



DARE TO DREAM

Educational Aspirations
of Adolescent Girls

EVIDENCE FROM JHARKHAND, INDIA

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IIPS	International Institute for Population Sciences
NIOS	National Institute of Open Schools
OR	Odds Ratio
OBCs	Other Backward Classes
RTE	Right to Education
SCs	Scheduled Castes
STs	Scheduled Tribes
SHGs	Self-Help Groups
STCs	Special Training Centers
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals



Girls walk to school in the morning |
Credit: Ketaki Nagaraju/ICRW Asia

INTRODUCTION

The importance of inclusive and equitable education is enshrined in Goal Four of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with special emphasis on addressing gendered disparities in access to safe, affordable, and quality education (United Nations, n.d.). Adolescent girls, in particular, face complex, gendered realities wherein inequitable norms contribute to their exclusion from growth and development opportunities; and restrict their agency and aspirations.

In these difficult circumstances, education plays a key role in increasing young girls' knowledge about themselves and the world around them. It also opens up a variety of options and opportunities available to them as they navigate the transition from adolescence to adulthood. By encouraging girls to aspire for a better future, education enables them to not only visualize the kind of life they want for themselves, but also articulate, advocate and act to break down barriers and achieve their goals.

Although gender parity in education has gradually improved in India, girls continue to lag on key indicators, with high dropout rates and low completion of secondary education (IIPS & ICF, 2017). Evidence also indicates that although there is improved gender parity in attendance and school-going status among the younger age groups, the gender gap widens among older adolescents, with fewer older girls engaged in education and training (Naandi Foundation, 2018). In Jharkhand, 38 percent of women (as compared to 18 percent of men) aged 15-49 years have never been to school, and only 15 percent of women aged 19-24 years completed 12th standard (IIPS and ICF, 2017). A World Bank and Government of Jharkhand state-wide study found that adolescent girls and young women face high levels of exclusion, with 56 percent of women aged 15-24 years not being engaged

in either education, employment, or training (Morton, M. H., Bhattacharya, S., & Kumar, P., 2018). The study highlights that the problem of exclusion is not a result of choice. It is a result of increasing constraints on girls as they grow older and are faced with heightened vulnerability and the pressure of marriage.

This research report presents the education status and aspirations of adolescent girls in Godda, Jamtara and Sahibganj districts of Jharkhand. It also examines the protective factors and barriers to their education and aspirations, as well as the programmatic implications of the former.

Key Findings

- ◆ *Almost all girls in the younger cohort (aged 10-14) were school-going, but only 50 percent of the older cohort (aged 15-18) were school-going. The proportion of girls who dropped out from school rose sharply after the age of 15, ranging from 34 percent among 15-year-old girls to 62 percent among 18-year-old girls.*
- ◆ *The top five reasons for dropping out from school cited by 15-18-year-old girls include inaccessibility of school (46 percent), too expensive (40 percent), poor performance or lack of interest (38 percent), domestic responsibilities (31 percent) and parents/in-laws/husband not allowing (22 percent).*
- ◆ *Parent's education, mother's occupation, religion, caste and wealth were protective factors for school-going status of girls, with varying significance and effect on the younger and older cohorts.*
- ◆ *Educational aspirations were higher among the older cohort, as compared to the younger cohort, for both school-going and out-of-school girls.*
- ◆ *For school-going girls, the level of education that girls thought they would complete was lower than what they aspired to complete. Among the older cohort, 98 percent aspired and 94 percent expected to complete at least 10th standard, 89 percent aspired and 79 percent expected to complete at least 12th standard, and 70 percent aspired and 49 percent expected to complete at least graduation.*
- ◆ *Among out-of-school girls, if given the chance, 63 percent of the older cohort would have liked to continue with their schooling. Aspirations of these girls were lower as compared to their school-going counterparts. While 98 percent of out-of-school girls aspired to complete at least 10th standard, 69 percent aspired to complete at least 12th standard, and only 39 percent aspired to complete at least graduation.*
- ◆ *Nine out of 10 school-going girls thought their family would support them in pursuing their educational aspirations as compared to seven out of 10 out-of-school girls.*
- ◆ *Six out of 10 school-going girls in the older cohort believed that socio-cultural and financial barriers could prevent them from achieving their aspirations as compared to eight out of 10 out-of-school girls in the same cohort.*
- ◆ *The top barriers to education that girls cited include school expenses, inaccessibility, marriage/pressure to marry and domestic responsibilities—all of which disproportionately affected out-of-school girls more than school-going girls.*
- ◆ *Parents' education and occupation, wealth, caste, girls' marital status, gender attitudes, and anticipated family backing were protective factors for girls' aspirations to complete at least graduation, with varying significance and effect on the younger and older cohorts as well as their school-going or out-of-school status.*



Adolescent girls raise hands during a classroom session at school | Ketaki Nagaraju/ICRW Asia

METHODOLOGY

To promote girls' education and develop alternative "life paths" to counter child marriage, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) conceptualized a comprehensive multi-layered girls' empowerment program called UMANG.¹ As a part of this program, ICRW undertook a baseline survey with 2,030 girls aged 10-14 years (younger cohort) and 2,026 girls aged 15-18 years² (older cohort); the associated results and analysis are presented in this report. The older cohort received greater attention as they generally are at a critical stage in their lives, face key decisions about their future and experience a higher risk of dropping out from school. For the analysis, the following measures were created and used separately for the younger and the older cohorts:

- ◆ **Schooling status:** The respondents (adolescent girls) were classified into three groups based on their schooling status, i.e., those attending school/college (school-going/currently in school); those out of school (dropped out/previously in school), and those who never attended school (no schooling).
- ◆ **Aspired level of education:** Girls' aspirations were measured in terms of the level of education they would like to complete. Three categories were created for the analysis: those who aspired to complete at least 10th standard; those who aspired to complete at least 12th standard; and those who aspired to complete at least graduation.

