PROJECT BRIEF

UMANG

Intergenerational Transmission of Empowerment from Mothers to Daughters

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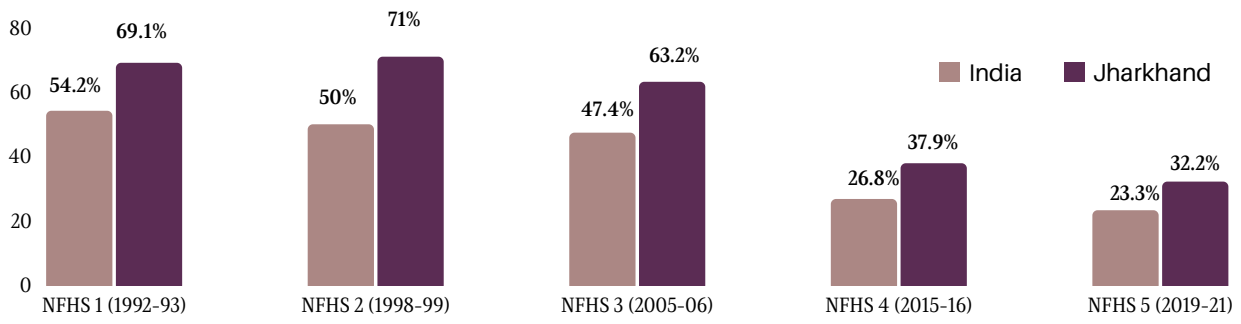
Background

With 223 million child brides, India is home to a third of all underage brides in the world[1]. Although India has witnessed significant decline in child marriage prevalence (from 54% in 1992-93 to 23.3% in 2019-21), the number continues to remain high. This implies nearly one-fourth women are still getting married before attaining adulthood, despite enactment of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 and plethora of efforts by successive governments at the centre and states. This is alarming considering India's commitment to SDG Target 5.3 (eliminating child marriage by 2030).

A multi-faceted problem strewn with an inter-generational effect

Child, early & forced marriage (CEFM) is a human rights violation that disproportionately impact the lives of girls & women. Girls with poor agency & decision-making abilities, with limited exposure to knowledge & opportunities fail to live a healthy adult life. Hence, a vicious cycle of deprivation, poor health, violence, lack of confidence and no/negligible control over resources continues for generations. The eastern region of India, with presence of a higher proportion of tribal population, report more child marriages. Jharkhand is one such state.

One-third adolescent girls in Jharkhand are still getting married before 18 years of age



Percent of women aged 20-24 years who were married before the age of 18

[1] UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Country Profile-India, 2020

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Introduction

Umang identifies education and economic aspirations as critical elements to address regressive social norms around child/early marriage and to lead the path to adolescent empowerment. Given the fact that mothers are the closest friend and confidante to adolescent daughters, and that mothers' aspirations matter for their children's educational outcomes, PCI India has chosen to work with mothers or adult women as a means for empowering adolescent girls in the long run. PCI's effort with these mothers or female relatives of adolescent girls is aimed at capacitating them to support girls towards fulfilling their aspirations at household and community levels. PCI is working through Self Help Groups (SHG) and higher up platforms, developed and nurtured by Palash (JSLPS)[2] to reach out to women in collectives to build their skills and capacitate them to encourage adolescent girls to complete school education and aspire for their future life and economic self-reliance. The project is nestled on three-tier SHG structure, comprising SHGs, Village Organizations (VOs) and Cluster Level Federations (CLFs).

Goal: Develop and pilot a model on the principle of inter-generational transmission of empowerment from mother to daughter to reduce the prevalence of child/early marriage in Jharkhand

Objectives

1. Capacitate SHG women to create an enabling environment and encourage adolescent girls to fulfil their aspirations and life choices
2. Promote education and economic advancement as pathways for girls' empowerment
3. Establish a scalable and sustainable model for addressing child marriage and adolescent empowerment through the SHG platform

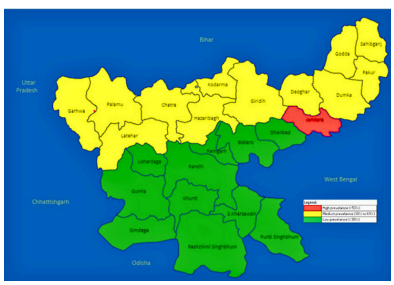
Geography

7 districts: *Godda, Jamtara, Koderma, Sahebganj, Palamu, Giridih, Deoghar*

Umang has now been scaled up from 2 districts (Godda and Jamtara) to 7 districts.

