नजरिया विकसित होने लगा है। विश्वास-सहयोग बढ़ने लगा है। और ये हो रहा है क्योंकि अब उन्हें उनके जिले या प्रखण्ड में लोकल रोल मॉडल दिखने लगे हैं। सीधे तौर पर छात्राओं से इतर हमने 'व्यवस्था तथा लीडरशिप' के साथ भी सिलसिलेवार ढंग से कार्य किया है।

राज्य, जिला से लेकर विद्यालय स्तर पर हमने व्यवस्था से संबंधित सरकारी अधिकारी, वार्डन, शिक्षकों के साथ संयुक्त रूप से व्यवस्था रूपांतरण का भी कार्य किया है। JEPC, JCERT, शिक्षा विभाग, DIET, DSWO के साथ मिलकर शिक्षक, वार्डन को 21 वीं सदी के शिक्षण कौशल, जेन्डर जैसे विषयों पर तथा आंगनबाड़ी सेविकाओं को शाला पूर्व तैयारी विषय पर प्रशिक्षित किया है। हमने JEPC के साथ कस्तूरबा विद्यालय के शिक्षकों के लिए Sheक्षा नाम की एक पत्रिका के दो अंक भी प्रकाशित किए हैं। उगम राज्य और देश में स्थित विभिन्न सरकारी-गैर सरकारी कॉन्सोर्सियम का भी हिस्सा है।

इस रिपोर्ट में आप उगम के द्वारा, पिछले वर्ष में किए गए कार्यों से अवगत होंगे। आप सहज मेरे साथ यह कल्पना कर सकते हैं कि निकट भविष्य में अगर हमने अपने कार्यों को और विस्तार दिया तो झारखण्ड भीतर से बुनियादी तौर पर अवश्य बदलेगा। अगर हमने सिस्टम के साथ मिलकर झारखण्ड के कुल 4,345 गाँवों को KGBV, सशक्ति फेलोशिप, कन्या विद्यालय और आंगनबाड़ी के माध्यम से महिला लीडर (रोल मॉडल) उपलब्ध करवाए तो निश्चित ही एक सकारात्मक तथा स्थायी बदलाव का उत्सव मना पाएंगे। उगम अपने सार्थक प्रयासों और परिणामों को सार्वभौमिक करने के इरादे से झारखण्ड के साथ-साथ आगामी वर्षों में ओडिशा, महाराष्ट्र एवं अन्य प्रदेशों में भी प्रवेश करेगी। आप सभी को शिक्षा और सशक्तिकरण की इस अनूठी यात्रा में सतत सहयोग और साथ के लिए पुनः साधुवाद व शुभकामनाएँ।

संजय झा
COO

Empowering Adolescent Girls

Ugam envisions a world where every adolescent girl has the opportunity to transform her life and community.



This transformation begins with ensuring that every girl completes secondary school, which is foundational to her empowerment. Beyond access to education, girls need empowering practices, meaningful learning experiences, relatable role models, and a strong support network.

Ugam's initiatives focus on integrating programs within schools that not only educate but also empower girls with life skills and gender equity training. After completing Class 12, the KGBV

Alumni Program provides continued support to these young women, creating a platform where they feel guided and connected as they pursue further education or career goals. These alumni evolve into "sheroes" — inspiring role models for current students and agents of change within their communities.

Through this continuum of support, Ugam's approach fosters a generation of educated, confident, and empowered young women who are equipped to lead social transformation.

Our Work

Our approach and implementation is based on our understanding that for adolescent girls empowerment is manifested as the encouragement of: **Shiksha** (learning), **Shakti** (health and wellness) and **Abhivyakti** (voice and agency).

Our three Core Programs to achieve the change are:

- Transforming KGBVs/JBAVs (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas)
- Sashakti Fellowship
- Community Reach – Adolescent girls programs

ROLE PLAYED BY UGAM

Transforming KGBVs:

Working directly with the girls we facilitate sessions on: foundational Hindi and English learning, adolescence and menstrual hygiene, gender awareness, Socio Emotional Learning and mental health. Building voice and agency through robust pedagogical approaches like songs, stories, discussions, games, case studies etc

Strengthening KGBV/JBAV as institutions by building engaging libraries, robust bal sabhas and participative assemblies. In addition building capacities of teachers and wardens.

Engaging Education systems through District Education Officers and Gender Coordinators Workshops, regular meetings/

updates with State and District officials and creating knowledge and practice briefs

Sashakti Fellowship:

Young women after graduating from KGBV/JBAV engage with Ugam for upto two years on a journey of **empowerment and leadership**. Fellows participate in: structured sessions, field immersion, debriefs and discussions, peer learning and residential retreats - to build leadership by enhancing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Simultaneously, the State KGBV **Alumni Program** is implemented in schools to ensure wide participation, with a focus on completing a 200-hour empowerment curriculum. This model positions alumni as role models and mentors, fostering a powerful cycle of peer-led change.

Community Outreach:

Based on the needs identified through participatory methods, we have created a "safe space" for adolescent girls in the community. Girls meet, engage, discuss, laugh and think critically about key issues through our story and case study based Life Skills program.