¹ Please refer to the UMANG program leaflet for more details on the UMANG program and intervention activities.

² For more details on evaluation design, please refer to the ICRW research report: Raising Her Voice: Agency and Aspirations of Adolescent Girls on Marriage—Evidence from Jharkhand, India.



Girls participate in a morning assembly session at school | Credit: Ketaki Nagaraju/ICRW Asia

- ◆ **Level of education girls expect to complete:** The level of education that girls believed they would be able to achieve in their current situation was also measured and categorized into three categories: those who expected to complete their education at least up to — 10th standard; 12th standard; and graduation.
- ◆ **Expected barriers:** Potential barriers that could prevent the girls in this study from achieving their educational aspirations, as perceived by the girls, were included in the analysis. These include barriers related to access, interest, and quality of education.
- ◆ **Family backing:** Family backing anticipated by girls was measured in terms of girls who believe their families would allow them to pursue the level of education they aspired for and would allow them to go to neighboring/other village (s) for studies.
- ◆ **Feelings toward education scale:** Girls were asked to respond to nine statements related to school, teachers and studies (such as “My teachers at school want/wanted me to do well”) using a four-point scale — strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.³ Using factor analysis, six statements on feelings toward school, teachers and studies, with high internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha — 0.83), were identified to construct a scale to measure girls’ feelings toward education. The scores for each statement were added to arrive at a total score for each respondent, which ranged from six to 24. Next, the scale was divided into three categories for the analysis — a score less than 12 is low, scores from 12-17 are moderate, and scores from 18-24 are high. The progression of the scores from low to high indicates girls’ increasing affinity toward education.
- ◆ **Gender attitudinal scale:** Using factor analysis, 11 statements related to gender roles and responsibilities, attributes, and violence were identified to create a gender attitudinal scale (Cronbach’s Alpha – 0.73).⁴ The score for each statement was added to arrive at a total score for each respondent, which ranges from 11 (inequitable attitude) to 44 (equitable attitude). Subsequently, this scale was divided into three categories for the analysis — scores less than 22 are low, scores between 22 and 32 are moderate, and scores from 33 to 44 are high.

Bivariate and multivariate analyses were carried out to examine the effect of various factors on girls’ schooling status as well as the factors associated with aspirations for higher levels of education.

³ Please refer to Annexures—Table 12 for the Statements used to construct a scale for measuring girls’ feelings toward education.

⁴ Please refer to Annexures—Table 13 for the Statements used to construct a gender attitudinal scale.



Adolescent girls participate in a classroom session | Credit: Ketaki Nagaraju/ICRW Asia

FINDINGS

A) SCHOOLING STATUS

Almost all girls in the younger cohort were school-going, but only 50 percent of the older cohort were enrolled at schools. Inaccessibility of schools, expenses and domestic responsibilities were the top reasons for dropping out of school in the older cohort.

Nine out of 10 girls in the younger cohort were school-going. Among the remaining girls, nine percent had dropped out from school and one percent had never been to school (Table 2). Among the older cohort, only 50 percent of girls were school-going, which is significantly lower than the corresponding proportion for the younger cohort. Dropout from school increases sharply after the age of 15, and ranged from 34 percent among 15-year-old girls to 62 percent among 18-year-old girls (Table 3). The main reasons provided by girls in the older cohort for dropping out of school included inaccessibility of schools (46 percent), too expensive (40 percent), poor performance or lack of interest (38 percent), domestic responsibilities (31 percent) and parents/in-laws/husbands not allowing them to continue their education (22 percent) (Table 4).

Educational status of parents emerged as a protective factor for girls' school-going status. Mother's occupation also influences girls' schooling – girls whose mothers were not working were more likely to be in school.

The multivariate analysis found that mothers' and fathers' education levels were protective factors for girls' schooling across both age cohorts (Table 5). As compared to girls whose mothers had no schooling, girls with mothers who had at least one year of schooling were 2.4 times (among the younger cohort) and 1.8 times (among the older cohort) more likely to be in school. Similarly, as compared to girls whose fathers had no schooling, girls with fathers who had completed one to nine years of schooling were 1.7 times (among the younger cohort) and 2.3 times (among the older cohort) more likely to be in school. Among the older cohort, girls with fathers with 10 or more years of schooling were 3.4 times more likely to continue their schooling than those with fathers who had no schooling.