Why Godda and Jamtara in pilot phase?

Prevalence of child marriage in Jharkhand has always remained higher than the national average. As per NFHS-5, the percent of women aged 20-24 years married before the age of 18 is 32% in Jharkhand as against 23% in India. Godda has 49% prevalence; hence falling in amber category and Jamtara has 51% prevalence, thus in red category.



[2] Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society

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Reach

4.96 lakh Women

1,435 JSLPS Cadre Trained

49,629 Self-Help Groups

3,947 Village Organizations

197 CLFs

Partnership: Umang is implemented by PCI India in partnership with Palash - Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS) - under the Dept of Rural Development, Govt of Jharkhand, with support from Global Communities.

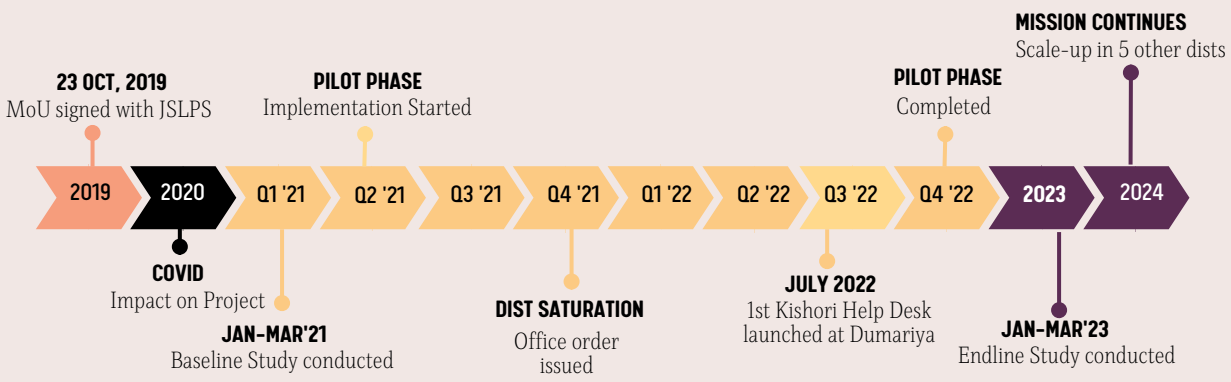
Pathway of community engagement from PCI to SHG members via JSLPS

PCI India → JSLPS Cadre → SHGs, VOs & CLFs

Components of Umang Model

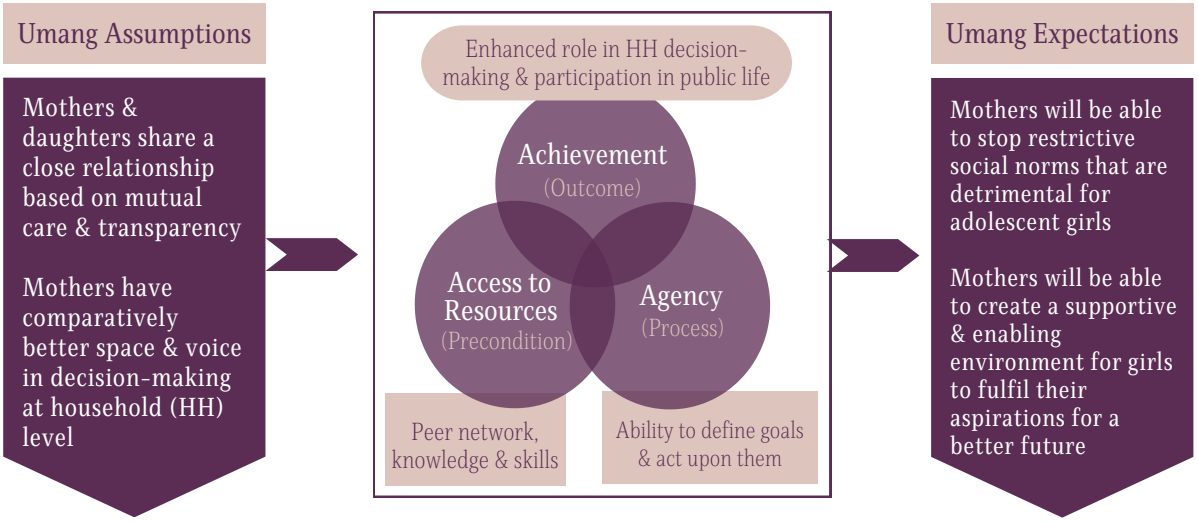
1. Graded module-based awareness and reflective sessions with SHG, VO and CLF members
2. Kishori (*adolescent girl*) Help Desk that offers counselling to adolescent girls & their parents for fulfilling girls' aspirations and delaying their age at marriage