District Anganwadi Strengthening:

An evolving model that build capacity of the Anganwadi Sevikas and rejuvenates the anganwadi with a special focus on foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) for the very young children and gets them school ready.

2024-25 Highlights



Ugam Utsav

We sang, danced, recited poems, watched a short film on our work and congratulated our fellows with a certificate on completing their Sashakti fellowship at UgamUtsav, a celebration of **Ugam entering its 10 th year**.



We are grateful to everyone who have supported us in implementing the work on the ground—our donors, CSOs and individual supporters, without you this journey would not have been possible.

Special thanks to **Dr. Abhinav Kumar sir**, Head of Quality Education at JEPCC, for gracing the event with his presence.



Project IMPACT

Short for Institutional Development and Mentoring for Perfect Amenities and Child Behavior Transformation, is a state government initiative to transform government schools.

To achieve this several activities are undertaken. Ugam team has partnered with the State government to support the implementation of **Project IMPACT in KGBVs**.



Sheksha Magazine Launch

A special **magazine designed for KGBV teachers** was inaugurated by Dr. Avinav Kumar sir, State Program Manager, Jharkhand Education Project Council in the presence of Ugam team, district KGBV in charges and all wardens and teachers from the state on the occasion of Teachers' Day.

The magazine has teaching tools, quizzes, data from the around the world and feature on some of the incredible teachers.

Community Program

In the heart of Jharkhand, **50 Ugam fellows** embarked on a mission to collaborate with Anganwadi Sevikas across **75 villages**, aiming to bridge gaps and empower adolescents. The fellows immersed themselves in the Sevikas; daily work, understanding their challenges and sharing ways to engage children and adolescents more effectively.



Through interactive sessions, they demonstrated activities that fostered learning, life skills, and creativity. A key focus was addressing menstrual health—a topic often shrouded in silence. The fellows created safe spaces for open conversations with adolescent girls, using stories and activities to break taboos. They also equipped Sevikas with the tools and confidence to navigate sensitive discussions, fostering stronger connections with the girls they serve.



JCERT Gender Cell

We are part of a Gender Cell established by the Jharkhand Education Council for Education, Research, and Training (JCERT), comprising various CSOs and state representatives. In November, we engaged in multiple discussions focused on developing a **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** to implement gender-transformative practices in all schools across Jharkhand.

The Ugam team has significantly contributed to drafting key sections of the SOP. We take great pride in being part of this impactful, large-scale initiative.





Reading Campaign

We supported the “KGBV/JBAV Schools Reading Campaign” initiated by JEPC, IPEL, Room to Read, and Unicef across all KGBVs of the state. An event of the campaign was the “Read a thon” in which students were engaged in reading continuously for half an hour.



Team Capacity Building

We hosted 4 residential retreats for our team. Bringing together 55 remarkable young women leaders from across Jharkhand.

Their field stories—of triumphs and challenges—reaffirmed our mission to drive meaningful change. Together, we’re empowering students to lead libraries and Bal Sansads, fostering vibrant spaces for learning, leadership, and growth.



This year, our fellows took bold steps in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs), addressing critical issues like mental wellness while advancing their impactful work in menstrual hygiene and gender awareness. With courage and resilience, they are transforming challenges into opportunities for sustainable change.

Weekly capacity building happened at the guesthouses which include preparation, practice, peer learning and debriefs (to solve problems faced).



Partnerships and Sampoorna Consortium

Our team is part of the Sampoorna 2.0, the SEL collective of different CSOs.

Throughout the year we have been an active member of the collective, providing insights on SEL activities within KGBVs. We also helped in the implementation of SEL activities in KGBVs throughout the state.

Adolescent Health Champions: Our partners, Adolescent Health Champions (AHC), led by Ricky Sharma and Dr Priya Shanker have been a great pillar of strength since 2022.

AHC aims to train adolescents as gender and health peer educators. Ricky was a Social Enterprise Fellow and Master in Public Policy candidate at Harvard Kennedy School.

Through 2024-25 Ugam and AHC together addressed the health awareness needs of girls in 35 KGBV schools across 5 districts.

Leadership & Advocacy

Our founder, Lopa Gandhi, delivered an impactful lecture at the IIM Ahmedabad Winter School on December 13, 2024. The Winter School, hosted by the Right to Education Resource Centre (RTRC), is a platform where participants explore critical education policies, engage with experts, and collaborate on strategies to make education more inclusive and equitable.

She also participated in UNGEI’s FemNet4GTE summit in Johannesburg. It was an invaluable opportunity to advocate for GTE at a global platform.

Our team participated in an event called “Aakankshayein” held by District Administration Saraikela on discussions for aspirations and challenges for the youth particularly in Jharkhand.

We are grateful to the DC Mr. Ravi Shankar Shukla (IAS) for his continued support and dynamic vision.





Aanganwadi workers' Capacity Building

We completed a comprehensive training program for **1220 Anganwadi Workers in four districts**, aimed at strengthening early childhood education and creating child centric, sensitive, inclusive learning spaces. Through interactive and hands-on activities, the training equips Anganwadi Workers with practical strategies to improve foundational learning, promote play-based education, and engage effectively with children and their caregivers.



The program also emphasizes the importance of nutrition, health, and child development, enabling workers to become informed advocates within their communities.