The mother's occupation was also linked to the school-going status of both cohorts. Girls whose mothers were not working were more likely to be in school than those with mothers who were unskilled workers. The respective Odds Ratio (OR) are 2.4 among the younger cohort and 1.4 among the older cohort. However, fathers' occupation had no significant effect on the school-going status of girls (Table 5).

Religion, caste, and wealth also affect girls' schooling status, after adjusting for other background characteristics.

Girls from Hindu families were more likely (1.7 times among the younger and 2.3 times among the older cohorts) to be in school than those from non-Hindu families (Table 5). Among the younger cohort, girls from Scheduled Castes (SCs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and other castes⁵ were more likely to continue their education as compared to those from Scheduled Tribes (STs). However, a similar pattern was not observed among the older cohort wherein girls from SCs were less likely to be in school as compared to those from STs. Girls from OBCs and other castes in the older cohort were as likely to continue school as those from STs, when other background characteristics were adjusted (Table 5). Lastly, girls from the higher wealth quintiles were more likely to be in school than those belonging to the poorest wealth quintile. Girls from the richest wealth quintile were 3.8 times (among the younger cohort) and 2.1 times (among the older cohort) more likely to be in school (Table 5).

B) EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF SCHOOL-GOING GIRLS

While fewer girls from the older cohort were in school, their educational aspirations were higher than the those of the younger cohort. However, in both cohorts, the level of education that girls perceived to be able to complete was lower than what they aspired to complete.

Among the younger cohort, 92 percent aspired to at least complete 10th standard, while 60 percent wanted to complete at least 12th standard and 36 percent wanted to become graduates. When asked to think about their current situation, only 48 percent of girls believed that they would be able to complete at least 12th standard, while another 23 percent believed that they would be able to complete graduation (Table 6).

Although the educational aspirations were higher among the older cohort, as compared to the younger cohort, the level of education they thought they would be able to complete fell short of their aspirations. This was particularly true for those who desired to complete graduation or more (Table 6). Around 70 percent of the older cohort aspired to complete at least graduation, but only 49 percent perceived that they would be able to achieve that level of education.

⁵ Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) are officially designated groups recognized by the Constitution of India. Those belonging to SCs, STs, and OBCs have historically faced marginalization and oppression within the predominant caste hierarchy. Special provisions are incorporated in the Constitution for safeguarding and protecting the rights and interests of these groups.

Most girls believed that they would receive support from their teachers and families to pursue education, but cited high costs associated with education, inaccessibility of schools and pressure to get married as barriers to achieving their educational aspirations.

Nine out of 10 girls thought that their families would support them to pursue their educational aspirations. In case they were not able to garner parental support, 86 percent of the younger cohort and 90 percent of the older cohort were confident in their ability to convince their families. Similarly, 82 percent of the younger cohort and 87 percent of the older cohort thought that they would receive their teachers' support and relevant information to pursue their educational aspirations (Table 6).

Half of the younger cohort and 60 percent of the older cohort report that there were many barriers that could prevent them from achieving their aspirations. Inability to afford the expenses associated with education was a major barrier as indicated by 45 percent of the younger cohort and 52 percent of the older cohort. Distance and inaccessibility of schools were barriers for 40 percent of younger cohort and 42 percent of the older cohort. For 13 percent of the younger cohort and 23 percent of the older cohort, marriage or pressure to get married was a barrier that could stop them from achieving their educational aspirations (Table 7). Overall, only half of the school-going girls in the older cohort believed that they would be able to complete at least up to graduation by overcoming structural barriers or family resistance.

C) EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL GIRLS

69 percent of the younger cohort and 63 percent of older cohort of out-of-school girls shared that if given a chance, they would want to resume their schooling. Girls who dropped out within last three years were more likely to want to resume their schooling than those who had dropped out earlier. Aspirations of out-of-school girls were lower than those of their school-going counterparts.

Among girls who dropped out of school, 70 percent of the younger cohort and 76 percent of the older cohort wished they could have continued with their schooling. 69 percent and 63 percent, respectively, shared that if given a chance now, they would like to resume their education (Table 7). Although more girls from the older cohort (as compared to the younger cohort) wished they could have continued with their schooling, fewer from the older cohort wanted to resume schooling. A higher proportion of girls who dropped out over the past three years (at the time of the survey) wanted to resume their schooling (72 percent of the younger and 71 percent of the older cohorts) as compared to those who dropped out more than three years ago (52 percent of the younger and 41 percent of the older cohorts) (Table 8).

Among the girls in the older cohort who wanted to resume their education, 98 percent aspired to complete at least 10th standard, while 69 percent aspired to complete at least 12th standard, and 39 percent aspired to complete graduation (Table 7). While seven out of 10 girls believed that they would receive their family's support to pursue their educational aspirations, eight out of 10 girls reported barriers that could prevent them from achieving their educational aspirations (Table 9). Inability to afford the expenses associated with education (56 percent) and inaccessibility of schools (51 percent) emerged as the top two barriers, followed by marriage/pressure to get married (30 percent). Domestic responsibilities also emerged as a major barrier (29 percent).

