

# UMANG

A Multi-Dimensional Model for  
Shifting Norms and Fostering  
Intergenerational Change through  
Women's Collectives to Address  
Child Marriage in Jharkhand







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This publication comprises documentation of the design, framework and implementation of the Umang model, evaluation findings, learnings and recommendations as a part of the program undertaken by PCI India in partnership with Palash (Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society). Umang is a norm-shifting and empowerment focused model to address child/early marriage of adolescent girls in Jharkhand. The program was supported by Global Communities. We encourage learning from this document to be used only for non-commercial purposes by appropriately quoting/citing with appropriate attribution.

### About Palash (JSLPS)

The Department of Rural Development, Government of Jharkhand, has established a separate and autonomous society named Palash, also known as Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS), which works as the nodal agency for effective implementation of livelihood promotion in the state. Palash is also the nodal agency for implementation of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) Project in state of Jharkhand. Palash essentially works in the domain of Social Mobilization, Financial Inclusion, Livelihood Promotion and Skill Development. NRLM has an ambitious mandate – conceivably the largest poverty reduction program for poor in the world – as it aims at reaching nearly 70 million rural households of India.

### About PCI

PCI India is a multi-disciplinary organization working in India since 1998. It drives interventions to transform the lives of communities at scale by solving complex social issues – partnering with governments, private sectors, and development organizations. Its decades of deep community connection has equipped it to discover the root causes of social and developmental challenges faced by the communities, including the marginalized ones. Through evidence-based programming and sophisticated measurements, PCI India designs solutions that are efficacious and scalable. It is recognized for providing high-quality technical assistance to both national and state governments. Currently it has a pan-India presence with program implementations across 14 states that are touching the lives of more than 17 million people.







## Acknowledgments

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Our gratitude extends to the officials from various government departments, including members of Block Level Child Protection Committee (BLCPC) and District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) who supported the study and intervention implementation. Their collaboration enabled systemic engagement, access to resources, and advocacy for policy reforms, strengthening Umang's outcomes. We also acknowledge the elected representatives from the PRIs, whose support and advocacy helped create an enabling environment for the intervention, ensuring community ownership and sustainability.

Special thanks go to the PCI India Umang team – Poonam Kumari, Shalini Kumari, Anita Kumari, Sanjiv Singh, Nawab Pervez, Binay Kumar Biswas, Karamvir Singh and Pooja Kini whose tireless efforts day and night brought this initiative to life. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, their dedication ensured that the work continued unabated, maintaining engagement with communities through innovative adaptations like virtual sessions and remote outreach. Their resilience and commitment have been instrumental in Umang's success.

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

### **BLCPC: Block-Level Child Protection Committee**

Refers to the committee at the block level that Umang engages with for systemic advocacy and child protection efforts, as mentioned in the Design of Umang section.

### **CLF: Cluster-Level Federation**

A higher-tier structure in the SHG-federated system, formed by representatives from 5–40 Village Organizations, used for systemic engagement and advocacy in Umang's intervention (Formative Research, Design of Umang, Strategic Partnership).

### **CRY: Child Rights and You**

An organization cited in the Introduction section, for data on school dropout rates among girls in India (CRY, 2013).

### **DV Act: Domestic Violence Act**

A legal framework in India, formally known as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, referenced in the Design of Umang section (VO and CLF sessions) to educate women on protection against domestic violence.

### **JSLPS: Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society**

JSLPS, also known as Palash, is the nodal agency under the Department of Rural Development, Government of Jharkhand, for implementation of NRLM project in the state. It is the organization responsible for leading the Umang initiative, acknowledged in the Design and Qualitative Findings sections and cited in the publication details.

### **NFHS: National Family Health Survey**

A survey providing data on child marriage prevalence and related statistics in India and Jharkhand (e.g., NFHS-4 [2015–16], NFHS-5 [2019–21]), referenced in the Introduction and Design of Umang sections.

### **NRLM: National Rural Livelihood Mission**

NRLM, also known as Aajeevika, is a flagship program of the Ministry of Rural Development in India that aims at poverty reduction in rural areas and referenced in the publication details.

### **PCI India: Project Concern International India**

The organization responsible for implementing and publishing the Umang initiative, acknowledged in the Qualitative Findings section and cited in the publication details.

### **POCSO: Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act**

A legal framework in India referenced in the Design of Umang section (VO and CLF sessions) to educate women on child protection laws.

### **SEM: Socio-Ecological Model**

A theoretical framework used by Umang to address child marriage across multiple levels (individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, public policy), introduced in the Theoretical Frameworks section and applied throughout the Design of Umang.

### **SHG: Self-Help Group**

A grassroots women's collective of 10–20 members, forming the base of Umang's intervention structure, extensively referenced across all sections (Formative Research, Strategic Partnership, Design of Umang).

### **SRHR: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**

A focus area of Umang's intervention, addressed through SHG sessions, Kishori Help Desks, and counselling, mentioned in the Design of Umang and Qualitative Findings sections.

### **VO: Village Organization**

A mid-tier structure in the SHG-federated system, formed by 5–20 SHGs within a village, used for community-level leadership and advocacy in Umang's intervention (Formative Research, Strategic Partnership, Design of Umang).

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## Introduction: The Persistent Challenge of Child Marriage in India and Jharkhand

Child marriage remains a deeply entrenched social issue in India, with profound consequences for the health, education, and empowerment of adolescent girls. Despite legal prohibitions and decades of intervention, the practice persists, particularly in rural and underserved regions. The Umang initiative, meaning "enthusiasm" in Hindi, emerges as a bold response to this challenge, integrating empowerment and norm-shifting strategies to tackle the pervasive issue of early marriage among adolescent girls in Jharkhand, India.

### A National Perspective: Child Marriage in India

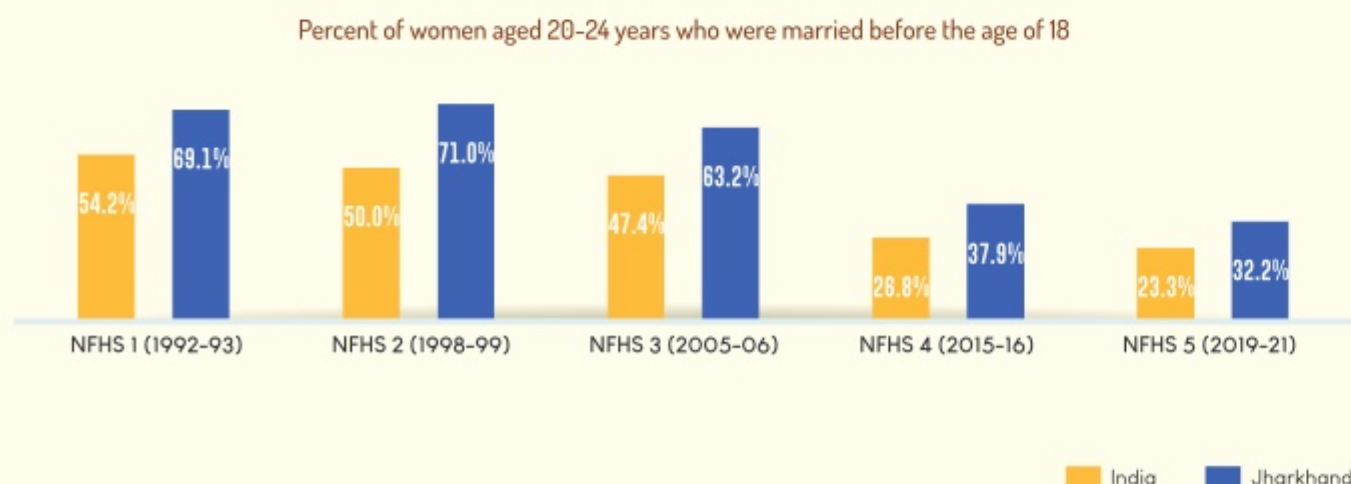
Across India, the prevalence of child marriage has witnessed a gradual decline, yet it remains alarmingly high. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-21), 23% of women aged 20-24 years were married before reaching the age of 18, a drop from 27% in NFHS-4 (2015-16). While this reduction signals progress—attributable to increased awareness, education campaigns, and stricter enforcement of laws like the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006—the numbers still reflect a stark reality: nearly one in four young women in India is denied the chance to complete her childhood, free from the burdens of marriage.

**Child marriage is not merely a statistical concern; it is a violation of human rights that ripples across generations.** Girls married before 18 years of age are more likely to experience domestic violence, early pregnancies, and maternal health complications. A 2016 study by Corstone highlights a critical dimension of this issue: women and girls in India, particularly those married young, exhibit a poor sense of self-efficacy, agency, and decision-making power over their health, education, and overall well-being. This lack of autonomy perpetuates cycles of poverty and gender inequality, as these girls are often pulled out of schools to fulfil domestic roles, limiting their opportunities for personal and economic growth.

Education, a key pathway that has the potential to lead girls out of this cycle, faces its own barriers. Data from Child Rights and You (CRY, 2013) reveals that school dropout rates among girls spike between 5th and 8th standards, a critical transition period when societal pressures, including early marriage, intensify. This dropout trend aligns with the age at which many girls are betrothed or married, thus effectively ending their scope for attaining formal education and narrowing their life prospects.

The interplay of these factors – early marriage, limited agency, and educational discontinuation—creates a vicious cycle that interventions like Umang seek to disrupt.

One-third adolescent girls in Jharkhand get married before 18 years of age



### The Jharkhand Context: A Deepening Crisis

Jharkhand is a state marked by its tribal heritage, rural expanse, and economic challenges. Here, the prevalence of child marriage exceeds the national average, amplifying the urgency for targeted action. NFHS-5 (2019-21) data indicates that 32% of women aged 20-24 years in Jharkhand were married before 18, down from 38% in NFHS-4 (2015-16).

While this decline mirrors national trends, the figure remains stubbornly high, reflecting entrenched cultural norms, poverty, and systemic gaps in education and healthcare access within the state.

Jharkhand's rural communities, where traditional practices often hold sway, are particularly vulnerable to the persistence of child marriage.

### Intergenerational Impact of Early Marriage

The consequences are starkly visible in the state's reproductive health statistics. According to NFHS-5, 10% of women aged 15-19 years in Jharkhand had either given birth or were pregnant at the time of the survey, a slight improvement from 12% in NFHS-4. This early childbearing, often a direct result of child marriage, poses severe risks: adolescent mothers face higher rates of maternal mortality and morbidity, and their children are more likely to suffer from malnutrition and stunted growth. These outcomes underscore the intergenerational impact of early marriage, locking families into cycles of disadvantage.

Education, a cornerstone of empowerment, remains elusive for many girls in Jharkhand. NFHS-5 reports that only 33% of women aged 15-49 years in the state have completed 10 or more years of schooling, a marginal increase from 29% in NFHS-4. This low educational attainment is both a cause and consequence of child marriage: girls who leave school early are more likely to marry young, and those married young rarely return to education.

The intersection of these factors—high child marriage rates, early pregnancies, and limited schooling—paints a grim picture of gender inequity in Jharkhand, necessitating interventions that go beyond awareness to address the root causes.

### Drivers of Child Marriage: Beyond the Numbers

The data from NFHS and other sources provides a quantitative snapshot, but the drivers of child marriage in Jharkhand are deeply qualitative, rooted in social, economic, and cultural dynamics. Poverty is a primary catalyst: families, particularly in rural areas, may view early marriage as a means to reduce financial burdens or secure a daughter's future in the absence of viable alternatives. Gender norms further compound this, positioning girls as economic liabilities whose value lies in their roles as wives and mothers rather than as individuals with agency.

Cultural traditions, especially among Jharkhand's tribal communities, also play a significant role. In some areas, child marriage is seen as a rite of passage or a way to preserve family honor, reinforced by descriptive norms (what people observe others doing) and injunctive norms (what people believe they should do). These norms create a social environment where delaying marriage is met with resistance or stigma, even when families recognize its harm. Additionally, weak enforcement of legal protections—despite the 2006 Act—allows the practice to persist, particularly in remote regions with limited access to governance structures.

The drivers of child marriage in Jharkhand are deeply rooted in social, economic, and cultural dynamics.





## The Need for a New Approach

Decades of interventions—ranging from cash incentives to legal crackdowns—have yielded mixed results. While some interventions have reduced child marriage rates, they have often failed to address the underlying normative frameworks that sustain the practice in the long run. **Awareness campaigns may educate communities about the legal age of marriage, but without shifting perceptions regarding the value of the girl child, or providing tangible alternatives to child/early marriage, behavior change remains elusive.** Similarly, school retention programs, especially those that only focus on adolescent students without involving families and communities, falter when families prioritize marriage over education, and economic schemes lose impact when women lack the agency to control resources.

This is where Umang has undertaken a unique, but holistic approach. Recognizing that child marriage is not just a symptom of poverty or ignorance, but an outcome of deeply ingrained social norms, Umang has taken a dual-pronged approach: empowering girls through education and economic independence, while leveraging relational and collective dynamics to shift attitudes.

By focusing on enriching the mother-daughter bond and the collective agency of self-help groups (SHGs), Umang aims to break the intergenerational cycle of early marriage and foster a normative shift—where communities no longer see child marriage as inevitable or desirable in any situation.

### Setting the Stage for Umang's Journey

In addition to the statistics of the prevalence of child marriage, low self-efficacy, high dropout rates, early pregnancies, and limited schooling—reveal the depth of the issue of child marriage in Jharkhand. Yet, these numbers also point to an opportunity:

**By addressing both the structural barriers (education and economic access) and the social norms (perceptions and expectations), a model like Umang can pave the way for a lasting impact.**

Piloted in two blocks of Jharkhand—Nala (in Jamtara district) and Godda Sadar (in Godda district)—this intervention demonstrated the ability to prove that enthusiasm, empowerment, and community agency can transform the lives of adolescent girls and bring in a positive shift in people's attitudes regarding child/early marriage.