Teacher Training

730 teachers from KGBVs in 7 districts engaged in our teacher Capacity building sessions.

Some of the key highlights:

- Teachers are implementing innovative tools like graphic organizers and mind maps in classrooms.
- Students are taking charge of their learning by visually breaking down subjects into easy-to-understand formats.
- Improved engagement and collaboration between teachers and students.



Virtual English Language Support

These sessions, tailored for 10th grade students, are now benefiting over 6,600 students across 10 districts and 110 KGBVs. Initially piloted in one district, we're delighted to see its widespread reach and effectiveness in board exam preparation, with notable student engagement and progress.

Creation of AV materials to aid learning



Our founder director Lopa Gandhi has over 20 years of experience in the field of education. She has a vast experience in developing curriculum and teaching English language.

Since all KGBVs have a functional ICT lab where students can learn from audio visual mediums, leveraging technology becomes a key intervention point. A series of 5 videos were screened at different KGBVs and are benefiting hundreds of students.



Women's Day celebration

Our Womens Day celebration was a powerful gathering of empowerment, resilience, and action, with 90 young women leaders coming together to mark the occasion. We were honored to have former IAS officer and Ugam board member, Mridula Sinha ji, grace us with her presence, inspiring the girls with her insights and experiences.

The energy and motivation among the participants were palpable. On the second day of the retreat, we held a debrief session and engaged in meaningful discussions on key learnings from our ongoing programs.

Additionally, our Director of Legal and Financial Compliance Mr. Milind Gandhi interacted with the young women, addressing their questions on finance and savings, equipping them with valuable knowledge for their future.



Our Achievements



TRANSFORMING KGBV SCHOOLS Shiksha

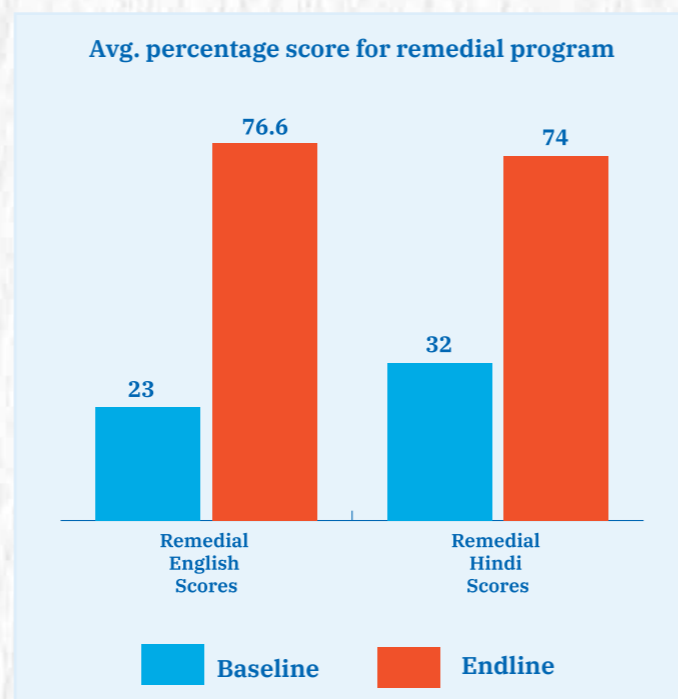
Middle school students in rural government schools in India often face significant learning gaps due to a combination of systemic and contextual challenges. Many students struggle with foundational skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, often lagging behind the grade-level expectations. These gaps are compounded by irregular attendance, lack of access to quality teaching, and limited learning support at home. Multigrade classrooms, teacher shortages, and inadequate infrastructure further hinder consistent and effective learning. Additionally, language barriers—where the medium of instruction differs from the students’ home language—can make comprehension difficult, widening the academic divide and affecting overall educational outcomes.

Although Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) has acquired much headlines for early years, we find the need for these even at grade 6 level.

Our Foundational Learning programs support Hindi and English language learning.

Across **18 districts, 17000+** girls from grade 6 and 7 were taught **remedial Hindi and remedial English.**

Almost 3000 girls participated in the baseline and 2500 girls in the endline evaluation. We share below the data



Shakti: health and gender education

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is more than just access to sanitary products—it’s a vital **human rights and gender equity issue.** Comprehensive education around menstrual health plays a **transformative role** in empowering girls. It:

- Promotes Health and Well-being
- Builds Confidence and Self-esteem
- Enhances School Attendance and

- Academic Performance
- Breaks Social Taboos and Stigma
- Encourages Leadership and Advocacy

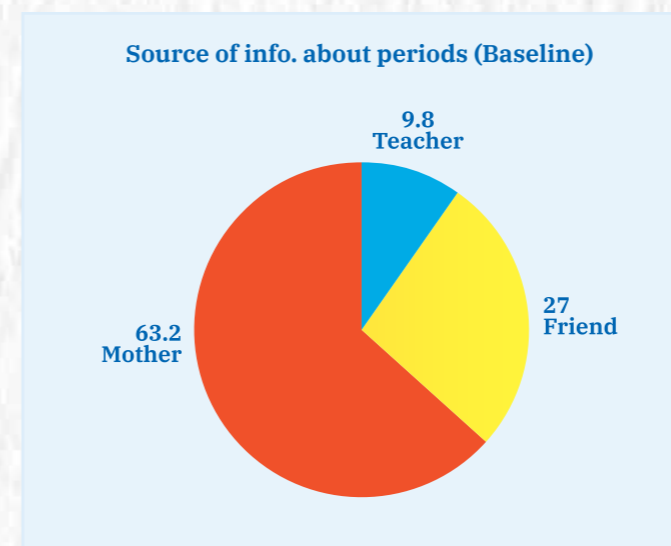
Teaching menstrual hygiene is more than just a health intervention—it’s a **transformative empowerment strategy.** By equipping girls with knowledge and resources, we help them thrive physically, emotionally, and socially, opening doors to a future full of potential.