D) FACTORS INFLUENCING GIRLS' ASPIRATIONS TO COMPLETE AT LEAST GRADUATION

Among school-going girls in the younger cohort, place of residence (block), parents' education, father's occupation, wealth, family backing and gender attitudes had a significant association with their aspirations to complete graduation.

As compared to girls from Nala block, those belonging to Jamtara block had lower aspirations (OR=0.6) to complete at least graduation (Table 10). Girls whose mothers had at least one year of schooling were 2.2 times

more likely to aspire to complete at least graduation than those whose mothers had no schooling. Similarly, girls whose fathers had one to nine years of schooling (OR=1.7) or 10 or more years of schooling (OR=2.8) were more likely to aspire to complete at least graduation than those whose fathers had no schooling. The father's occupation also had a significant influence on a girl's aspirations; girls whose fathers were cultivators/skilled workers (OR=1.7) or engaged in business/salaried jobs (OR=1.5) were more likely to aspire for higher studies as compared to those whose fathers are unemployed or unskilled workers.

Girls belonging to the rich (OR=1.7) and richest (OR=1.9) wealth quintiles were more likely to aspire for higher education than those belonging to the poorest quintile (Table 10). Girls with family backing (those who believed that their families would allow them to pursue their aspired levels of education and go to neighboring/other villages for studies) were 2.7 times more likely to aspire for higher studies as opposed to those without such backing. Furthermore, girls who scored high on the gender attitudinal scale, i.e., expressed equitable gender attitudes, were 2.2 times more likely to aspire for higher education than those with a low score (those who expressed inequitable gender attitudes).

Among the school-going girls in the older cohort, father's education and occupation, caste, wealth, family backing, and gender attitude had a significant association with their aspirations to at least complete graduation.

Girls whose fathers had over 10 years of schooling (OR=2.3) were more likely to aspire for higher education than those girls whose fathers had no schooling. Additionally, girls whose fathers were cultivators/skilled workers (OR=1.9) or engaged in business/salaried jobs (OR=1.8) were more likely to aspire for higher education than those girls whose fathers were not working/engaged in unskilled work (Table 10). Caste and wealth also had a protective effect on girls' educational aspirations; those from SCs were 2.4 times more likely to aspire to complete at least graduation as compared to girls from STs. Girls from the moderate (OR=1.9) and richest (OR=2.6) wealth quintiles were more likely to aspire to complete graduation than those belonging to the poorest quintile (Table 10). Girls with family backing were 2.9 times more likely to aspire for higher studies than those without such backing (Table 10). Furthermore, girls who scored high on the gender attitudinal scale were 1.6 times more likely to aspire for higher education than those who scored low. Thus, girls who had gender equitable attitudes were more likely to aspire for higher education than those with inequitable gender attitudes.

Among the out-of-school girls in the older cohort, parental education, caste, wealth, years since drop out from school, family backing, and marital status had a significant association with their aspirations to at least complete graduation.

Girls whose mothers had at least one year of schooling (OR=1.7), or whose fathers had either one to nine years of schooling (OR=1.6) or 10 or more years of schooling (OR=2.2) were more likely to aspire for higher education than girls with illiterate mothers or fathers (Table 11). Compared to girls belonging to STs, girls belonging to other castes (other than ST, SC, and OBC) were 2.9 times more likely to aspire to complete at least graduation, despite being out-of-school (Table 11). Interestingly, compared to girls from the poorest quintile, those from the poor (OR=2.2) and richest (OR=2.1) quintiles were more likely to aspire for higher education.

Girls who dropped out over the last three years (at the time of the survey) were more likely to aspire for higher education than those who dropped out earlier (OR=2.3). The odds of aspiration for higher studies were 2.5 times higher for girls with family backing, as compared to girls without such backing (Table 11). Additionally, girls who were unmarried at the time of the survey were 1.8 times more likely to aspire for higher studies than those who were married or had their marriage fixed (Table 11).



Adolescent girl speaks at a school event | Credit: Ketaki Nagaraju/ICRW Asia

DISCUSSION

Findings from the UMANG baseline study provide key insights into the educational status and aspirations of adolescent girls in Godda, Jamtara and Sahibganj districts, and have important implications for policy and programming on girls' education and empowerment. Significant differences in the school-going status and aspirations of the younger and older cohorts underline the varied needs and experiences of younger and older adolescents. The survey results also highlight the necessity for a segmented and targeted approach in research and programming, with a focus on socio-economically marginalized households.

While the younger girls' cohort was mostly school-going with very low dropout rates, they have lower educational aspirations as they are probably unable to visualize or map their future at an early age. Conversely, only 50 percent of the older girls' cohort was school-going. Although they have higher educational aspirations than the younger cohort, they experience a greater risk of dropping out from school as they transition to secondary and higher secondary school, with only half the girls in this age group attending school.

The findings also highlight key differences in the educational aspirations of school-going and out-of-school girls, and bring out the added vulnerabilities of out-of-school girls. Not all out-of-school girls aspired to continue their education even if given the chance, and those who did, had lower aspirations as compared to their school-going counterparts. This disparity is even more pronounced among girls with aspirations of higher education, i.e., graduation and beyond.