## Formative Research: Unpacking the Persistence of Child Marriage in Nala and Godda Sadar

The Umang initiative, a social norms-shifting and empowerment-integrated model, embarked on a critical phase of formative research to understand the deep-seated drivers of child marriage among adolescent girls in Jharkhand's rural communities, specifically in the blocks of Nala and Godda Sadar.

This phase was designed to lay the groundwork for Umang's intervention by engaging directly with local stakeholders—particularly self-help group (SHG) women, village organizations (VOs), and cluster-level federations (CLFs)—to uncover:

- ♦ Why does child marriage remain prevalent?
- ♦ Why do mothers struggle to prevent their daughters' early marriages?
- ♦ Why SHGs, as powerful women's collectives, hesitate to take decisive action?

The findings from this research illuminate the complex interplay of social norms, systemic barriers, and cultural dynamics that sustain child marriage, while also highlighting opportunities for transformative change.

### Methodology: Engaging Rural Communities and Women's Collectives

The formative research involved immersive fieldwork in the rural areas of Nala and Godda Sadar, two blocks in Jharkhand known for their high rates of child marriage and socio-economic challenges. Researchers visited these communities to observe and participate in the meetings of SHGs, VOs, and CLFs, which form a federated structure of women's collectives across rural India. SHGs typically consist of 10–12 women who come together for livelihood opportunities, economic empowerment, and social support, while VOs and CLFs represent larger village and cluster-level networks, respectively, amplifying the collective agency of these groups. This federated structure, deeply rooted in community institutions, provided a rich platform to explore attitudes, behaviors, and barriers related to child marriage.

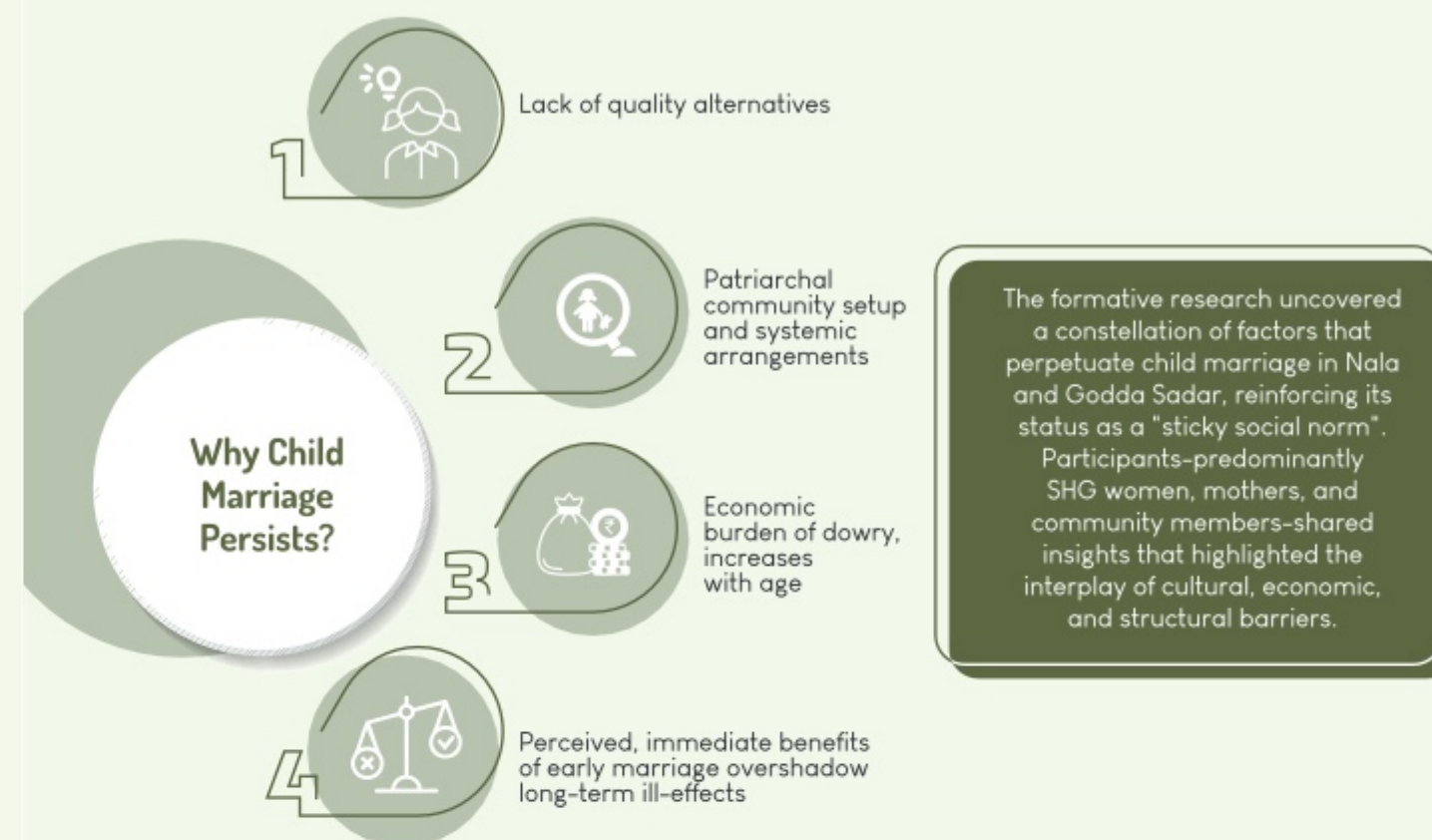
The research team engaged directly with SHG women, many of whom were married off before attaining legal age of marriage, ie 18 years of age, to understand their perspectives, experiences, and challenges. Open-ended discussions and observational studies were conducted to answer two key questions:

- (1) Why does child marriage persist in these communities despite legal prohibitions and awareness campaigns?
- (2) What normative and systemic challenges prevent mothers and SHGs from effectively preventing early marriages?

The responses, grounded in the lived realities of these women, revealed a tapestry of cultural norms, economic pressures, and systemic gaps that Umang seeks to address.



## Why Child Marriage Persists: Uncovering the Root Causes



The formative research uncovered a constellation of factors that perpetuate child marriage in Nala and Godda Sadar, reinforcing its status as a "sticky social norm". Participants—predominantly SHG women, mothers, and community members—shared insights that highlighted the interplay of cultural, economic, and structural barriers.

One dominant theme was the **lack of quality alternatives** to delay marriage and ensure a safe transition into adulthood for adolescent girls. In rural communities, where education and economic opportunities are scarce, marriage remains the default path for girls, who often consider it as the only way to secure their future. Girls who remain unmarried past adolescence face uncertainty, vulnerability, and social scrutiny, making early marriage an attractive, if misguided, solution. This absence of viable alternatives perpetuates a descriptive norm—where early marriage is what most people observe and practice—making it difficult for individuals or families to deviate without facing stigma or isolation.

Another critical driver is the **patriarchal community setup and systemic arrangements** that control female sexuality and prioritize safety over autonomy. Many parents expressed deep-seated fears about their daughters' safety, including the risk of harassment, assault, or elopement, which they believe can be mitigated through early marriage. This perception is rooted in a lack of trust in community safety nets and systemic protections, compounded by inadequate law enforcement and child protection mechanisms in rural areas. As a result, marrying off daughters as early as possible is seen as a pragmatic, if harmful, strategy to safeguard family honor and avoid potential shame.

Economic pressures further complicate the issue. Participants highlighted the **increasing economic burden of dowry**, which weighs heavily on families, particularly in Jharkhand's rural and tribal communities. Dowry demands often escalate with a girl's age, which implies creating an incentive to marry daughters young, before dowry expectations become prohibitive. This economic logic, intertwined with cultural norms, reinforces child marriage as a practical choice, even when families recognize its negative consequences.

Finally, the **perceived, immediate benefits of early marriage** often overshadow its long-term, harmful effects, according to the women interviewed. Many participants noted that communities tend to ignore the long-term impacts—such as health risks, educational loss, and domestic violence—because the immediate perceived advantages (e.g., securing a daughter's future, reducing family expenses, or maintaining social status) appear to outweigh them. This cognitive dissonance reflects a deeply ingrained injunctive norm—what people believe they should do, even if they know it's harmful—further entrenching child marriage as a social expectation.



## Normative Challenges for Mothers: Barriers to Preventing Child Marriage

The formative research also delved into the specific challenges mothers face in preventing their daughters' early marriages. The responses revealed a web of normative expectations and systemic pressures that limit maternal agency and perpetuate intergenerational cycles of early marriage.

One major barrier is the **exclusion of women from marriage-related decision-making**. In these patriarchal communities, men—fathers, brothers, or extended family members—hold primary authority over marriage decisions, while women, including mothers, are expected to defer to their judgment. This lack of inclusion reinforces mothers' powerlessness, making it difficult for them to advocate for delaying their daughters' marriages, even when they recognize the harm.

Mothers also face intense **pressure to agree with family and community** suggestions about marriage, including proposals driven by dowry negotiations. The economic and social stakes of dowry create a coercive environment where mothers feel compelled to accept matches for their daughters, regardless of age or readiness. This pressure is compounded by the fear of social repercussions if they resist, as family's risk being ostracized or shamed for challenging traditional norms.

Another pervasive expectation is that mothers must **prepare their daughters for marriage through domestic training**, teaching them household chores and skills deemed necessary for marital life. This focus on domestic readiness often begins in adolescence, diverting girls' time and energy away from education and career or other constructive activities that could delay their marriage. Many mothers admitted they do not know how to keep their daughters engaged in alternative pursuits—such as continued schooling or vocational training—without sparking conflict within the family or community.

The societal expectation that **daughters should be educated only to become literate, not independent**, further limits mothers' ability to envision a different future for their girls. Education is often seen as a tool for basic literacy to support the family, not as a pathway to economic independence or personal empowerment. This narrow view aligns with the broader norm that women should prioritize family roles over individual aspirations, reinforcing the inevitability of early marriage.

Perhaps most critically, **no one is expected to stop a marriage, especially for girls**. Marriage is viewed as a sacred ceremony, deeply embedded in cultural and religious traditions. Any attempt to delay or prevent it—whether by a mother, daughter, or community member—is considered inauspicious that can lead to severe stigma and social exclusion or discrimination for the girl and her family. This fear of backlash silences opposition, even among mothers who may privately oppose child marriage.

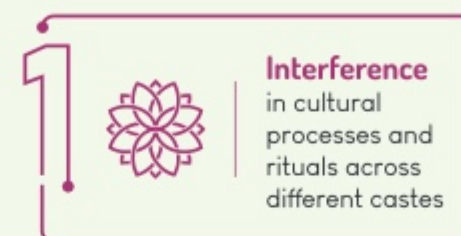
Finally, the belief that **early marriage safeguards family honour**—driven by fears of harassment, elopement, or loss of reputation—creates an additional layer of pressure. Mothers, often survivors of child marriage themselves, may internalize these fears, seeing early marriage as a necessary protection against societal risks, despite its long-term harm.

This tension between personal experience and cultural expectation leaves many mothers trapped, unable to break the cycle of child/early marriage for their daughters.



## Normative and Systemic Challenges for SHGs: Collective Hesitation

While SHGs, VOs, and CLFs represent powerful women's collectives with the potential to drive change, the formative research revealed significant barriers that prevent them from taking concrete action against child marriage. These challenges are both **normative**—rooted in community attitudes—and **systemic**—tied to gaps in knowledge and infrastructure.



One key finding was the reluctance to **interfere in cultural processes and rituals across different castes**. SHG members expressed concern that addressing child marriage could disrupt long-standing traditions, risking conflict or alienation within diverse community structures. This hesitation reflects the **descriptive norm** of maintaining cultural harmony, even when it perpetuates harmful practices like child marriage.



Another major barrier is the **fear associated with challenging the sanctity of marriage**. As a sacred ceremony, marriage carries immense cultural weight, and any attempt to question or delay it is seen as inauspicious and taboo. SHG women voiced concerns that advocating against child marriage could stigmatize girls and their families, particularly in the event of negative outcomes like elopement or harassment. This fear of social repercussion stifles collective action, even among groups that exhibit strong potential for influence.



Knowledge gaps also hinder SHG action. Many women admitted they are not aware of laws prohibiting child marriage, such as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, or broader child protection laws. Where awareness exists, it is often partial, lacking the depth needed to navigate legal or systemic processes effectively. This lack of understanding extends to **legal and systemic mechanisms** for reporting or preventing child marriage, leaving SHGs ill-equipped to act as advocates or enforcers.



Additionally, SHG members highlighted their reluctance to **raise issues that could create conflict with men** at the household or community level. In patriarchal settings, challenging marriage norms risks antagonizing male family members or community leaders, threatening the social and economic stability of SHG women. This dynamic underscores the systemic power imbalance that limits collective agency, even within women's groups.



Finally, **safety concerns and fears of elopement** emerged as persistent worries, mirroring the individual fears of mothers. SHG women recognized the lack of safe spaces and systemic support for adolescent girls, making early marriage appear as the only viable option to protect them from harm. This perception, combined with the absence of alternative pathways, reinforces the collective hesitation to challenge child marriage head-on.



## Learnings and Implications for Umang

The formative research in Nala and Godda Sadar offers profound insights into the entrenched norms and systemic barriers sustaining child marriage.

**For mothers, the challenges are personal and relational stemming from their own experiences, societal expectations, and lack of alternatives for their daughters. For SHGs, the barriers are collective and structural rooted in cultural taboos, knowledge gaps, and fears of conflict or reprisal.**

Together, these findings paint a picture of a deeply ingrained social norm, reinforced by descriptive and injunctive pressures, that Umang must address through targeted, norm-shifting strategies.