12,000 girls in 200 classrooms participated in sessions on topics such as adolescence, menstrual health, anemia and gender education.

At the start and end of the sessions we administered a test to evaluate the knowledge and attitude shifts among the girls.

A total of 2592 girls from Grade 7 participated in the baseline evaluation, while 2181 participated in the endline.

The average age of menarche reported was between 11 and 13 years.



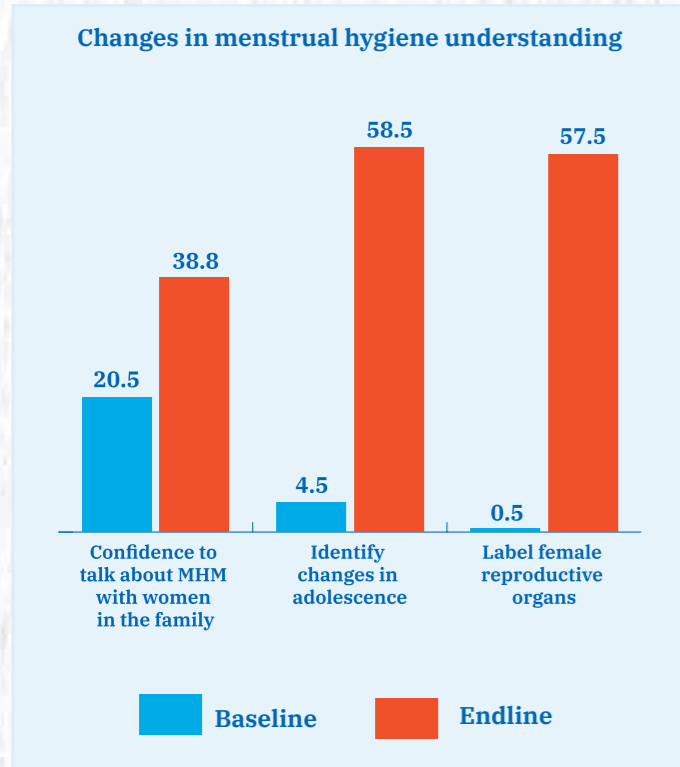
The pie chart shows that at baseline, most girls received information about menstruation from:

- **Mothers (59.9%):** Primary source, indicating strong familial influence.
- **Friends (25.6%):** Peer communication also plays a key role.
- **Teachers (9.3%):** Low contribution from formal education channels.

This underscores **the need to strengthen school-based menstrual education** and equip teachers to play a more active role.

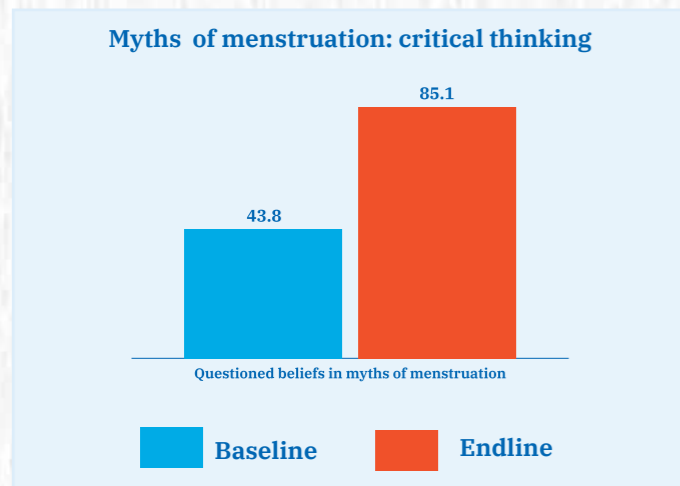
The other key features were:

- **Breaking the Silence:** Confidence to talk about menstruation with women in their families rose from **20.5% at baseline to 38.8% at endline.** This shift suggests progress in dismantling the “culture of silence” surrounding menstruation.
- **Building Awareness and Understanding:** The percentage of girls who could identify physical and emotional changes during adolescence increased from 4.5% to 58.5%. - Those who could correctly label female reproductive organs rose dramatically from 0.5% to 57.5%.



The chart below highlights a significant shift in critical thinking around menstrual myths:

- This dramatic increase reflects the **power of safe, guided discussions**.
- Encouraging girls to **ask questions** and engage in **open dialogue** helped challenge traditional taboos.
- It also shows progress toward the broader goal of **empowering girls through knowledge and critical reflection**.