Girls who dropped out over the last three years had higher aspirations than those who dropped out of school earlier. Furthermore, as compared to school-going girls, a large proportion of out-of-school girls reported barriers that they believed would prevent them from achieving their aspirations. Out-of-school girls were also disproportionately affected by certain barriers like marriage or pressure to get married and domestic responsibilities. Out-of-school girls had lower expectations of receiving family support to pursue their aspirations and felt less able to convince their parents if they were unsupportive. Family backing emerged as an important factor influencing the educational aspirations of adolescent girls. Irrespective of their school-going status, girls who believed that their family would support and allow them to go out of their village to complete education were more likely to aspire for higher education.

It is important to note that while most girls aspired to complete at least 10th and/or 12th standards, they cited external barriers as a major contributing factor for dropping out from school. These barriers perpetuate the gap between girls' aspirations and what they perceive as achievable in their current situation. They are indicative of the complex interplay of structural, system-level factors and regressive gender norms that continue to hinder girls' education, which urgently need to be addressed through policy and programming. Furthermore, the reasons reported by adolescent girls for dropping out of school largely correspond with the barriers anticipated by both school-going and out-of-school girls in achieving their educational aspirations. This further emphasizes the need for addressing these obstacles to reduce dropout as well as the gap between girls' aspirations and achievement.

Expenses related to education emerged as a major barrier, embedded in a context of widespread poverty and prevailing gender norms that accord less value to girls' education (Kaul, T., 2018). While parents are largely supportive of their daughter's education, they may hesitate to invest their limited resources into her education, the costs of which increase with age. The Right to Education (RTE) Act only provides for free education up to 8th standard. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the quality of education and learning outcomes are poor, leading to disinterest in studies (ASER Centre, 2018). Experience from the UMANG program has shown that due to the poor quality of school education, many girls resort to private tuition classes to boost their learning outcomes, which also has a cost implication. Many of those who are unable to get private tuition perform poorly in studies and lose interest. Costs related to transport to school also add to the economic pressure.

Inaccessibility of schools and difficulty to go to school alone were other major barriers cited by the girls. Secondary and higher-secondary schools tend to be fewer in number and located further apart than primary and upper-primary schools. Therefore, girls require the provision of safe and inexpensive transportation for better and easy access, along with safer roads, adequate lighting, etc. Social barriers, including restricted mobility of adolescent girls and gender norms related to protection of and control over girls and their sexuality further complicate the matter.

Given the aforementioned structural/systemic barriers, enhancing provision and access to schemes, scholarships, and other forms of financial and travel support for girls to continue their education is important. For example, studies have shown that bicycle schemes have been successful in increasing enrollment and helping girls to access school (Muralidharan, K. & Prakash, N., 2017). Similarly, free provision of books and uniforms can also help to cut down costs of education. In addition, provision of bridge education programs and schemes can enable out-of-school girls to rejoin school (at the appropriate level) in the early years of dropping out, when girls' aspirations to continue education are high. In Jharkhand, bridge education is provided through the National Institute of Open Schools (NIOS), Special Training Centers (STCs), and the Mahila Samakhya Kendra program. However, the reach of these programs and schemes among out-of-school girls is low (Morton, M. H., Bhattacharya, S., & Kumar, P., 2018). These programs and schemes need to be made accessible to all those who require them and must recognize the vulnerabilities of out-of-school girls so that the relevant barriers are mitigated to help them pursue their aspirations.

Marriage or pressure to marry and domestic responsibilities were also key barriers cited by girls. As girls grow older, they are at a heightened risk of being pushed into marriage in the proximate future, and out-of-school girls



Adolescent girls participate in a life-skills program | Paula Bronstein/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment

are more likely to be married or have their marriage fixed than school-going girls.⁶ Given the broader situation of poverty and lack of investment in girls' education, marriage often becomes a competing priority as girls grow older. Parents, who otherwise support their daughter's education, may find it more viable to discontinue her schooling and marry her off. Furthermore, girls also bear the burden of undertaking domestic work in their homes, particularly in families where both parents are engaged in work to make ends meet. Inequitable gender norms sustain both of these barriers and operate particularly at the family and community levels to hinder girls' education. Programs that challenge these unequal norms, engage with parents and families to promote delayed marriage and advocate equal distribution of work can help mitigate these barriers.

To empower adolescent girls and enhance their agency and aspirations, the UMANG program includes interventions with girls as well as with key stakeholders across the ecosystem of adolescent girls. In schools, the UMANG program includes participatory group education activities with adolescent girls and boys from 6th–12th standards, with graded curricula for younger adolescents (6th–8th standards) and older adolescents (9th–12th standards). These sessions are conducted by teachers and aim to build adolescents' perspective on gender and related concepts, enhance key skills like decision-making, build their aspirations, and equip them with the tools to achieve those aspirations. Similar sessions are conducted by UMANG peer mentors with 10-14-year-old and 15-18-year-old adolescent girls in the community, using sports as a mechanism to bring them together, and build their collective agency. Thus, both younger and older girls, as well as school-going and out-of-school girls are reached directly through the program.