The persistence of child marriage, as uncovered in this study, is not simply a matter of ignorance or poverty but a complex interplay of cultural beliefs, economic pressures, and systemic failures. The lack of safe transitions into adulthood, the patriarchal control over girls' lives, and the economic burden of dowry create a web of incentives that favour early marriage. At the same time, the normative expectations—marriage as sacred, girls as liabilities, and honour tied to early unions—silence resistance and perpetuate the practice across generations.

For Umang, these findings underscore the need for a dual approach: empowering individuals (particularly mothers and daughters) through education and economic independence, and mobilizing collectives (like SHGs, VOs, and CLFs) to shift community norms. By addressing the gaps in knowledge, safety, and agency, Umang can create alternative pathways for girls while challenging the descriptive and injunctive norms that sustain child marriage. The mother-daughter relationship and the collective agency of SHGs, as identified in Umang's conceptual framework, emerge as key levers for change, offering hope for breaking the cycle in Jharkhand's rural communities.

The insights gained from the formative research in Nala and Godda Sadar, illuminating the deep-rooted norms and systemic barriers sustaining child marriage, provided a critical foundation for Umang's strategic approach. These findings directly informed the development of robust theoretical frameworks, which guide the intervention's design by offering a multi-layered, evidence-based strategy to shift social norms and empower adolescent girls and their communities, as detailed in the following section.





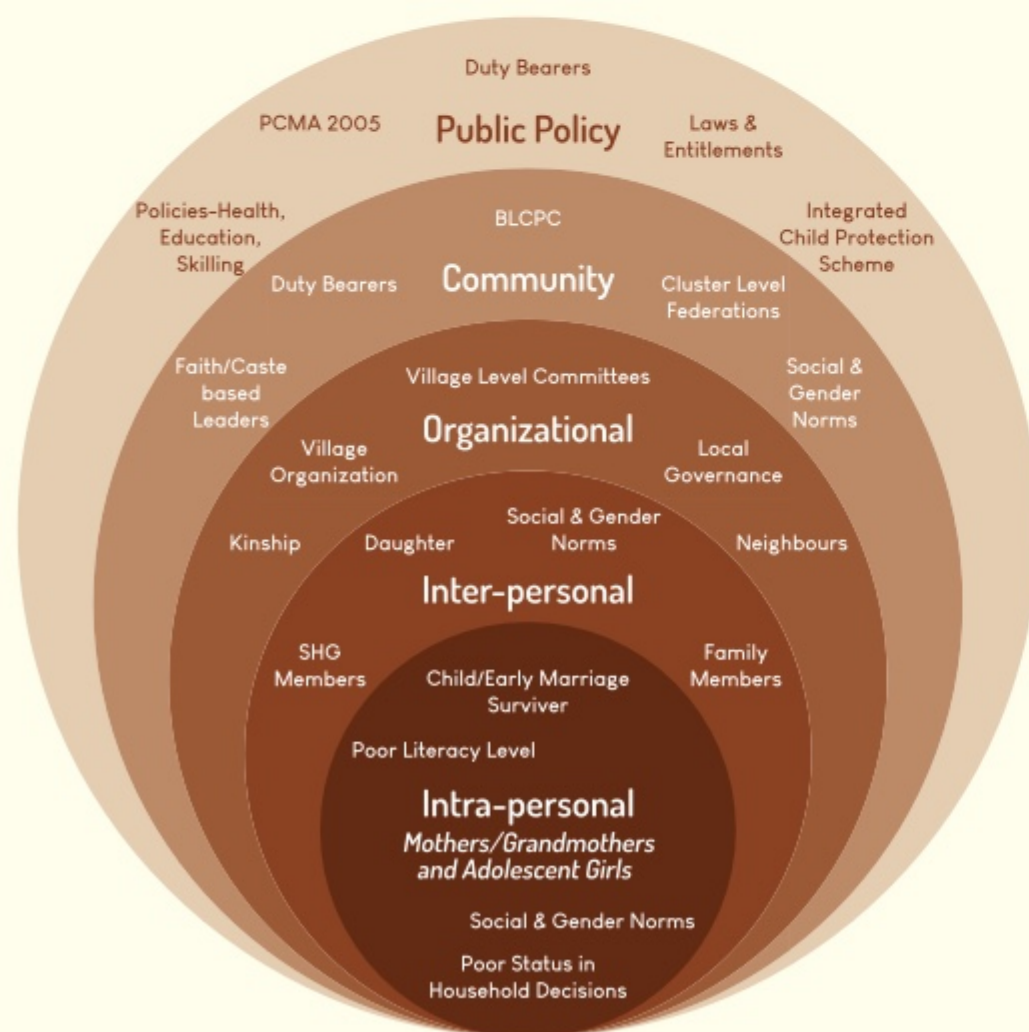
## Theoretical Frameworks for Designing a Norm-Shifting & Empowerment-Integrated Model

The Umang initiative, designed to address the pervasive issue of child marriage among adolescent girls in Jharkhand, is grounded in a robust set of theoretical frameworks that guide its norm-shifting and empowerment-integrated approach. By drawing on the Socio-Ecological Model, Naila Kabeer's Empowerment Framework, and Cristina Bicchieri's Social Norms Theory, Umang constructs a multi-layered strategy to transform individual behaviors, community norms, and systemic structures. This section outlines how these frameworks underpin Umang's intervention, piloted in the rural blocks of Nala and Godda Sadar, to create lasting change in attitudes and practices around early marriage.

### The Socio-Ecological Model: A Multi-Layered Approach

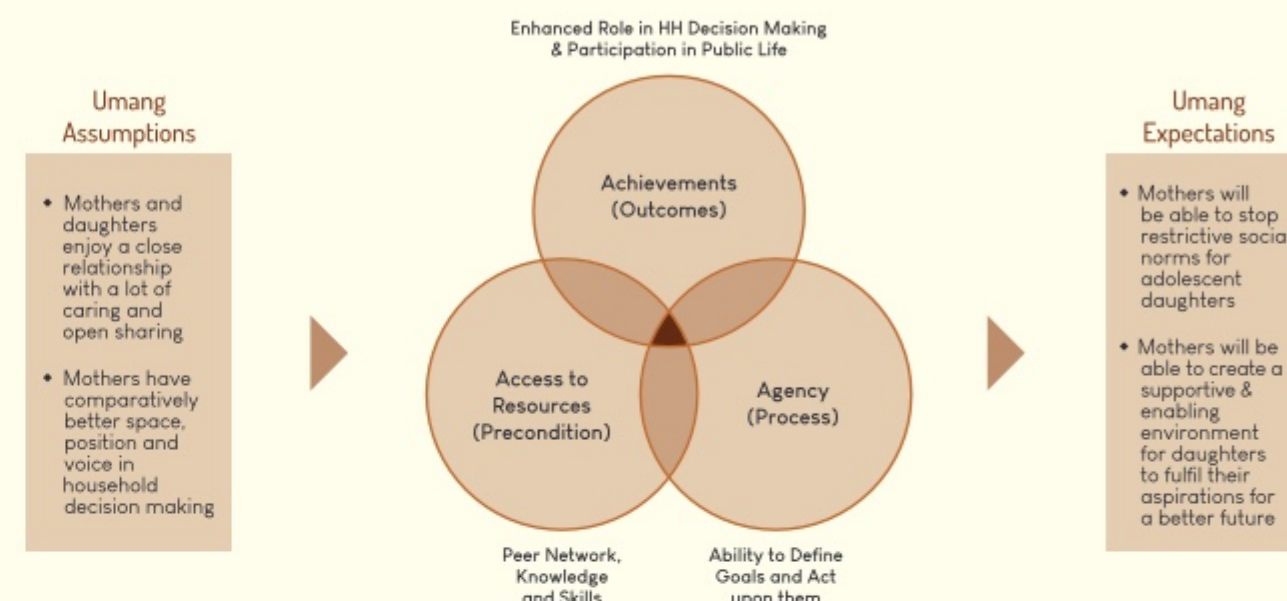
The Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing child marriage by examining the interplay of individual, interpersonal, community, and societal factors. Umang leverages this model to work across all its layers, recognizing that child marriage is not merely an individual choice, but a deeply embedded social phenomenon influenced by multiple levels of interaction.

Umang works across all layers of the model.



### The Empowerment Framework: Naila Kabeer's Model

Naila Kabeer's Empowerment Framework, which defines empowerment as a process with three interconnected components—access to resources (pre-condition), agency (process), and achievement (outcome)—provides a powerful lens for Umang's intervention. This framework aligns seamlessly with Umang's goal of empowering adolescent girls and their mothers to prevent child marriage through education, economic independence, and norm shifts.



Source: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment, Naila Kabeer (1999).

**Access to resources** serves as the pre-condition for empowerment and is a key enabling factor in Umang's design. Membership in SHGs is central to this component, providing women with access to financial resources, social networks, and training opportunities. In Nala and Godda Sadar, SHG membership offers mothers and other women a platform to save, borrow, and engage in income-generating activities, reducing the economic pressures (e.g., dowry) that drive child marriage. Beyond financial resources, SHGs provide access to Umang's educational inputs, such as workshops on child rights, health, and gender equity, equipping women with the knowledge and tools to challenge harmful norms. Thus, SHG membership is both a pre-condition—offering initial access—and an enabling factor that opens doors to further empowerment.

**Agency**, the process of empowerment, is the heart of Umang's intervention. Through SHG participation and Umang's targeted sessions, women gain the ability to exercise choice and voice in decisions about their daughters' futures. This agency manifests in several ways: mothers learn to delay their daughters' marriages, advocate for their continued education or vocational skilling, and negotiate with family members—particularly husbands and in-laws—to reject early marriage proposals. For adolescent girls, agency grows as they develop confidence, assert their aspirations for higher education or independence, and resist societal pressures to marry young. This shift in agency is reinforced through mother-daughter dialogues, where mothers bring new perspectives from SHG meetings into the household, fostering intergenerational change.

**Achievement**, the outcome of empowerment, is realized when girls successfully delay marriage, complete 12 years of schooling, or acquire skills that lead to economic independence. For Umang, the ultimate achievement is seeing adolescent girls in Nala and Godda Sadar transition safely into adulthood, free from the burdens of early marriage. This outcome is not just individual, but collective, as empowered SHG members and their families create a community-wide shift toward valuing girls' education and autonomy over traditional marriage norms. For example, a mother who once saw her daughter's marriage as inevitable might now prioritize her completing secondary education, securing her a future of choice and opportunity.

By positioning Umang within Kabeer's framework, the intervention ensures that empowerment is not a one-time event but a dynamic process that builds on resources, fosters agency, and delivers tangible outcomes. This approach aligns with Umang's belief that education and economic independence are critical pathways to prevent child marriage, while SHGs serve as the backbone for scaling this empowerment across communities.



## Creation of Social Norms: Cristina Bicchieri's Pathway for Norm-Shifting

Cristina Bicchieri's Social Norms Theory, as articulated in her work *Norms in the Wild* and other scholarship, offers a structured pathway for Umang to shift the descriptive and injunctive norms that sustain child marriage in Jharkhand. Bicchieri identifies five stages of norm-shifting—change in factual and normative personal beliefs, collective decision to change, introduction of sanctions for non-compliance, creation of normative expectations, and creation of empirical expectations—which Umang follows to trigger transformative conversations and behaviors in Nala and Godda Sadar.



The process begins with a **change in factual and normative personal beliefs**. Through Umang's sessions with SHGs, mothers, and daughters, individuals are exposed to new information about the harms of child marriage—such as health risks, educational loss, and economic disadvantages and the benefits of delaying marriage, such as completing schooling or gaining skills. This knowledge challenges the factual beliefs (e.g., that early marriage ensures safety) and normative beliefs (e.g., that marriage is a sacred duty) that underpin child marriage. For instance, a mother might learn from SHG meetings that her daughter's education could lead to economic independence, prompting her to question the inevitability of early marriage.

Next, Umang facilitates a **collective decision to change** within SHGs, VOs, and CLFs. These women's collectives, with nearly 80% saturation in many villages, become spaces for dialogue where members agree to reject early marriage and prioritize girls' education. This collective commitment is reinforced through Umang's workshops, which encourage SHG members to develop shared goals, such as ensuring all girls complete 12 years of schooling or rejecting early marriage proposals. The federated structure of SHGs amplifies this decision, creating a critical mass of women who model new behaviors and influence their communities.

The **introduction of sanctions for non-compliance** follows, though Umang approaches this delicately to avoid alienating community members. Rather than formal punishments, Umang encourages SHGs to establish social sanctions—such as peer pressure or community disapproval—for families who persist in child marriage practices. For example, SHG members might collectively discourage families from arranging early matches, emphasizing the new norm of education and independence. These sanctions, rooted in the collective agency of SHGs, help enforce the emerging norm while maintaining community cohesion.

The **creation of normative expectations** occurs as SHGs, and their members begin to see delaying marriage and supporting girls' education as the socially expected behavior. Through Umang's sessions, mothers learn to expect that their daughters should complete schooling before marriage, and communities start to view this as a desirable norm. This shift is driven by the mother-daughter conversations triggered by Umang, where mothers bring new narratives from SHG meetings into the household, influencing husbands, in-laws, and other family members. As these expectations take hold, early marriage becomes less acceptable, and education becomes a marker of progress.

Finally, the **creation of empirical expectations** solidifies the norm shift as people observe others adopting the new behavior. In villages with nearly 80% SHG saturation, the widespread adoption of Umang's narrative—rejecting early marriage, enabling daughters to complete 12 years of schooling, and prioritizing education over traditional matches—creates a self-reinforcing cycle. SHG collectives become the reference group, modelling and sustaining this new thinking, while rejecting regressive norms like dowry or the sanctity of early marriage. As more households adopt this approach, empirical expectations grow, ensuring the norm shift is durable and widespread.