Transforming Gender Perspectives

Through Reflective Engagement The module on gender awareness commenced with an unexpected yet telling declaration from many girls in the classroom — that gender discrimination did not exist in their lives. However, as the sessions progressed, led by the Sashakti Fellow, the classroom dynamic began to shift. Through a thoughtfully facilitated process involving open-ended discussions, sharing of relevant data, and prompts that encouraged deep self-reflection, the girls began to examine their own beliefs and question long-held societal norms.

This transformation was not immediate, but it was profound. The module, carefully designed to unpack gender-related stereotypes and unconscious biases, became a catalyst for change. With a total of **2,313 girls participating in the baseline evaluation and 1,908 in the endline**, the data clearly reflects a meaningful evolution in their thinking.

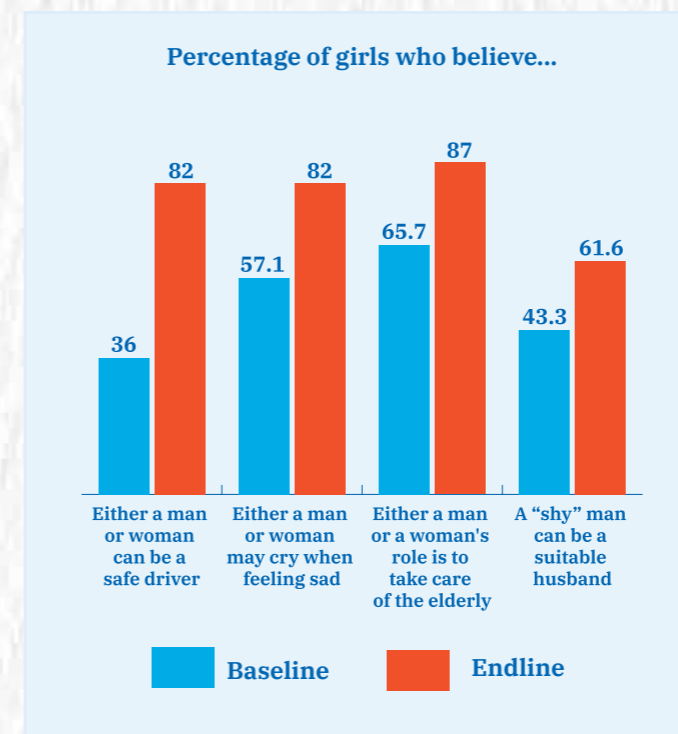
A key exercise asked the girls to assign gender labels — “Men (M)”, “Women (W)”, or “Either (E)” — to descriptors such as “a safe driver,” “to cry when sad,” and “to care for elders.” Their shift in thinking is reflected below in the graph.

These shifts reflect a growing understanding among the girls that qualities and responsibilities are not inherently gendered but are human traits and choices.

Another significant element addressed in the module was **notions of masculinity**, often an overlooked

aspect in gender discourse. For example, when asked if a “shy boy” could make a suitable husband, only **43.3%** of the girls initially agreed. By the endline evaluation, this number had increased to **61.6%**, indicating a broadened and more inclusive view of male identity.

The graph below illustrates these attitudinal shifts, highlighting the effectiveness of the gender module in challenging ingrained stereotypes and fostering a more equitable mindset among the participants.

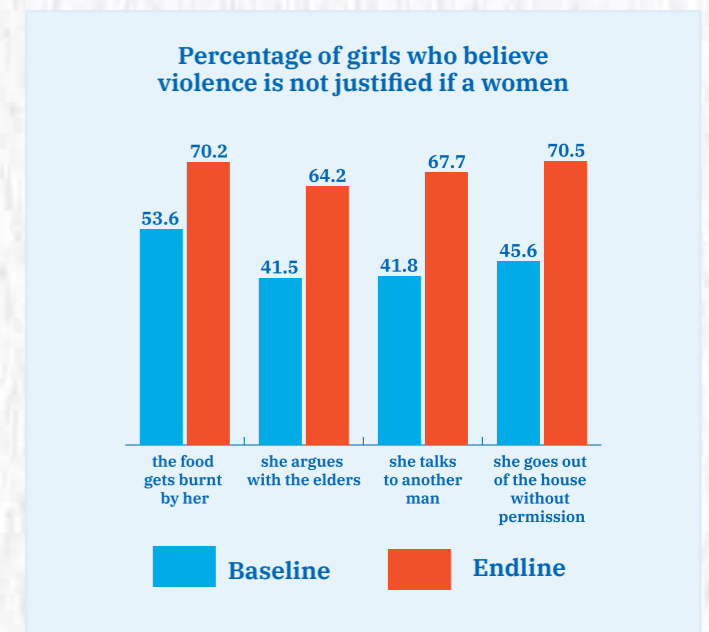


One of the most pervasive and deeply internalized realities for adolescent girls is **gender-based violence (GBV)**. Whether experienced directly or observed within their communities, this form of violence often becomes so normalized that it is perceived as an unfortunate but acceptable part of life. As a result, many girls and women begin to **justify acts of violence against themselves and others**, seeing them as warranted under certain circumstances rather

than as violations of their rights. During the intervention, the girls were encouraged to critically examine these internalized beliefs. A key activity involved asking them whether violence against a woman was justified in specific scenarios — a direct attempt to unpack the societal conditioning that legitimizes such violence.