The UMANG program also engages parents and community members through its targeted interventions with men and boys and women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to create a supportive environment for girls to aspire and realize their aspirations. These interventions use both formal and informal structures and platforms to sensitize community members and promote discussion around gender norms, and promote active participation at the family and community levels. Mid-media activities such as street theatre and community radio jockey will also be undertaken to initiate dialogue and mobilize the community to create a broader, supportive environment for girls. Furthermore, the UMANG program recognizes that girls, parents, and community members are embedded in the larger normative framework and are part of key structures and institutions. Thus, the program also engages with institutions and structures (including health, education, livelihoods, and others), and positions different intervention components within the system for larger and sustained change.

⁶ For more details on UMANG baseline findings on early child and forced marriage, please refer to the ICRW research report: Raising Her Voice: Agency and Aspirations of Adolescent Girls on Marriage—Evidence from Jharkhand, India.

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Girls wait for their turn to speak at a school event | Credit: Ketaki Nagaraju/ICRW Asia



ANNEXURE

Table 1: Proposed and achieved sample size for girls aged 10-14 years and 15-18 years (by blocks)

Area	Intervention				Control
	Godda district		Jamtara district		Sahibganj district
	Godda	Mahagama	Jamtara	Nala	Barhait / Barharwa
10-14-year-old girls					
Proposed	400	400	400	400	400
Achieved	413	404	409	403	401
15-18-year-old girls					
Proposed	400	400	400	400	400
Achieved	402	408	403	406	406

Table 2: Percentage of girls according to school-going status (Girls aged 10-14 years and 15-18 years)

School-Going Status	%	Weighted count
10 -14-year-old girls		
Never been to school	1.2	23
Discontinued	8.9	181
Currently in school	89.9	1826
Total (%)	100.0	2030
15 -18-year-old girls		
Never been to school	3.0	61
Discontinued	46.7	946
Currently in school	50.3	1019
Total (%)	100.0	2026

Table 3: Proportion of girls by school-going status according to age (10-18 years)

Age (years)	School-going	Out-of-school	No schooling
10	97.8	1.7	0.6
11	94.2	4.7	1.2
12	88.3	10	1.7
13	87.4	12.1	0.5
14	84.4	14.1	1.4
15	63.1	34.3	2.6
16	56.8	40.5	2.7
17	45.2	52.6	2.2
18	33.7	61.7	4.6

Table 4: Distribution of adolescent girls by reasons for dropping out of school

Top five reasons for dropping out of school (%)	10-14 years	15-18 years
School in accessible/difficult to go alone	45.3	46.1
Too expensive	33.9	40.1
Poor performance/lack of interest	47.0	37.6
Domestic responsibilities including care of child/family members	34.3	30.7
Parents/in-laws/husband did not allow	27.2	22.0
Girls who dropped out of school (N)	181	946

Table 5: Multivariate logistic regression odds ratio for girls aged 10-14 years and 15-18 years, currently in school

Dependent variable – Currently in school=1; rest=0	10-14-years old		15-18-years-old	
	OR (95% CI)	Sig.	OR (95% CI)	Sig.
Background characteristics				
Block - Nala ®				
Mahgama	0.52 (0.29-0.95)	.033	1.34 (0.93-1.93)	.123
Godda	1.07 (0.57-2.02)	.832	2.26 (1.56-3.28)	.000
Barhait/Barharwa	0.79 (0.46-1.37)	.405	2.17 (1.48-3.16)	.000
Jamtara	0.98 (0.53-1.81)	.946	1.13 (0.78-1.63)	.511
Age - 17-18 years ®	--	--		
15-16 years	--	--	2.92 (2.34-3.63)	.000
Mother's education - No schooling ®				
At least one year of schooling	2.44 (1.34-4.44)	.004	1.83 (1.39-2.39)	.000
Father's education – No schooling®				
1-9 years of schooling	1.67 (1.11-2.49)	.013	2.25 (1.75-2.90)	.000
10 or more year of schooling	1.39 (0.66-2.96)	.389	3.42 (2.42-4.85)	.000
Mother's occupation - Unskilled worker ®				
Skilled worker/business/salaried	1.28 (0.87-1.88)	.214	1.20 (0.90-1.61)	.219
Not working	2.43 (1.38-4.29)	.002	1.43 (1.02-2.00)	.039
Father's occupation - Not working or unskilled worker ®				
Cultivator/skilled worker	1.45 (0.98-2.14)	.062	1.18 (0.91-1.52)	.216
Business/salaried	1.57 (0.89-2.77)	.117	1.02 (0.75-1.38)	.909
Religion - Non-Hindu ®				
Hindu	1.73 (1.18-2.53)	.005	2.26 (1.74-2.92)	.000
Caste - ST ®				
SC	1.92 (1.04-3.52)	.036	0.45 (0.29-0.69)	.000
OBC	2.33 (1.46-3.73)	.000	1.15 (0.83-1.60)	.393
Other	3.22 (1.64-6.33)	.001	1.10 (0.72-1.67)	.670
Wealth quintile - poorest ®				
Poor	1.67 (1.09-2.63)	.019	1.22 (0.86-1.74)	.267
Moderate	1.32 (0.83-2.09)	.236	1.83 (1.28-2.61)	.001
Rich	2.93 (1.56-5.50)	.001	1.74 (1.21-2.50)	.003
Richest	3.79 (1.59-9.01)	.003	2.13 (1.45-3.14)	.000
Constant	1.67	.130	0.07	.000