## Integrating the Frameworks: Umang's Holistic Approach

Umang's integration of the Socio-Ecological Model, Kabeer's Empowerment Framework, and Bicchieri's Social Norms Theory creates a holistic, multi-dimensional strategy to address child marriage. The Socio-Ecological Model ensures that Umang works across individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels, tackling the root causes of child marriage comprehensively. Kabeer's framework positions SHG membership as the gateway to empowerment, fostering agency among mothers and daughters to delay marriage and achieve educational and economic outcomes. Bicchieri's pathway guides Umang in shifting social norms, leveraging SHGs to trigger conversations, build collective decisions, and create new expectations that reject child marriage.

Together, these frameworks enable Umang to address the normative and systemic barriers identified in the formative research while empowering mothers, daughters, and SHGs to drive change. The mother-daughter relationship, strengthened through Umang's interventions, becomes a powerful vehicle for intergenerational transformation, while SHGs serve as the engine for mass-level norm shifts, reaching nearly 80% of households in target villages. By combining education, economic independence, and norm-shifting, Umang aims to create a sustainable model that not only prevents child marriage but also transforms community attitudes and systems in Jharkhand.





## Design of Umang: A Norm-Shifting and Empowerment-Integrated Intervention

Building on the formative findings in Nala and Godda Sadar and the theoretical frameworks outlined earlier, Umang's design represents a pioneering effort to reduce the prevalence of child and early marriage among adolescent girls in Jharkhand while empowering them to fulfil their aspirations. This norm-shifting and empowerment-integrated model targets high-prevalence districts, aiming to create a scalable and sustainable solution through strategic partnerships, women's collectives, and systemic engagement. This section outlines Umang's goals, objectives, intervention design across the socio-ecological model, key strategic components, implementation, and expected impact, positioning it as a transformative response to the challenges identified in the pilot blocks.

### Goal and Objectives: A Vision for Change

Umang's overarching goal is to reduce the prevalence of child and early marriage by 15–20% in high-prevalence districts of Jharkhand, addressing a deeply entrenched social norm that restricts girls' potential. Beyond this, Umang seeks to empower adolescent girls, enabling them to pursue education, career aspirations, and economic independence, thus breaking the intergenerational cycle of early marriage. To achieve this, Umang has defined three core objectives:

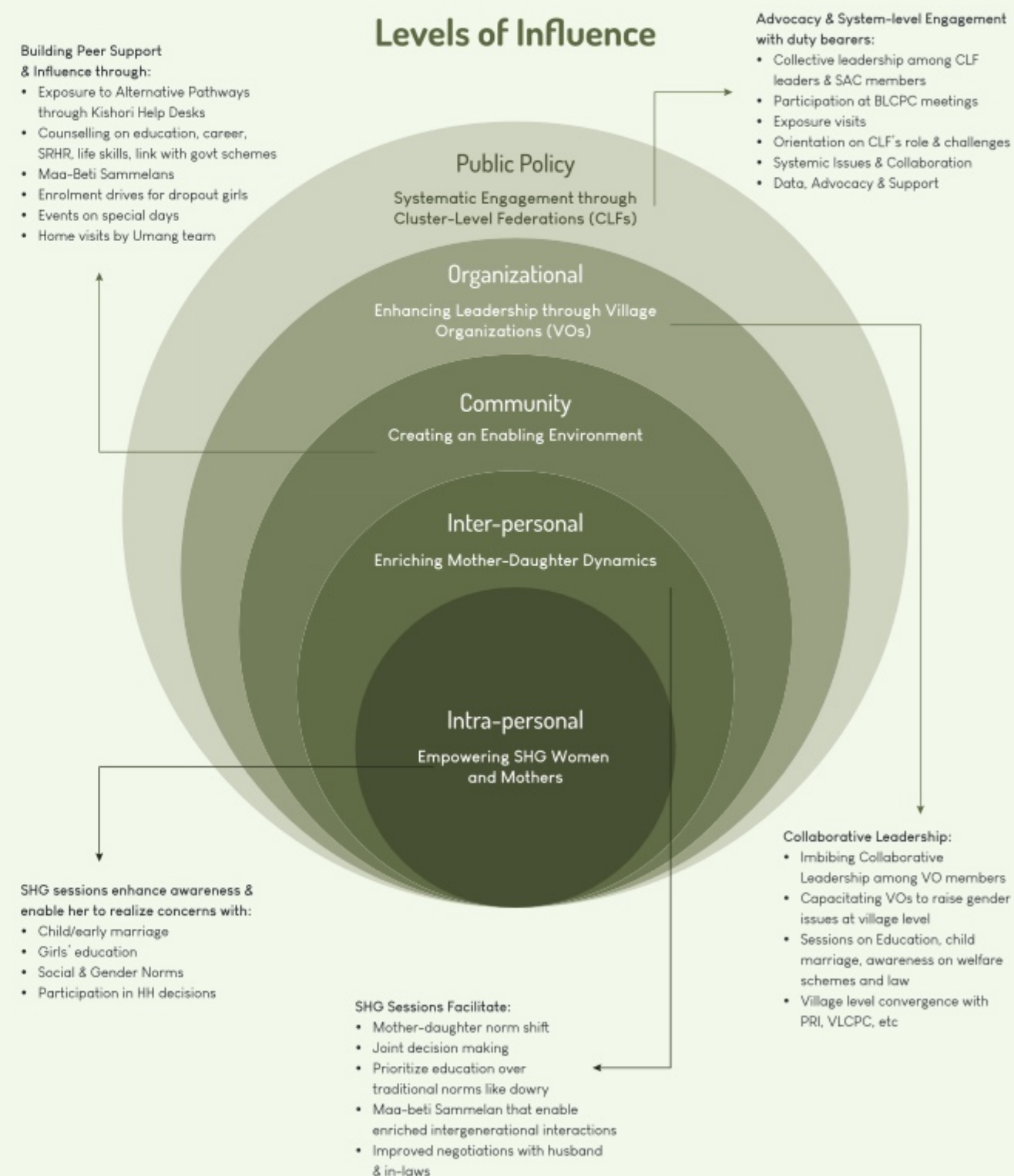
- ♦ Capacitate women's collectives to create an enabling environment that encourages adolescent girls to fulfil their aspirations, challenging cultural, economic, and systemic barriers.
- ♦ Establish a scalable and sustainable model for addressing child and early marriage through the SHG platform, ensuring long-term impact across Jharkhand and beyond.
- ♦ Empower adolescent girls by enhancing their access to education, skills, and opportunities, while strengthening their agency to resist early marriage and pursue their potential.

These objectives are operationalized through a strategic partnership with Palash, the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society, as detailed later, ensuring alignment with state policies and leveraging existing infrastructure to drive change.



## Intervention Design: Addressing Child Marriage Across Socio-Ecological Levels

Umang's design is rooted in the Socio-Ecological Model, as outlined in the Theoretical Frameworks, which frames child marriage as a multi-layered issue influenced by individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and public policy factors. By targeting each level, Umang creates a holistic, norm-shifting intervention that addresses the root causes identified in the Formative Research. Below, we explore how Umang operates at each level, leveraging SHGs, mother-daughter relationships, and partnerships to drive change.





## 1. Intra-Personal Level:

### Empowering SHG Women and Mothers

At the intra-personal level, Umang focuses on SHG women who are also mothers of adolescent girls, recognizing them as key agents of change. Through 22 targeted SHG sessions, Umang enhances awareness and builds agency, addressing concerns related to child marriage, girls' education, gender norms, and household decision-making. These sessions, informed by Naila Kabeer's Empowerment Framework, foster personal belief changes (per Cristina Bicchieri's Social Norms Theory) to challenge injunctive norms, as identified in Formative Research. Key topics include:

- ♦ **Orientation and Gender Sensitization (Sessions 1–3):** Introduce Umang's goals, the harms of child marriage, and gender equity, laying the foundation for norm-shifting.
- ♦ **Mother-Daughter Communication (Sessions 4–6):** Equip mothers with skills to foster open dialogue, challenge traditional expectations, and support daughters' aspirations.
- ♦ **Reproductive Health and Decision-Making (Sessions 7–9):** Empower mothers to advocate for daughters' health and informed marriage timing, addressing SRHR gaps.
- ♦ **Nutritional Requirements (Sessions 10–12):** Highlight health risks of early marriage, linking nutrition to well-being and education.
- ♦ **Educational Requirements for Agency (Sessions 13–15):** Emphasize completing 12 years of schooling and skilling as pathways to independence.
- ♦ **Laws and Schemes (Sessions 16–18):** Educate on legal frameworks like the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, and child protection laws for advocacy.
- ♦ **Career Choices and Financial Independence (Sessions 19–22):** Explore vocational training and economic opportunities, supporting long-term aspirations.

These sessions empower mothers to shift personal beliefs, drive household change, and prepare for collective action, as explored further in later sections.

## 2. Inter-Personal Level:

### Enriching Mother-Daughter Dynamics

At the inter-personal level, Umang leverages the mother-daughter relationship, a critical conduit for change identified in the Strategic Partnership section, to shift norms within households. SHG sessions and community activities, such as Maa-Beti Sammelans, enable enriched intergenerational interactions, joint decision-making, and improved negotiations with husbands and in-laws. This aligns with Bicchieri's pathway, moving from personal belief changes to empirical expectations, as mothers bring new perspectives from SHG sessions into the home. For instance, a mother might use career counselling insights to support her daughter's educational goals, resisting early marriage pressures, while negotiating with family members to prioritize education over traditional norms like dowry. These dynamics, detailed earlier, foster agency and achievement, per Kabeer's framework, without repeating the full description of the bond.





### 3. Community Level: Creating an Enabling Environment

At the community level, Umang creates a supportive ecosystem to reject child marriage, building on the SHG structure and mother-daughter support. Key activities, informed by the Formative Research's need for alternatives, include:

- ♦ **Kishori Help Desks:** Located at Cluster-Level Federation (CLF) offices, these desks provide adolescent girls with pathways for higher education, career counselling, linkages to government schemes, life skills guidance, and SRHR information, addressing aspiration gaps. Parents, particularly mothers, participate in selected sessions to reinforce household support, as noted later.
- ♦ **Peer Support and Influence:** Maa-Beti Sammelans, enrolment drives for dropout girls, and events on special days (e.g., National Girl Child Day) foster solidarity and normalize education, creating empirical expectations per Bicchieri.
- ♦ **Home Visits and Counselling:** Umang's team conducts visits and counselling on education, careers, and SRHR, linking families with resources to delay marriage.

These activities reduce descriptive norms favouring early marriage, as detailed in the qualitative findings, without repeating specific outcomes here.

### 4. Organizational Level: Enhancing Leadership through Village Organizations (VOs)

At the organizational level, Umang enhances leadership among women in Village Organizations through 14 modular sessions, empowering them to address girls' status in their villages. These sessions, building on SHG capacity, focus on advocacy and engagement:

- ♦ **Role and Responsibilities (Sessions 1-1b):** Orient VOs to leadership in preventing child marriage.
- ♦ **Education and Child Marriage (Sessions 2-3b):** Emphasize education's value and early marriage's harms.
- ♦ **Welfare Schemes and Laws (Sessions 4-6b):** Educate on government programs and legal frameworks (e.g., Right to Education, POCSO).
- ♦ **Stakeholder Participation and Village Initiatives (Sessions 5-7b):** Mobilize community leaders and identify local organizations for adolescent education.

VOs lead village-level action, monitoring child marriage and advocating for education, complementing SHG efforts without repeating session details.

### 5. Public Policy Level: Systemic Engagement through Cluster-Level Federations (CLFs)

At the public policy level, Umang prepares CLF leaders for systemic change through 14 sessions, focusing on advocacy and policy influence:

- ♦ **Status and Role of CLFs (Session 1):** Overview of adolescent girls' challenges and CLF leadership.
- ♦ **Welfare Schemes and Laws (Sessions 2-4):** Build awareness of programs and legal protections against child marriage.
- ♦ **Systemic Issues and Engagement (Sessions 5-9):** Address ChildLine, domestic violence, dowry, and stakeholder collaboration.
- ♦ **Data and Advocacy (Sessions 10-13):** Train on data analysis, policy recommendations, and block-level officer engagement.
- ♦ **Kishori Help Desk (Session 14):** Reinforce help desks' systemic role.

CLFs engage in Block-Level Child Protection Committee meetings and advocacy, ensuring systemic change, as supported by Palash, without repeating partnership details.

### 6. Strategic Component: Kishori Help Desk: Systemic Enabling Environment

Kishori Help Desks, a cornerstone of Umang, address gaps in girls' aspirations by providing:

- ♦ Pathways for higher education and career counselling.
- ♦ Linkages to government schemes and benefits.
- ♦ Life skills guidance and SRHR information.

Located at CLF offices, these desks support all adolescent girls, with parental involvement in selected sessions, linking individual empowerment to community and policy support, as noted earlier, without repeating broader SHG or session content.

#### Partnership with Palash (JSLPS)

Umang was co-designed and implemented in partnership with Palash (JSLPS – Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society). The Pilot was implemented from 2019 to March 2023 including the phase of 12 months pause due to COVID-19. Umang was implemented among the SHGs formed, nurtured and capacitated by JSLPS as per the mandate of it being a livelihood mission. With the strong support and guidance from JSLPS leadership Umang reached out to nearly 80% of the rural households in the pilot blocks, thus making it an effective model to address child marriage.





## Holistic Integration and Expected Impact

Umang's design integrates its socio-ecological levels to achieve transformative impact on child marriage in Jharkhand. These components, supported by Palash's partnership, work synergistically to shift descriptive and injunctive norms (per Bicchieri), foster agency and achievement (per Kabeer), and address the multi-layered barriers identified in Nala and Godda Sadar (per the Formative Research). This holistic approach positions Umang as a replicable model, ensuring sustainability and long-term change across Jharkhand.

### Expected Outcomes and Scalability

Building on this integrated design, Umang targets a 15–20% reduction in child marriage prevalence, empowering 80% of SHG-connected households to reject early marriage, and ensuring girls complete 12 years of schooling or achieve economic independence. The SHG-federated structure, mother-daughter dynamics, and Kishori Help Desks ensure sustainability, while Palash's partnership enables scalability across the state, with impacts and scalability potential detailed in the Quantitative and Qualitative Findings sections.