The impact of the module is visible in the shift in responses, clearly reflected in the graph below. It reveals a **significant decrease in the number of girls who felt violence was acceptable**, demonstrating a growing awareness that **no circumstance justifies gender-based violence**.

The sessions helped girls understand that such violence stems not from individual failings but from **systemic inequality and power imbalances**. By confronting these attitudes, the module played a crucial role in empowering girls to **reject justification of violence** and recognize their right to safety and dignity.





Abhivyakti: voice and agency through stories and songs

Songs and storytelling in classrooms make learning more engaging and relatable, encouraging even shy or hesitant students to participate. These methods tap into familiar cultural forms, making it easier for girls to connect and contribute. By expressing themselves through creative means, girls gain confidence and are more likely to speak up and take part in discussions. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of belonging and active involvement in the classroom.

These creative methods provide a safe and familiar space for girls to express their thoughts, share experiences, and explore their identities. Through storytelling, girls can reflect on their own lives and those of others, building empathy, confidence, and a sense of community. Songs, especially those rooted in local traditions or infused with empowering messages, allow girls to engage emotionally and collectively, reinforcing their self-worth and encouraging participation. By integrating these practices into classroom learning, educators can break down barriers of silence

and passivity, helping girls find and strengthen their voices, while fostering leadership and critical thinking skills that extend beyond the classroom walls.

In **175 schools** girls remember our Sashakti Fellows for their songs and stories.



Institution Building for Model KGBV creation

Strong school processes are essential for institutional strengthening as they ensure consistency, accountability, and quality in education delivery. Clear systems for planning, monitoring, and teacher support lead to better learning environments and outcomes. Effective processes also promote collaboration among staff and encourage data-driven decision-making. Over time, they build a culture of continuous improvement and resilience within the school.

A total of **200 KGBV/JBAV schools** were visited

We focus on three key practices or processes in every school- library as a learning space, assembly as a

participative space and bal sansad as a collaborative space.

Libraries: Recognizing the importance of joyful reading in students' development, this initiative focuses on transforming school libraries into vibrant, student-friendly spaces. By curating diverse, age-appropriate books and introducing interactive activities like storytelling, read-aloud, and peer-led reading circles, the program encourages girls to read beyond textbooks and develop a genuine love for reading. It also builds leadership among student library leaders to ensure the sustainability of these efforts. More than 50000 girls across 180 schools benefited from enriched library experiences that spark curiosity and imagination.

We have supported the setting up of **180 libraries** in schools.

150+ wardens have ensured that a "Library Period" is integrated in the time table and all girls visit the library at least weekly.

Bal Sabha: A students' parliament in schools empowers learners to actively participate in decision-making and develop leadership skills. It promotes democratic values by teaching students about representation, dialogue, and accountability. Through regular involvement, students gain confidence, responsibility, and a sense of ownership over their school environment. It encourages teamwork and helps address issues relevant to students' lives. Ultimately, it nurtures a culture of respect, voice, and agency among young learners.

Through the Bal Sansad intervention, we've been nurturing not just knowledge, but essential life skills like teamwork, problem-solving, and effective communication. Each activity is a step towards building their confidence and self-esteem, empowering them to take on future challenges with resilience and purpose. From engaging in lively group discussions to conducting school-level surveys, the students embraced every opportunity to learn. They practiced maintaining registers with precision and worked together to create actionable plans for their schools. Phase 1 of this initiative has been a resounding success in 150 schools.



Warden and Teacher Empowerment

Our engagement with wardens and teachers in KGBVs continued.

At every visit through the year Ugam team engaged with them in their schools and discussed the various school strengthening initiatives. Ugam facilitated sessions in the 4 day State level training program- "Empowering Girls, Transforming Futures: A Training Workshop for



KGBV/JBAV Teachers on Promoting Gender Equality” for all 260 schools representatives.

The State KGBV Alumni program started with orientation will all wardens and then has been successfully led by wardens and Ugam team in schools.

Lastly, 115 wardens engaged in session on Career Guidance for class 12 students.

730 teachers from KGBVs in 7 districts engaged in our teacher Capacity building sessions.

Some of the key highlights:

- Teachers are implementing innovative tools like graphic organizers and mind maps in classrooms.
- Students are taking charge of their learning by visually breaking down subjects into easy-to-understand formats.
- Improved engagement and collaboration between teachers and students.



SASHAKTI PROGRAM

20 young women from our first batch of Sashakti Fellowship program graduated in March 2024.

Their journeys of empowerment are a source of immense inspiration for everyone.

From very tentative beginnings, these young women have empowered themselves; each of them travels independently and had freedom of mobility, they possess and manage their bank accounts, they are confident of communicating with various stakeholders at village, block and district level. As they share, the biggest change has been developing courage, resilience and a vision for the future. Their awareness and perspectives on core issues about learning and gender have positively changed.

Several of them join Ugam as Program Leaders.

Many continue their higher education and /or training and some are engaging in entrepreneurial journeys.