Note: ® — Reference Category

Table 6: Aspirations about studies and anticipated family support to continue studies among girls currently in school

Aspirations about future studies and anticipated family support	10-14-years-old	15-18-years-old
	% Freq	% Freq
Aspirations		
If no constraints, standard like to complete		
% Wants to complete 10th standard or more	92.2	98.3
% Wants to complete 12th standard or more	60.1	88.9
% Wants to complete graduation or more	35.9	69.5
Given your current situation, what level of education would expect to complete		
% Expect to complete till 10th standard or more	86.1	94.4
% Expect to complete till 12th standard or more	47.9	79.0
% Expect to complete till graduation or more	23.1	48.8
Other support systems for continuing studies		
% Think family will support to go for level of education that she wants to achieve	90.9	89.7
% If family does not agree, who think she will be able to convince her family to go for higher studies	85.8	89.6
% Think teachers will support in providing information regarding level of education aspired	82.1	87.0
% Given current situation expect to complete at least graduation AND confident of convincing family about desired education level	23.1	48.0
Perceived barriers (multiple response) to pursue educational aspirations (%)		
No barrier	49.4	40.2
Other perceived barriers		
Too expensive	44.8	51.8
School inaccessible/difficult to go alone	39.5	42.4
Domestic responsibilities including care of child/family members	8.2	9.3
Parents did not allow	10.2	12.2
Marriage/pressure to get married	13.1	22.8
Girls currently in school	1825	1019

Girls participate in an activity at the community center. A scene from the film *Parvaaz / Flight* | Produced by ICRW and directed by Mixed Media Productions



Table 7: Aspirations about studies and anticipated family support to continue studies among girls who discontinued their education

Aspirations about future studies and anticipated family support	10-14-years	15-18-years
	% Freq	% Freq
Aspirations about future studies among those who dropped out from school (%)		
Wished/could have continued school/college	69.6	76.3
If given a chance to continue education at present, would like to study further	68.6	63.3
Total girls who have dropped out from school/college	181 (100.0%)	946 (100.0%)
Aspirations and family support to continue education among those who want continue education now (%)		
Who wish to study at least till 10th standard or above	94.4	98.3
Who wish to study at least till 12th standard or above	32.2	68.7
Who wish to study at least till graduation or above	15.3	38.7
Who think her family will support her to go for the level of education she wants to achieve	70.2	70.8
Girls who think she will be able to convince her family to go for higher studies, if they are against it	56.5	69.7
Total girls who want to study at present	124 (100.0%)	599 (100.0%)

Table 8: Association between timing of dropping out from school (years since drop out) and aspiration to continue studies, among total dropped out girls (10-18 years)

Years since dropping out from school/college	Given a chance would like to study now			Total (N)
	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know	
10-14-years age group				
<= 3 years	72.0	25.3	2.7	150
> 3 years	51.6	48.4	0.0	31
Total (%)	68.5	29.3	2.2	181
15-18-years age group				
<= 3 years	70.8	28.6	0.6	706
> 3 years	41.1	55.6	3.3	240
Total (%)	63.3	35.5	1.3	946

Table 9: Perceived barriers to continue studies among the girls who are motivated to study now, after dropping out from school

Perceived barriers (multiple response) to continue studies again (%)	10-14 years	15-18 years
	% Freq	% Freq
No barrier	21.9	21.0
Other perceived barriers		
Too expensive	54.2	56.1
School inaccessible/difficult to go alone	53.2	50.7
Domestic responsibilities including care of child/family member	29.1	28.5
Marriage/pressure to get married	21.4	29.7
Husband/in-laws will not allow	--	7.2
Parents will not allow	25.0	19.8
Total girls who want to study at present	124 (100.0%)	599 (100.0%)

Table 10: Multivariate logistic regression for girls aged 10-14-years and 15-18-years willing to study till graduation or above, among school going girls