### Strategic Partnership and Engagement with SHGs and Intergenerational Conversation

The Umang initiative relies on strategic partnerships and deep engagement with SHGs and their federated structures. By layering and leveraging the three-tier institutional framework of SHGs—Self-Help Groups, Village Organizations (VOs), and Cluster-Level Federations (CLFs)—Umang harnesses the collective potential of women's collectives while enriching the mother-daughter relationship as a key driver of change. This section explores how Umang capitalizes these dynamics to create a transformative intervention in the rural blocks of Nala and Godda Sadar, building on the normative shifts and empowerment strategies outlined in earlier sections.

### Harnessing the Mother-Daughter Relationship: A Pathway for Change

At the heart of Umang's approach is the recognition that mothers are uniquely positioned to influence their adolescent daughters and drive intergenerational change in attitudes toward child marriage. In the rural communities of Nala and Godda Sadar, mothers are often the closest family members to their daughters, serving as their first guides, confidantes, and advocates within the household. This intimate bond offers a powerful opportunity for Umang to foster dialogue, build agency, and challenge the entrenched norms that perpetuate early marriage.

The formative research revealed that most mothers of adolescent girls in these communities are carrying the scars of early unions—limited education, economic dependence, and often, domestic challenges—into their roles as caregivers. Despite these experiences, many mothers struggle to protect their daughters from the same fate due to societal pressures, patriarchal norms, and a lack of alternatives. Umang seeks to transform this dynamic by strengthening the mother-daughter relationship, equipping mothers with the knowledge, skills, and agency to advocate for their daughters' education, independence, and delayed marriage.

Umang's strategy centers on joint decision-making at the household level, expanding women's participation and voice to create a more equitable family environment. Through SHG sessions and targeted workshops, mothers learn about the harms of child marriage, the benefits of education and skilling, and their legal rights under laws like the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. These sessions also provide practical tools—such as communication skills, negotiation strategies, and financial literacy—to help mothers engage with their daughters, husbands, and extended family members in meaningful ways. For example, a mother might use insights from an SHG meeting to initiate a conversation with her daughter about completing 12 years of schooling or negotiate with her husband to reject an early marriage proposal, prioritizing the daughter's future instead.

This enriched mother-daughter relationship becomes a conduit for norm-shifting within the household. Daughters, in turn, gain confidence to express their aspirations—whether for higher education, vocational training, or economic independence—knowing they have their mother's support. This dynamic not only strengthens the bond between mother and daughter but also amplifies the daughter's agency, enabling her to resist societal pressures and pursue a path free from early marriage. In communities where girls traditionally have limited voice, this partnership fosters a new narrative, where mothers and daughters together challenge the descriptive and injunctive norms that equate marriage with safety or honor.

Moreover, Umang recognizes that empowering mothers enhances their overall agency, voice, and skills, creating a ripple effect across the family and community. By supporting joint decision-making, Umang ensures that women are not sidelined in critical choices about their daughters' futures, breaking the cycle of patriarchal control that drives child marriage. This approach aligns with Umang's broader empowerment framework, as outlined in Naila Kabeer's model, where access to resources (via SHGs), agency (through mother-daughter dialogue), and achievement (delayed marriage and education) converge to transform lives.

### Leveraging the SHG Structure: Capacitating Women's Collectives

Parallel to its focus on the mother-daughter relationship, Umang strategically leverages the three-tier federated structure of SHGs to amplify the collective agency of women and drive mass-level change. This institutional framework, deeply embedded in rural India, offers a robust platform for Umang to address child marriage at scale, particularly in Nala and Godda Sadar.



At the base level, **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** consist of 10–20 women who come together for economic empowerment, social support, and mutual accountability. In the context of Umang, SHGs serve as the entry point for engaging mothers of adolescent girls. Through Umang's sessions, SHG members receive training on gender equity, child rights, and the harms of early marriage, as well as practical skills like financial literacy, leadership, and advocacy. These sessions also foster dialogue about delaying marriage, completing schooling, and promoting girls' independence, equipping members to influence their households and communities.



The next tier, **Village Organizations (VOs)**, are formed by grouping 5–20 SHGs within a single village, creating a broader network of women’s leadership. VOs amplify the impact of SHG initiatives, providing a platform for coordinated action against child marriage. Umang works with VOs to develop village-level strategies, such as community awareness campaigns, peer support networks, and advocacy with local leaders to enforce child protection laws. VOs also serve as training hubs, where SHG members share lessons from Umang sessions, reinforcing the new narrative of education and independence while rejecting regressive norms like dowry or early marriage.

At the highest level, **Cluster-Level Federations (CLFs)** are formed by representatives from 5–40 VOs, representing a regional or district-wide coalition of women’s collectives. CLFs enable Umang to scale its intervention, linking village-level efforts to broader systemic change. Through CLF platforms, Umang advocates for policy reforms, engages with government agencies, and mobilizes resources to address structural barriers like poverty, lack of education, and safety concerns. CLFs also monitor progress, evaluate the impact of Umang’s norm-shifting strategies, and ensure sustainability by fostering long-term community ownership of the anti-child marriage movement.

This three-tier structure—SHGs, VOs, and CLFs—creates a cascading effect, where individual empowerment at the SHG level ripples upward to village and cluster levels, driving collective action and norm shifts. With nearly 80% of households in target villages connected to SHGs, Umang can reach a critical mass of mothers, daughters, and community members, creating a tipping point where rejecting child marriage becomes the dominant norm. SHG members, as reference groups, model new behaviours—such as delaying marriage, supporting girls’ education, and challenging patriarchal expectations—while using their collective agency to influence husbands, in-laws, and local leaders.



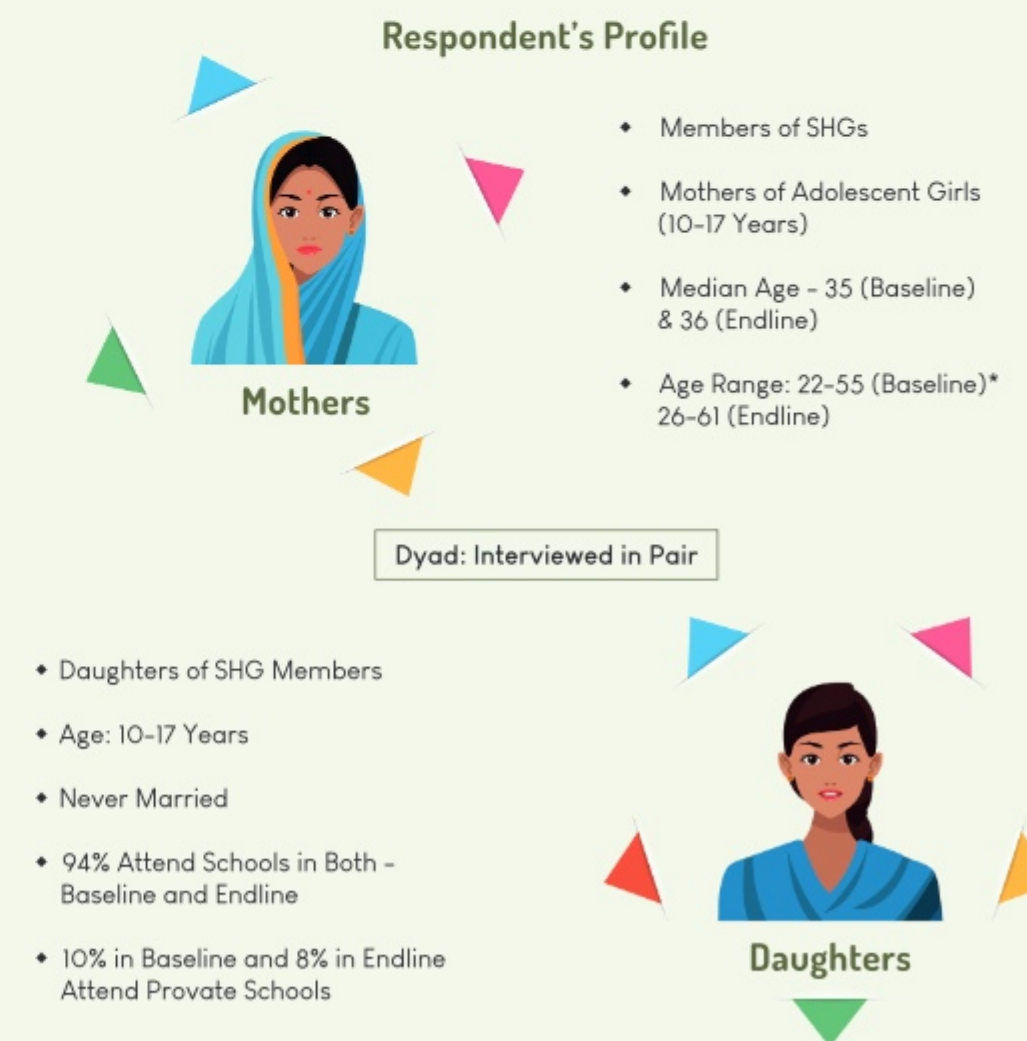
## Facilitating Positive Outcomes

To test the efficacy of the Umang model, a pre and post design, using two rounds of representative cross-sectional quantitative survey, was employed under Umang pilot phase. While the Baseline Survey was undertaken, the Endline Survey was conducted.

To test the efficacy of the Umang model, a pre- and post-assessment design was employed during the pilot phase, using two rounds of representative cross-sectional quantitative surveys. The Baseline Survey was conducted during February and March 2021, followed by the Endline Survey during February and March 2023.

**Research Methodology:** Both surveys adopted a dyad approach, wherein mother–adolescent daughter pairs from the same households were interviewed using a semi-structured personal interview schedule. A total of 100 villages were selected—64 from Godda Sadar block and 36 from Nala block. From each village, four pairs of SHG mothers and their daughters were selected, resulting in 400 pairs for the endline survey and 395 pairs in the baseline.

**Respondents’ Profile:** Among the respondents, 56% of respondents in the baseline and 53% in the endline were Below Poverty Line (BPL). The median age of mothers was 35 years in the baseline and 36 years in the endline. The median age at marriage was 16 years, and median age at first birth was 18 years in both rounds. Early childbirth (before age 18) was reported by 40% of mothers in the baseline and 34% in the endline. In terms of school attendance, 54% of mothers in the baseline and 48% in the endline had never attended school. 57% of mothers in the baseline and 61% in the endline reported being engaged in paid work. Most girls were enrolled in government schools, with only 10% in the baseline and 8% in the endline attending private schools.





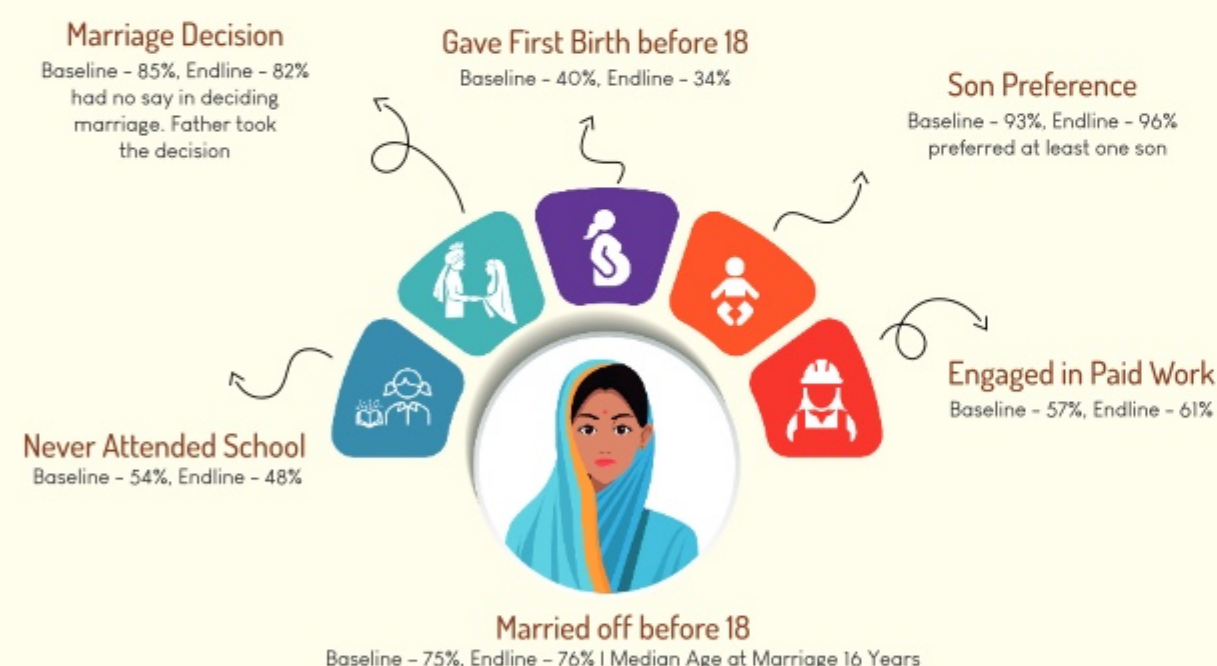
## Evaluation Findings

### 1. Mothers' Life at a Glance

♦ **Mobility:** Mothers showed greater mobility in the endline, particularly in terms of seeking permission and traveling unaccompanied to places such as the nearby market, Anganwadi centre, friends' homes, SHG meetings, Panchayat meetings, their parental homes, and even outside the village. While 62% of mothers in the baseline reported being able to travel alone, this increased significantly to 83% in the endline. Mothers were found to be more socially engaged in the endline compared to the baseline. They reported meeting and interacting with their peers and friends more frequently. While 66% of mothers in the baseline reported regular social engagement, this increased to 72% in the endline.