Ugam currently engages with 75 young women as full time Sashakti Fellows.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Reaching adolescent girls in rural communities is crucial because it breaks the cycle of poverty and gender inequality. Early intervention ensures access to education, health, and life skills at a pivotal stage in their development. Empowered girls are more likely to delay marriage, pursue careers, and advocate for their rights. They become role models and change agents within their families and communities. Investing in rural girls creates a ripple effect, driving long-term social and economic progress.

Under the leadership of 35 of Ugam’s Community Fellows, we reach out to 400+ adolescent girls in various communities of Jharkhand.



REIMAGINING ANGANWADIS

Anganwadi sevikas are frontline workers who play a key role in shaping the early development of young children. Training them in early learning ensures they can provide age-appropriate, stimulating activities that build strong foundations in language, numeracy, and social skills. With proper training, they can better identify developmental delays and support school readiness. Empowered sevikas can engage parents more effectively in their child’s learning journey. Strengthening their capacity enhances the overall quality of early childhood care and education in the community.

We completed a comprehensive training program for **1220 Anganwadi Workers in four districts,**

Impact Evaluation Study

Aspire Impact has conducted an impact assessment of two programs implemented by Ugam Education Foundation (UEF) from inception till the financial year 2024-25



- 1. TRANSFORMING KGBV PROGRAM:** Initiated in 2019 in partnership with the Jharkhand Education Project Council (JPEC), strengthens inclusive learning in 180 KGBVs and 57 JBAVs. Led by Sashakti Fellows, it supports adolescent girls through education, health, hygiene, and confidence-building.
- 2. SASHAKTI FELLOWSHIP:** Launched in 2021 and active across 18 districts in Jharkhand, this program empowers graduates from KGBV and JBAV schools to become Sashakti Fellows. In this role, they lead academic and life skills sessions for students, while cultivating their own leadership qualities and professional development.

As UEF marks a decade of committed service, this report takes a closer look at the transformative impact it has had on the lives of adolescent girls and young women across Jharkhand. Established with a vision to strengthen gender equity and empower adolescent girls and young women from marginalised communities, UEF has spent the last ten years championing the cause of education, leadership, and life skills for those who have long remained on the margins.

This impact assessment, conducted by Aspire Impact, captures the outcomes and long-term changes achieved through UEF's two flagship initiatives: the Transforming KGBVs and Sashakti Fellowship

Reach: Over 50,000 adolescent girls across 18 districts in Jharkhand accessed education, health initiatives

- Through its initiatives, Ugam Foundation has covered 18 districts of Jharkhand, reaching over 50,000 adolescent girls studying in 180 KGBVs and 57 JBAVs and nurturing 65 fellows through the Sashakti Fellowship.
- Students received remedial education with 83% attending remedial hindi and 70% attending remedial English Sessions.
- Adolescent Health (93%), Mental Health (88%) and Gender based awareness (82%) was created through a structured curriculum delivered by Sashakti Fellows. Over 90% of fellows reported having delivered these sessions.
- Balgeet, role plays, storytelling activities conducted as part of citizenship building initiatives helped students find their voice and agency.
- 74% students actively participated in Bal Sansad (Student Council).

Depth: Improved mobility, financial independence, increased awareness, academic confidence

- The fellowship has enabled the fellows to overcome mental barriers - 97% report overcoming a lack of self-belief, 93% have developed leadership and decision-making skills. They have unlocked greater mobility and independence - 98% fellows frequently travel independently compared to 15% before.
- Financially, 98% of fellows now earn more than their household income - 93% are contributing



- towards family expenses, 82% have started saving, 62% have been able to pay off debts.
- The fellows' development is a powerful catalyst for student growth. 86% of students are now confident in Menstrual Hygiene Management practices, 94% feel confident about their Hindi reading & comprehension skills and 76% students report frequently taking on leadership roles within the school.
- Inclusion: Strengthening communities through gender and social justice
- The foundation's support is 100% focused on upliftment of women- 99% of fellows are first-generation professionals.
- The program covered 18 aspirational districts across Jharkhand, ensuring access to education and personal development for girls from marginalized communities.
- 92% of fellows and 98% of students identify with OBC/SC/ST caste categories.