Dependent variable – Willing to complete at least graduation=1; rest=0	10-14-years		15-18-years	
	OR (95% CI)	Sig.	OR (95% CI)	Sig.
Background characteristics				
Block - Nala ®				
Mahagama	1.0 (0.6 – 1.5)	.866	1.5 (0.9 – 2.5)	.116
Godda	1.0 (0.6 – 1.5)	.873	1.3 (0.8 – 2.0)	.323
Barhait/Barharwa	1.1 (0.7 – 1.7)	.783	0.9 (0.6 – 1.6)	.844
Jamtara	0.6 (0.4 – 0.9)	.026	1.5 (0.9 – 2.5)	.148
Mother's education - No schooling ®	--	--		
At least one year of schooling	2.2 (1.6 – 3.0)	.000	1.4 (1.0 – 1.9)	.061
Father's education – No schooling ®				
1-9 years of schooling	1.7 (1.3 – 2.3)	.001	1.4 (0.9 – 2.0)	.093
10 or more year of schooling	2.8 (1.9 – 4.2)	.000	2.3 (1.5 – 3.6)	.000
Mother's occupation - Unskilled worker ®				
Cultivator/skilled worker/business/salaried	1.0 (0.7 – 1.5)	.941	0.9 (0.6 – 1.4)	.615
Not working	1.0 (0.7 – 1.5)	.965	0.9 (0.5 – 1.4)	.552
Father's occupation - Not working or unskilled worker ®				
Cultivator/skilled worker	1.7 (1.2 – 2.3)	.001	1.9 (1.3 – 2.7)	.001
Business/salaried	1.5 (1.1 – 2.2)	.021	1.8 (1.2 – 2.7)	.007
Religion - Non-Hindu ®				
Hindu	1.4 (1.0 – 1.9)	.058	1.1 (0.7 – 1.6)	.664
Caste- ST ®				
SC	0.7 (0.4 – 1.3)	.246	2.4 (1.2 – 4.7)	.013
OBC	1.0 (0.7 – 1.6)	.876	1.6 (1.0 – 2.5)	.074
Other	0.9 (0.5 – 1.5)	.691	1.1 (0.6 – 2.0)	.815
Wealth quintile - poorest ®				
Poor	0.9 (0.5 – 1.4)	.522	1.0 (0.6 – 1.9)	.970
Moderate	1.0 (0.6 – 1.6)	.936	1.9 (1.1 – 3.3)	.031
Rich	1.7 (1.1 – 2.7)	.015	1.7 (0.9 – 2.9)	.086
Richest	1.9 (1.2 – 3.1)	.005	2.6 (1.4 – 4.7)	.001
Family backing – No ®				
Yes	2.7 (2.0 – 3.6)	.000	2.9 (2.1 – 4.0)	.000
Feelings toward education – Low score ®				
Moderate score	0.7 (0.5 – 0.9)	.013	1.1 (0.7 – 1.6)	.703
High score	0.7 (0.5 – 1.0)	.073	1.4 (1.0 – 2.1)	.075
Gender attitude – Low score ®				
Moderate score	1.1 (0.8 – 1.6)	.562	1.4 (0.9 – 2.0)	.126
High score	2.2 (1.6 – 3.1)	.000	1.6 (1.1 – 2.4)	.013
Constant	.033		.044	

Note: ® — Reference Category

Table 11: Multivariate logistic regression for girls aged 15-18-years-old willing to study till graduation or above, among dropped-out girls according to background characteristics

Dependent variable – Aspire to complete at least graduation=1; rest=0	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.		Sig.
		Lower	Upper	
Background characteristics				
Block - Nala ®				
Mahagama	.644	.352	1.178	.153
Godda	.476	.237	.956	.037
Barhait/Barharwa	.959	.514	1.788	.894
Jamtara	1.080	.622	1.876	.785
Mother's education - No schooling ®				
At least one year of schooling	1.724	1.073	2.769	.024
Father's education – No schooling®				
1-9 years of schooling	1.641	1.077	2.503	.021
10 or more years of schooling	2.206	1.182	4.116	.013
Mother's occupation - Unskilled worker ®				
Cultivator/skilled worker/ business/salaried	.834	.503	1.385	.483
Not working	.956	.569	1.606	.866
Father's occupation - Not working or unskilled worker ®				
Cultivator/skilled worker	1.173	.762	1.805	.468
Business/salaried	.643	.375	1.101	.107
Religion - Non-Hindu ®				
Hindu	1.076	.693	1.671	.745
Caste - ST ®				
SC	.808	.393	1.662	.562
OBC	1.372	.800	2.351	.250
Other	2.910	1.469	5.763	.002
Wealth quintile - poorest ®				
Poor	2.180	1.227	3.875	.008
Moderate	1.836	1.005	3.353	.048
Rich	1.362	.724	2.563	.338
Richest	2.123	1.099	4.102	.025
Years since leaving school - >3 years ®				
<= 3 years	2.275	1.356	3.816	.002
Marital status – Married/marriage fixed ®				
Unmarried	1.783	1.180	2.695	.006
Family backing – No ®				
Yes	2.523	1.736	3.667	.000
Gender attitude – Low score ®				
Moderate score	.837	.537	1.306	.433
High score	1.412	.912	2.186	.122
Constant	.028			.000

Note: ® — Reference Category

Table 12: Statements used to construct a scale for measuring girls' feelings toward education

1.	My teachers at school want/wanted me to do well.
2.	What I learn/learned at school will be/is useful for my future.
3.	I learn/learned lots of new things at school.
4.	I enjoy/enjoyed school.
5.	I am/was motivated to work hard at school.
6.	I look/looked forward to going to school.

Table 13: Statements used to construct a gender attitudinal scale

1.	Men need more care as they work harder than women.
2.	A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family.
3.	A wife should always obey her husband.
4.	The man should have the final say in all family matters.
5.	To be a man you need to be tough.
6.	Girls are more tolerant than boys by nature.
7.	A family's honor lies in a girl's hand.
8.	Only bad girls make male friends.
9.	Good girls do not roam around in public spaces.
10.	Instead of spending money on a girl's education, it should be saved for her dowry.
11.	A girl should have a right to inherit parental property.

Adolescent girls attend a training on adolescent sexual and reproductive health | Credit: Paula Bronstein/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment



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