♦ **Social Support:** Mothers were found to be more socially engaged in the endline compared to the baseline. They reported meeting and interacting with their peers and friends more frequently. While 66% of mothers in the baseline reported regular social engagement, this increased to 72% in the endline.

♦ **Spousal Communication:** Overall, spousal communication showed improvement in the endline. About 88% of mothers in the endline, compared to 72% in the baseline, shared that they could comfortably express differences of opinion with their husbands. Similarly, the comfort level in discussing family matters also improved—84% of mothers in the endline (up from 73% in the baseline) reported feeling at ease discussing their children's marriage-related issues with their husbands.



**Social Engagement**  
Majority (66% in Baseline and 72% in Endline) were socially engaged and met with their friends frequently.

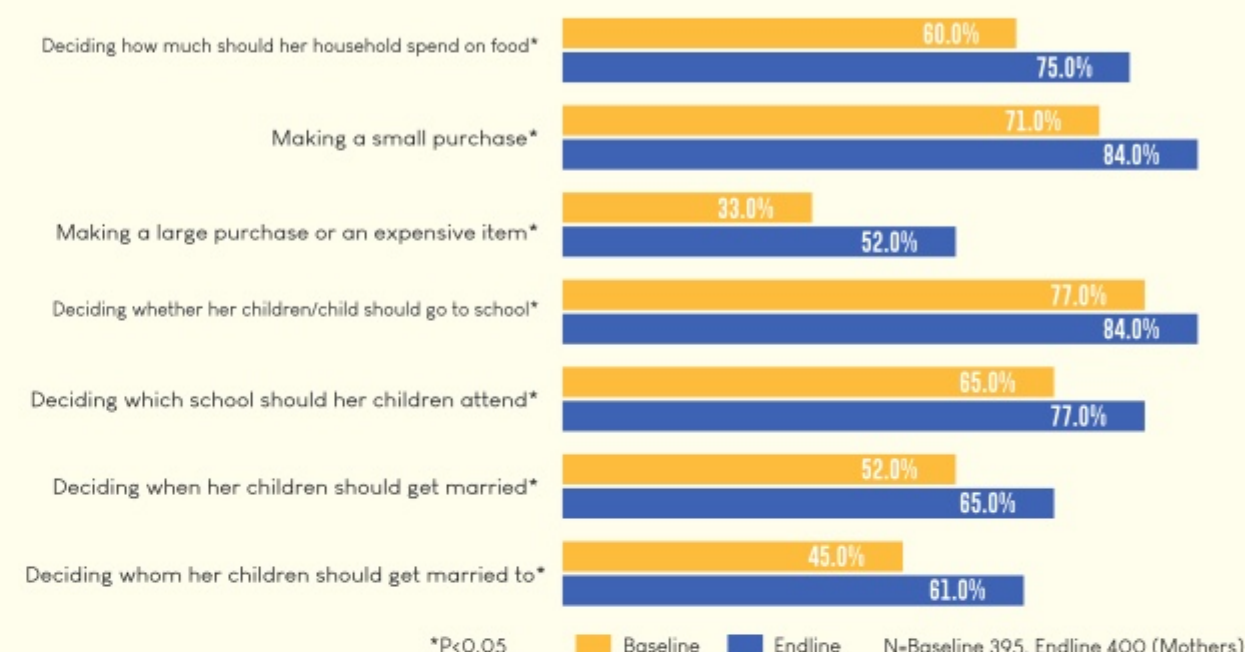
**Spousal Communication**  
88% of mothers in endline (as against 72% in baseline) said that they could comfortably air their differences in opinion to their husbands. 84% mothers in endline & 73% in baseline reported that they could discuss with their husbands about children's marriage.

**Mobility**  
Most could travel outside home unaccompanied. It went up from 62.3% in baseline to 82.5% in endline.

### 2. Mothers in Household Decision-making

The proportion of mothers participating in household decision-making increased significantly between the baseline and endline surveys. The most notable rise was seen in decisions related to large household purchases and the selection of life partners for their children.

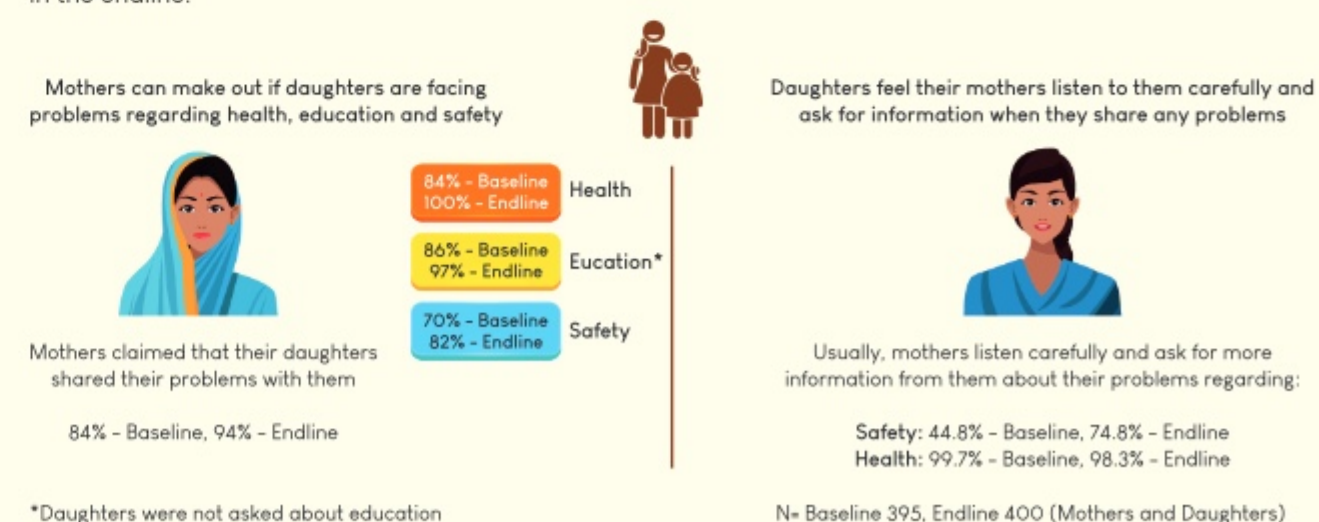
Overall, there was a marked improvement in mothers' involvement in decisions regarding both small and large household purchases, as well as matters concerning their children's education and marriage. The figure below illustrates the extent of mothers' decision-making power across various parameters.



### 3. Mother-daughter Communication

One of the key focus areas of Umang is strengthening mother-daughter communication, particularly around topics like education and career. The endline results show higher cordial relationship between mothers and daughters, as daughters shared their concerns with mothers more often & frankly.

Interestingly, despite many mothers being semi-literate or unlettered, 86% reported discussing education-related issues with their daughters during the baseline. This figure rose to 97% in the endline implying a higher interest among mothers in their daughters' academics and educational aspirations, and increased resolve among them to address challenges related to daughters' education after attending Umang sessions. Health related aspects were most sought after and discussed among mothers and daughters quite freely. In the baseline, 94% mothers said that their daughters discussed health issues with them, while this increased to 100% in the endline.



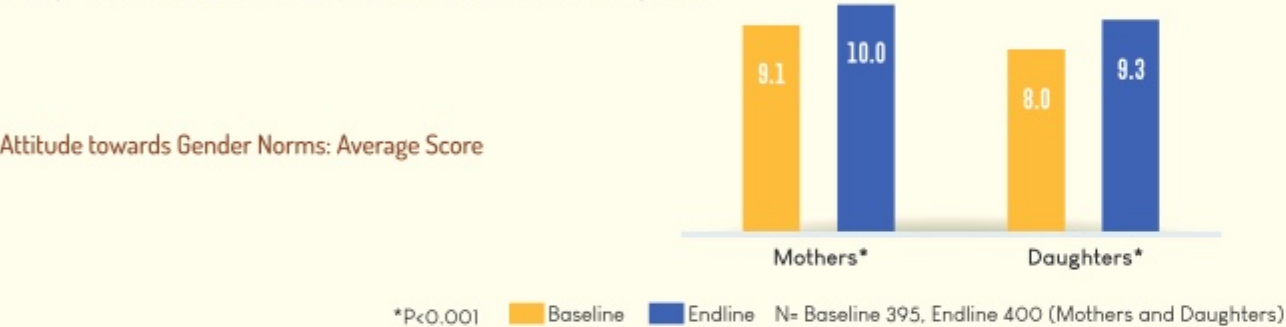


Safety remains a critical concern for adolescent girls, as it directly affects their mobility, education, and overall empowerment. Girls often hesitate to discuss safety-related issues with their parents for fear of backlash, restrictions, or a lack of trust. At baseline, while 70% of mothers believed their daughters discussed safety issues with them, only 45% of daughters reported doing so candidly, thus highlighting a significant gap between mothers' perception and daughters' reality. By the endline, this gap had narrowed: 82% of mothers and 75% of daughters reported engaging in open conversations about safety issues. This points to increased openness and a growing sense of trust and confidence between mothers and daughters.

4. Attitudes towards Gender Norms among Mothers and Daughters

To understand mothers' attitudes toward gender norms, a set of questions was administered to both mothers and their daughters. The survey included 23 questions for mothers and 22 for daughters, using a 4-point Likert scale: 1 for 'strongly agree,' 2 for 'agree,' 3 for 'disagree,' and 4 for 'strongly disagree.' Each response was scored as either positive (1) or negative (0), and an average score was calculated for each participant. This resulted in possible scores ranging from 0–23 for mothers and 0–22 for daughters, with higher scores indicating more egalitarian views.

Between the baseline and endline assessments, both mothers and daughters showed improvements in their attitudes toward positive gender norms. The endline scores were significantly higher compared to the baseline, with p-values of 0.002 for mothers and <0.001 for daughters.

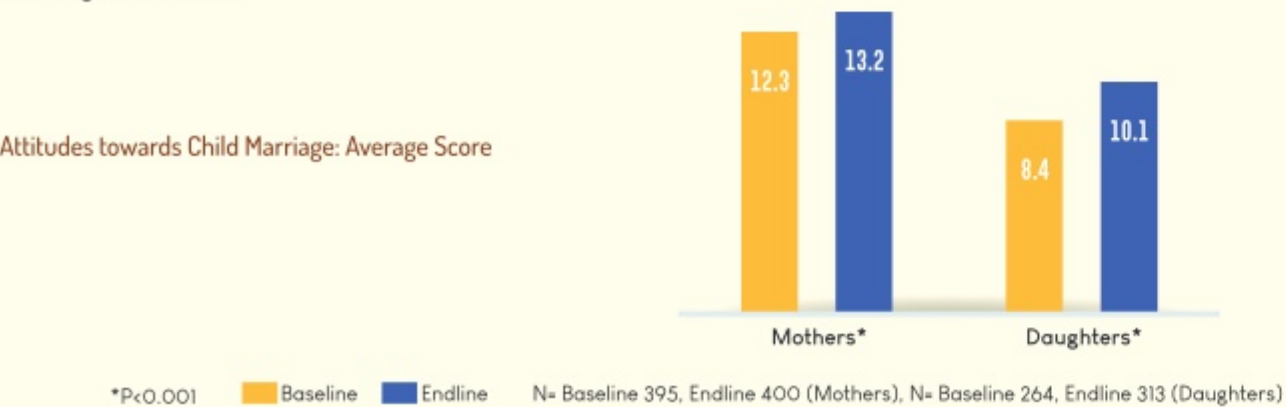


5. Knowledge and Attitudes to Marriage

Mothers were asked about the usual age of marriage for girls and boys in their village and community. The data revealed that a significant proportion of girls were reported to be married before the age of 18—42% at baseline and 28% at endline in their village, and 35% at baseline and 21% at endline in their community. These figures indicate a decline in the prevalence of child marriage over time.

To further explore perceptions around child marriage, a set of 17 questions was administered to all mothers and daughters (aged 13 and above), using a 4-point scale: 1 for 'strongly agree,' 2 for 'agree,' 3 for 'disagree,' and 4 for 'strongly disagree.' Each response was scored as either positive (1) or negative (0), resulting in a composite score ranging from 0 to 17, with higher scores indicating more egalitarian views.

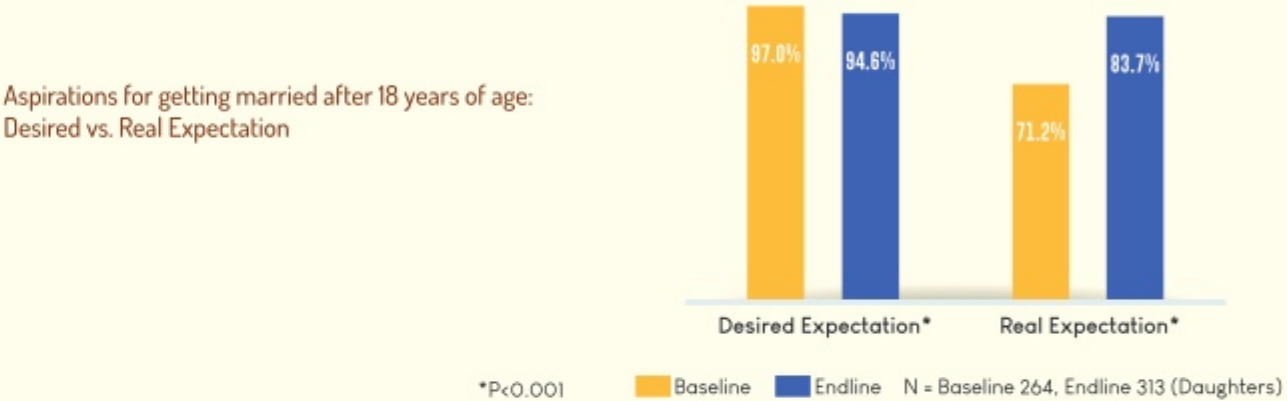
The composite scores showed an overall increase from baseline to endline for both mothers and daughters, reflecting improved attitudes toward child marriage. Notably, the shift was more pronounced among mothers than daughters. Additionally, more than 90% of mothers in both survey rounds agreed that child marriage is harmful.