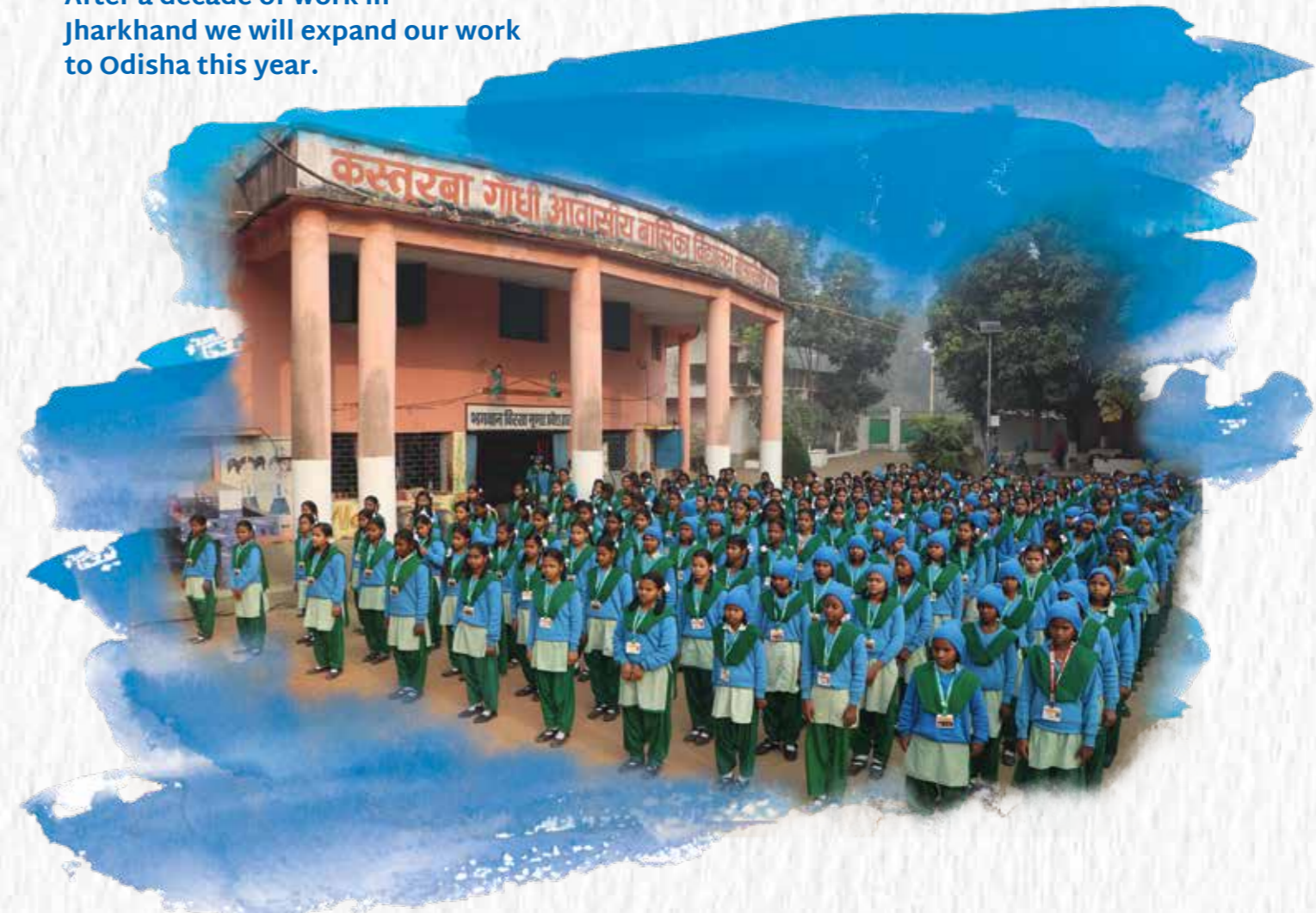
Sustainability: Enhancing potential for education and beyond

- This sense of agency is equally strong among students, 100% feel empowered. The vast majority (98%) see higher education or employment as most important, while significantly fewer (28%) place the same importance on marriage after graduation.
- The Sashakti Fellowship has instilled confidence to make their own life choices in 100% of fellows. After completing the fellowship, they wish to pursue goals such as higher education (32%), Training (28%), employment (27%), or entrepreneurship (12%).

Together, both programs have demonstrated visible impact. These initiatives by UEF demonstrate a strong and scalable model for empowering girls and young women, contributing meaningfully to gender equity and community transformation in Jharkhand.

Looking Ahead

After a decade of work in Jharkhand we will expand our work to Odisha this year.



As part of the Sampurna and Life Skill Collaborative Collectives we will engage with collaborative engagements and deepen our work on Socio Emotional Learning and Life Skills.

Strengthening our advocacy effort with more teacher and warden empowerment interventions, ensuring KGBV Alumni become an integral part of every KGBV school and many communities. We will engage in more research that becomes the voice of girls from rural India.

In collaboration with government departments, we are co-creating a scalable model for District Anganwadi Transformation program.

Lastly, none of this would be possible without the support and faith from all of you!

As we grow we need for funds and like minded partners for the girls in Jharkhand.

We Are Thankful

We often start our sessions with the song:

साथ चलेंगे साथी, साथ साथ चलेंगे

We wish to show our utmost gratitude to the people who have walked with us...

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Our anonymous donors

Our three Advisory Board members:

Mrs. Amita Chauhan, Mrs. Mridula Sinha and Mrs Purvi Vora

Our Partner: Adolescent Health Champions – Dr Priya Shankar and Joy

Jharkhand State Education Department team

District Collectors and Education and Gender Teams

Our wellwishers: Ujwal Thaker, Paresh, Ramya Rajgopalan, Shridhar Sethuraman



Appeal

You have been a great support for us and we thank you for that.

We follow the Martin Luther King quote:

“If you can’t fly then run, If you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but Whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”

Support Ugam with donations and spread the word around.

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Ugam

Set up in 2015 by Lopa Gandhi, Ugam Education Foundation (Ugam) is a section 8 not-for-profit organization that educates and empowers girls from rural, vulnerable communities.

Ugam collaborates with existing education systems, leverages resources and communities to transform schools and empower girls defeating all gender based barriers.

Ugam has 12A, 80G and FCRA certification.
CIN: U80904MH2015NPL265577