6. Daughters' Agency to Resist Child/Early Marriage

Although nearly all girls expressed a preference to delay marriage until after the age of 18 in both the baseline and endline surveys, many initially acknowledged that they might not be able to withstand familial pressure and could be compelled to marry before reaching the legal age. Encouragingly, by the endline, 84% of girls confidently stated that they would be able to dissuade their families and avoid early marriage – an increase from 71.0% at baseline. While the aspiration to marry after 18 was almost universal in both rounds, the endline results show a significant rise in girls' confidence (or real expectation) in achieving this goal.

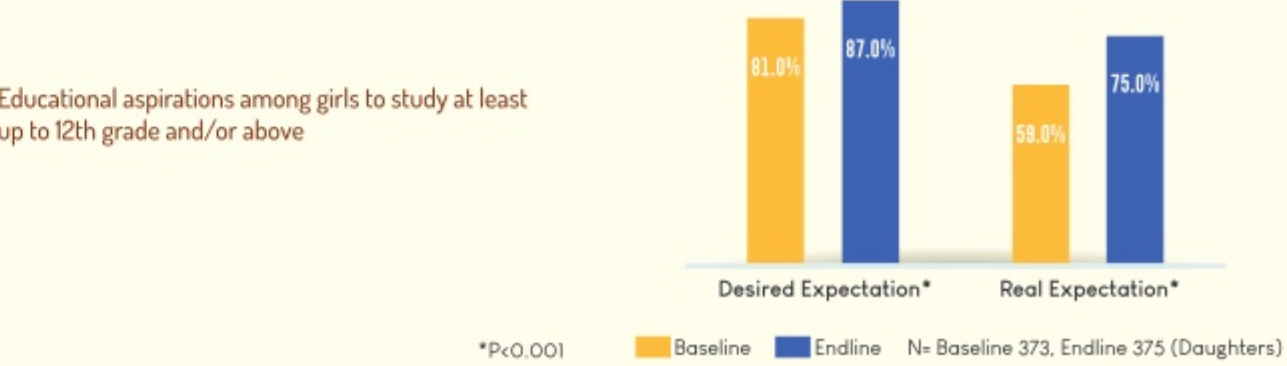
The rising aspirations and conviction seem to stem either from the increased awareness, agency and self-efficacy of the girls or increased support from their mothers who are the direct beneficiaries of Umang.



7. Educational Aspirations among Daughters: Desired vs Real Expectations

One of the key focus areas of the Umang program is to encourage mothers—and through them, their daughters—to continue their education at least up to the 12th standard. This has a direct impact on preventing child marriage. Daughters who reported attending school were asked how far they would like to pursue their studies. Daughters who reported attending school were asked how far they would like to pursue their studies. At baseline, 81% expressed a desire to study at least up to the 12th standard, which increased to 87% at endline. Moreover, the proportion of girls who believed they would actually be able to achieve this goal rose from 59% at baseline to 75% at endline.

When asked about barriers to achieving their educational aspirations, girls primarily cited expenses—reported by 41% at baseline and 34% at endline—and pressure to marry, mentioned by 22% at baseline and 15% at endline. Other barriers included the long distance to schools and lack of parental permission.





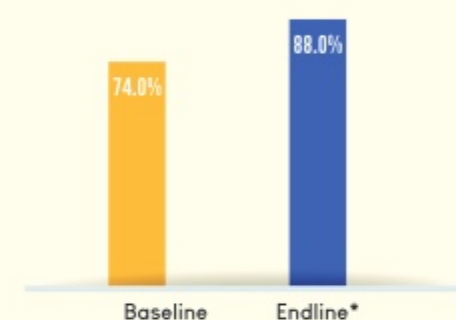
## 8. Mothers' Support to Daughters in Education

When asked to prioritize between marriage, higher education, physical safety, and employment/career for their daughters, mothers ranked higher education as the top priority. In the endline survey, 88% of mothers selected higher education as their number one choice, up from 74% at baseline.

Mothers in the endline also showed a stronger preference for their daughters to complete at least 12th standard and pursue graduation. Specifically, 81% of mothers at baseline believed their daughters should study up to at least the 12th standard, which increased to 87% in the endline.

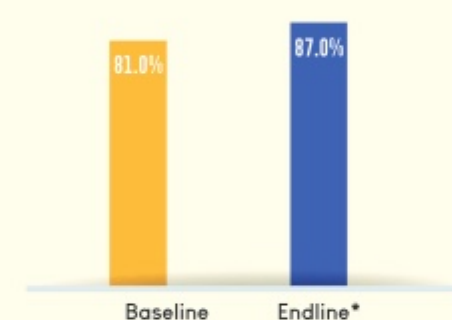
There was also a noticeable rise in proactive measures taken by mothers—such as saving money for their daughters' education and arranging tutors—during the endline survey. Interestingly, the proportion of mothers who expressed reservations about sending their daughters for higher education due to concerns that it might delay marriage declined from 17% at baseline to 12% at endline.

Percentage distribution of mothers who chose higher education over marriage, physical safety & employment for their daughters



\*P<0.05

Percentage distribution of mothers by preference for their daughters' education at least up to 12th grade



Baseline Endline N=Baseline 395, Endline 400 (Mothers)

## 9. Daughters' Career Aspirations

The evaluation studies highlighted that both mothers and daughters placed high value on girls' economic independence and aspired for girls to have careers. Mothers' aspirations for their daughters to be economically independent remained near universal in both the rounds – baseline (96%) and endline (97%). However, their career preferences remained largely confined to conventional roles. Perhaps deep-rooted social norms coupled with lack of exposure continued to discourage both mothers and daughters from considering unconventional or male-dominated professions, such as becoming commercial drivers. For instance, 74% of daughters at baseline and 69% at endline felt it was inappropriate for girls to be bus drivers. In contrast, 100% of daughters in both baseline and endline considered teaching to be a suitable profession for women.

The influence of patriarchal norms persists, although there is a noticeable decline, with 63% of daughters in the baseline and 54% in the endline believing that women should work only if permitted by their husbands or in-laws.



96% mothers in baseline & 97% in endline said they **wanted their daughters to be economically independent**



100% daughters in both baseline and endline said **teaching is the right job for girls**



74% daughters in baseline & 69% in endline said that it is **not appropriate for girls to be bus drivers**



63% daughters in baseline & 54% in endline believed that women should **work only if their in-laws and husbands allow them**

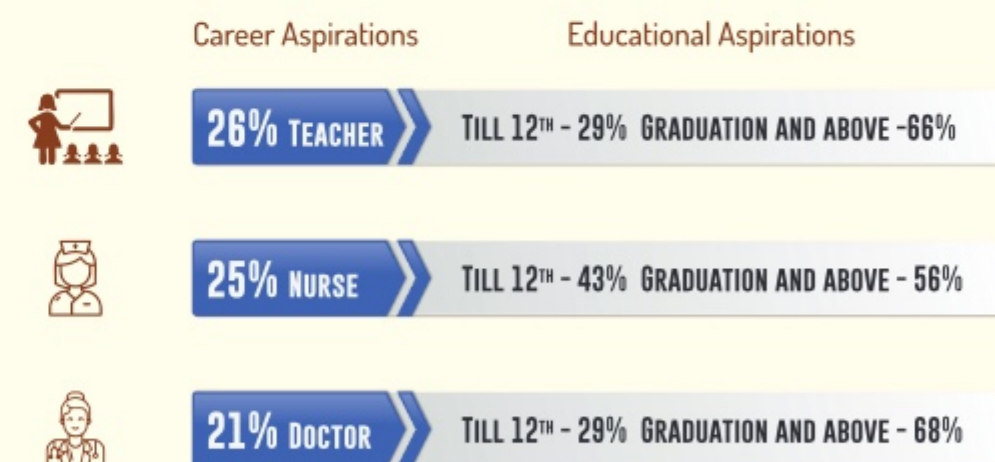
## 10. Gaps between Aspirations for Career & Education

Aspirations to engage in economic activities were high among daughters. However, a considerable proportion of those who aspired to become teachers, doctors, or nurses did not have the corresponding educational aspirations. In both the baseline and endline surveys, many girls who expressed interest in these professions did not indicate a desire to pursue the necessary qualifications required to achieve them. One contributing factor could be the delayed rollout of the Kishori Help Desk, which limited its effectiveness in providing adequate awareness and guidance on various career options and the preparation needed to pursue them.

### Baseline



### Endline



N=Baseline 373, Endline 375 (Daughters)



## Shifts in Normative Practices around Child Marriage

The Umang initiative, piloted from 2019 to March 2023 in the rural blocks of Nala and Godda Sadar, Jharkhand, has demonstrated significant progress in shifting normative practices and attitudes around child and early marriage among adolescent girls. Through its norm-shifting and empowerment-integrated approach, Umang has leveraged SHGs, mother-daughter relationships, and systemic engagement to challenge deeply entrenched social norms, empowering girls and their mothers to prioritize education, independence, and delayed marriage. This section presents the qualitative findings from the pilot's evaluation, focusing on shifts in descriptive and injunctive norms, critical reference groups, and personal preferences among mothers, followed by a conclusion, learnings, and recommendations.

### Qualitative Findings: Shifts in Normative Practices or Attitudes

The qualitative data collected during Umang's pilot phase, particularly from mothers of adolescent girls in Nala and Godda Sadar, reveals nuanced shifts in normative practices and attitudes toward child marriage, girls' education, gender roles, and autonomy. These findings, organized by specific norms, highlight the interplay of descriptive norms (what people observe others doing), injunctive norms (what people believe they should do), critical reference groups (influential community members), and personal preferences (individual beliefs), as shaped by Umang's interventions.

#### 1. Girls Doing Household Chores and Learning the Same

Descriptive Norm	Injunctive Norm
Mothers reported that the community expects girls to learn and perform household chores, a practice deeply rooted in patriarchal norms that position girls as primary caregivers. This norm reflects the widespread observation in Nala and Godda Sadar that girls, rather than boys, are responsible for domestic tasks, reinforcing their traditional roles.	Mothers believe they should teach household chores to their daughters and that girls should primarily handle these responsibilities, rather than boys. This expectation aligns with cultural values that prioritize girls' domestic preparation for marriage, often starting in adolescence, which can divert them from education and other opportunities.
Critical Reference Group	Personal Preference
Elders (in-laws, grandparents) and neighbors play a significant role in upholding this norm, exerting social pressure on mothers to ensure their daughters conform to these expectations. Their influence can create a fear of stigma or exclusion if girls deviate from traditional roles.	Despite the prevailing norms, many mothers expressed a personal preference for both boys and girls to share household chores, signaling a shift toward more egalitarian gender norms. This preference, influenced by Umang's gender sensitization sessions, suggests that mothers are beginning to question traditional divisions of labor, though resistance from critical reference groups remains a barrier.

Umang's interventions, particularly through SHG sessions on gender equity and mother-daughter communication, have sparked this shift, encouraging mothers to envision a more balanced distribution of responsibilities. However, the persistence of descriptive and injunctive norms indicates that broader community engagement is needed to sustain this change.

#### 2. Attending School Regularly

Descriptive Norm	Injunctive Norm
Mothers observed that the community is generally supportive of girls' education up to the 10th or 12th grade, a positive shift from earlier practices where education was often curtailed by early marriage. This reflects Umang's success in creating a descriptive norm where girls' schooling is increasingly seen as acceptable and beneficial, at least until secondary education.	Mothers feel a societal expectation to ensure their daughters complete studies up to the 10th or 12th grade, though they noted a lack of emphasis on higher education. This norm suggests that while Umang has influenced community attitudes, the focus remains on basic education rather than long-term aspirations, possibly due to economic pressures or cultural norms prioritizing marriage.
Critical Reference Group	Personal Preference
Neighbors and relatives exert influence, reinforcing the expectation of secondary education while often remaining indifferent to higher education or career paths, reflecting broader community priorities.	Mothers expressed a preference for their daughters to study beyond the 12th grade, particularly in income-generating opportunities (e.g., vocational training) rather than traditional academic paths. This preference, shaped by Umang's sessions on career choices and financial independence, indicates a growing aspiration for economic empowerment, though it is tempered by practical constraints like limited access to quality education.

Umang's focus on educational requirements and agency development has driven this shift, but the lack of community support for higher education highlights a gap that requires further intervention, such as expanded counselling and resource linkage.

#### 3. Girls Talking to Male Friends on the Road

Descriptive Norm	Injunctive Norm
Mothers reported that the community strongly rejects girls talking to male friends in public, viewing it as a behavior that brings shame to the girl and her family. This norm, rooted in fears of harassment, elopement, or loss of honor, reflects a deeply patriarchal control over female sexuality, a key driver of child marriage identified in the formative research.	Mothers do not expect their daughters to engage in such interactions, aligning with community expectations to protect family reputation and prevent "bad actions." This norm reinforces the urgency of early marriage as a safeguard, perpetuating the cycle Umang seeks to break.
Critical Reference Group	Personal Preference
Neighbors and the broader community exert significant pressure, creating a climate of fear and stigma that discourages girls from forming friendships with boys, even in educational contexts.	Mothers expressed a preference for their daughters to avoid talking to boys, citing a high fear of elopement or negative consequences. While this preference mirrors community norms, it also reveals the lingering impact of patriarchal fears, suggesting that Umang's norm-shifting efforts have not yet fully addressed this deeply ingrained concern.

Umang's gender sensitization and SRHR sessions have begun to challenge these norms, but the persistence of fear indicates a need for targeted safety programs, such as Kishori Help Desks, to build trust and reduce community anxieties about girls' mobility and interactions.



#### 4. Families Need to Attend to Marriage Proposals for Daughters

Descriptive Norm	Injunctive Norm
Mothers observed that the community prefers families to accept marriage proposals for daughters, often without considering the girl's future or readiness. This norm reflects the descriptive practice in Nala and Godda Sadar where early marriage is seen as inevitable, driven by economic pressures (e.g., dowry) and cultural expectations of family honor.	Mothers feel they should respond to these pressures and find ways to "save" their daughters' lives through marriage, even if it means sacrificing their education or aspirations. This expectation underscores the injunctive norm that prioritizes marriage over autonomy, a key barrier Umang aims to address.
Critical Reference Group	Personal Preference
Relatives and neighbors exert strong influence, pressuring families to comply with marriage proposals to avoid stigma or economic burdens like escalating dowry demands.	Mothers expressed a preference to delay their daughters' marriage until she completes her education, skilling, or secures a job, recognizing the complexity added by increasing dowry expectations. This preference, shaped by Umang's sessions on education and financial independence, marks a significant normative shift, though practical challenges (e.g., dowry pressures) remain.

Umang's focus on mother-daughter dialogue and SHG advocacy has driven this shift, but the influence of critical reference groups and economic factors suggests a need for broader community engagement and economic support to sustain change.

#### 5. Girls Travelling by Public Transport Daily for Higher Education

Descriptive Norm	Injunctive Norm
Mothers noted that the community is generally accepting girls traveling by bus or public transport for education, a positive shift reflecting increased mobility and support for education up to secondary levels. This norm indicates Umang's success in normalizing girls' participation in public spaces for educational purposes.	Mothers feel that the community expects their daughters to be regular in their studies but not engage in other activities or interact with boys, reflecting a cautious acceptance of mobility limited to educational goals. This norm suggests a partial shift, with lingering restrictions on girls' autonomy.
Critical Reference Group	Personal Preference
Relatives and neighbors influence this norm, supporting education but maintaining vigilance to prevent perceived "wrong deeds," such as socializing with boys.	Mothers expressed a desire for girls to rebuild community trust by focusing on studies and avoiding behaviors that could lead to negative outcomes. This preference, while maintaining caution, indicates a growing acceptance of girls' mobility, though fears of elopement or harassment persist, requiring further safety interventions.

Umang's Kishori Help Desks and life skills training have contributed to this shift, but addressing safety concerns and expanding exposure to diverse opportunities could deepen the change.

#### 6. Girls Getting into Jobs

Descriptive Norm	Injunctive Norm
Mothers observed that the community accepts girls taking traditional jobs, such as cadre (e.g., community health workers) or teaching, but remains less open to non-traditional job roles. This norm reflects a gradual acceptance of women's economic participation, driven by Umang's focus on financial independence.	Mothers appreciate their daughters taking jobs that are community-approved and allow them to balance household responsibilities. This norm indicates a cautious shift toward economic empowerment, but it is limited to traditional gender roles.
Critical Reference Group	Personal Preference
Relatives, neighbors, and in-laws (of daughters) influence this norm, valuing jobs that maintain social acceptance while fulfilling domestic duties.	Mothers welcomed girls taking traditional roles but expressed enthusiasm for non-traditional jobs, such as those in the army or police, which are highly respected and offer economic security. This preference, shaped by Umang's career counselling, signals a growing aspiration for diverse opportunities, though access remains a challenge.

Umang's focus on mother-daughter dialogue and SHG advocacy has driven this shift, but the influence of critical reference groups and economic factors suggests a need for broader community engagement and economic support to sustain change.

#### 7. Girls' Rights in Family Property After Marriage

Descriptive Norm	Injunctive Norm
Mothers noted that the community does not prefer girls demanding their share in family property, especially when dowry has already been paid during marriage. This norm reflects patriarchal inheritance practices that prioritize sons, perpetuating economic dependence on husbands and reinforcing early marriage.	Mothers feel that the community expects them to allocate property to sons only, aligning with cultural norms that exclude daughters from inheritance, even after marriage. This norm underscores a significant gender inequity Umang aims to address.
Critical Reference Group	Personal Preference
Relatives, village leaders, and neighbors exert pressure to maintain this norm, creating resistance to change.	Mothers expressed a preference for girls to receive their due share in property, recognizing the inequity, but acknowledged that achieving this would require substantial cultural and legal shifts. This preference, influenced by Umang's gender sensitization, indicates a nascent desire for equity, though systemic barriers remain formidable.

Umang's session on gender equality and the shifts in the roles of sons and daughters towards parents is making parents realize and ensure equal rights to both sons and daughters. There is an increased discussion around property rights to daughters; however more focussed and direct interventions are needed to shift norms and practices in this regard.



## Analysis of Norm Shifts and their Drivers

The observed shifts in normative practices and attitudes can be explained by Umang's intervention design and theoretical frameworks, which targeted the multi-layered barriers identified in the Formative Research. Here's how each framework contributed to these changes:

### 1. Socio-Ecological Model (SEM)

Umang's design, as outlined in the Design of Umang, operated across all levels of the SEM to drive these shifts. At the intra-personal level, SHG sessions (e.g., gender sensitization, educational requirements) empowered mothers to question traditional norms, such as girls' sole responsibility for household chores, fostering personal belief changes (per Bicchieri). At the inter-personal level, enriched mother-daughter dialogues and joint decision-making, facilitated through Maa-Beti Sammelans and SHG training, enabled mothers to challenge injunctive norms like accepting marriage proposals, supporting daughters' education up to the 12th grade or beyond. At the community level, Kishori Help Desks and peer support created descriptive norms favoring girls' mobility and education, reducing resistance to public transport use or job opportunities. At the organizational level, Village Organizations (VOs) built leadership to advocate against child marriage, influencing critical reference groups (e.g., neighbors, relatives) to shift expectations around property rights or male interactions. Finally, at the public policy level, Cluster-Level Federations (CLFs) engaged with duty bearers to address systemic barriers, such as dowry pressures, supporting mothers' personal preferences for delayed marriage and education. This multi-layered approach addressed the patriarchal and economic drivers identified in the formative research, explaining the gradual shifts observed.

### 2. Naila Kabeer's Empowerment Framework

Umang's focus on empowering mothers and daughters through access to resources (SHG membership), agency (decision-making skills), and achievement (education, delayed marriage) drove these norm shifts. For instance, SHG membership, a pre-condition per Kabeer, provided mothers with resources like legal knowledge and financial literacy, enabling them to challenge injunctive norms (e.g., prioritizing marriage over education) and support daughters' personal preferences for schooling or jobs. The agency developed through Umang's sessions—such as reproductive health training or career counselling—empowered mothers to negotiate with husbands and in-laws, shifting descriptive norms around household chores and job roles. Achievements, like daughters completing 12 years of schooling or delaying marriage, became observable outcomes, reinforcing community support for education and reducing reliance on early marriage as a safety net, as noted in the formative findings. This empowerment process explains why mothers began preferring egalitarian norms (e.g., shared chores, property rights) despite community resistance.

### 3. Cristina Bicchieri's Social Norms Theory

Umang's norm-shifting strategy, as detailed in the Design of Umang and Theoretical Frameworks, followed Bicchieri's five-stage pathway—change in personal beliefs, collective decision, sanctions, normative expectations, and empirical expectations—to drive these shifts. SHG sessions-initiated changes in factual and normative personal beliefs (e.g., recognizing the harms of early marriage or the value of education), as seen in mothers' preferences for delaying marriage or supporting non-traditional jobs. Collective decisions within SHGs, VOs, and CLFs, reinforced by peer support and Maa-Beti Sammelans, led to community agreements to prioritize education, creating normative expectations that girls should complete schooling before marriage. Social sanctions, such as peer disapproval of early marriage proposals, emerged organically within SHGs, reducing descriptive norms favoring immediate marriage. Finally, empirical expectations grew as nearly 80% of SHG-connected households adopted these new behaviors, observable in increased support for girls' mobility, education, and job aspirations, despite lingering fears (e.g., elopement, property rights). This pathway explains why shifts occurred, particularly in areas like attending school regularly or rejecting marriage proposals, addressing the normative challenges identified in the formative research.

Umang's focus on gender norms and legal awareness has sparked this shift, but broader advocacy and policy engagement are needed to challenge inheritance norms effectively.





## Conclusion: Positive Effects and Areas of Concern

The qualitative findings from Umang's pilot phase demonstrate significant positive effects in shifting normative practices and attitudes, particularly among mothers in Nala and Godda Sadar:

- ♦ **Enhanced Mobility of Mothers:** Umang's SHG sessions and Kishori Help Desks have increased mothers' confidence to engage in community activities, travel for meetings, and advocate for their daughters, reducing traditional restrictions on women's mobility.
- ♦ **Improved Inter-Spousal Communications between Mothers and their Husbands:** Through Umang's training on negotiation and decision-making, mothers report better communication with their husbands, enabling joint decisions to delay marriage and prioritize education.
- ♦ **Stronger Participation of Mothers in Household Decision-Making:** Empowered by SHG sessions and mother-daughter dialogues, mothers have gained a stronger voice in household choices, challenging patriarchal norms and advocating for girls' futures.
- ♦ **Enriched Bond between Mothers and Daughters:** The focus on intergenerational interactions has deepened the mother-daughter relationship, fostering trust, support, and shared aspirations for education and delayed marriage.
- ♦ **Positive Shifts in Gender Norms among both Mothers and Daughters:** Umang's gender sensitization and norm-shifting strategies have led to gradual changes, such as accepting girls' education, mobility, and jobs, though traditional norms persist in areas like property rights and male interactions.
- ♦ **Daughters Feel More Supported to Aspire for Higher Education, Health-Related Issues, and Safety Concerns:** Girls report increased confidence to pursue education up to the 12th standard and delay marriage until 18, supported by their mothers and Umang's resources like Kishori Help Desks.
- ♦ **Increased Confidence Among Daughters to Study at Least Up to 12th Standard & Delay Marriage Till 18 Years:** This outcome reflects Umang's success in shifting descriptive and injunctive norms, aligning with its goal of reducing child marriage prevalence by 15–20%.

However, several areas of concern remain:

- ♦ **Both Mothers and Daughters Opted for Traditional Career Choices:** Despite Umang's focus on career counselling, participants often preferred traditional roles (e.g., teaching, cadre) over diverse or non-traditional options, reflecting a lack of exposure and systemic barriers.
- ♦ **Lack of Exposure to Diverse Career Options:** The pilot highlighted limited access to information and opportunities beyond traditional jobs, particularly in rural areas, necessitating stronger counselling and linkage programs.
- ♦ **Lack of Access to Services as Required for Adolescents (SRHR, Life Skills, Career Counselling, and Quality Education):** Gaps in service provision, such as SRHR education, life skills training, and quality schooling, hinder girls' aspirations and Umang's impact, requiring systemic improvements.

These findings underscore Umang's achievements in shifting norms and empowering girls and mothers, while also identifying critical gaps for future action.

## Learnings & Recommendations

The qualitative findings and pilot outcomes offer valuable learnings and recommendations for Umang's scale-up and long-term impact:

### 1. Counselling: Prioritizing Girls' Education as a Valid, Long-Term Alternative to Child/Early Marriage

- ♦ **Learning:** The pilot revealed a glaring gap in aspirations for education and career among adolescent girls, with many mothers and daughters prioritizing traditional roles or secondary education over higher aspirations. Umang's counselling efforts have shown promise, but deeper engagement is needed to sustain change.
- ♦ **Recommendation:** Umang should strengthen its focus on educational and career counselling, starting as early as the 6th grade, to instill long-term aspirations and position education as a viable alternative to early marriage. This could include regular Kishori Help Desk sessions, partnerships with vocational training providers, and exposure visits to successful women in diverse fields. Counselling should also address systemic barriers, such as poverty and lack of quality education, linking girls with scholarships, government schemes, and private-sector opportunities.

### 2. Gender Norms: Targeting Additional Areas of Concern during Scale-Up

- ♦ **Learning:** Umang has proven a gradual shift among mothers towards positive gender norms, particularly regarding child marriage and girls' education. However, persistent norms—such as girls' exclusion from property rights, restrictions on male interactions, and traditional career choices—indicate areas for further intervention.
- ♦ **Recommendation:** During scale-up, Umang should expand its gender norm-shifting strategy to target additional areas, such as inheritance rights, girls' mobility, and non-traditional career paths. This could involve deeper SHG and CLF sessions on legal rights (e.g., property laws), safety programs to reduce fears of elopement or harassment, and community campaigns to normalize diverse roles for women. Engaging critical reference groups (e.g., elders, neighbors) through dialogues and advocacy could accelerate these shifts, aligning with Cristina Bicchieri's norm-shifting pathway.

### 3. Mother-Daughter Bond: Extending Engagement to Include Sons and Broaden Influence

- ♦ **Learning:** Enriching the mother-daughter relationship has proven a significant strategy in enhancing daughters' voice and space at the household level, driving norm shifts around education and delayed marriage. However, the pilot's focus on mothers and daughters leaves room to engage other family members, such as sons, to foster broader gender equity.
- ♦ **Recommendation:** Umang should extend its mother-daughter bond strategy to include sons, encouraging mothers to shape more egalitarian gender norms among all children. This could involve SHG sessions on parenting both genders, family workshops on shared responsibilities, and advocacy to involve fathers and brothers in supporting girls' education and independence. Strengthening mothers' influence in household decision-making, as seen in the pilot, could then cascade to broader family dynamics, reducing patriarchal pressures that drive child marriage.

Additionally, Umang should continue leveraging the SHG-federated structure (SHGs, VOs, CLFs) and Kishori Help Desks to address service gaps in SRHR, life skills, and career counselling. Partnerships with Palash and other stakeholders should focus on improving access to quality education, vocational training, and systemic resources, ensuring sustainability and scalability across Jharkhand.









Scan to visit Umang Microsite

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