Project Timeline



Empowerment Framework

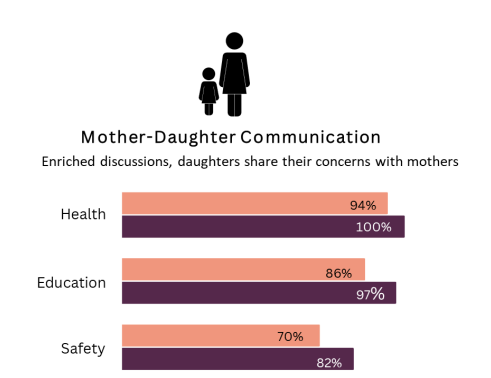
Umang is based on Naila Kabeer's[3] Empowerment Model encompassing Resources, Agency and Achievement

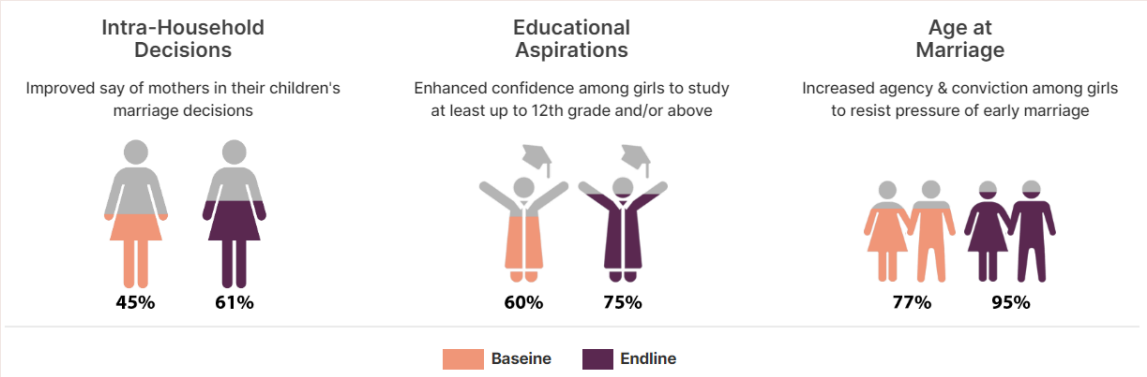


Kabeer (1999) defines empowerment as the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability

Encouraging Outcomes

Umang evaluation findings show positive trend between baseline (Feb -Mar'21) and endline (Feb-Mar'23) surveys.





[3] Naila Kabeer is a Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK. She is a socio-economist with research interests in gender, poverty, population & household economics

Umang Modules

For SHGs

Session 1-3: Orientation towards the project and gender sensitization
Session 4-6: Mother-daughter communication & relationship
Session 7-9: Reproductive health and decision-making
Session 10-12: Nutritional requirements of adolescent girls
Session 13–15: Educational requirements towards agency development
Session 16–18: Laws & schemes for protection of child rights and prevention of child marriage
Session 19–22: Career choices for girls & avenues for financial independence

For VOs

Session 1-1b: Our role and responsibilities
Session 2-2b: Gift of education
Session 3-3b: Child Marriage
Session 4-4b: Welfare schemes related to education of adolescent girls
Session 5-5b: Participation of stakeholders for prevention of child marriage
Session 6-6b: Discussion on laws related to adolescent education (Right to Education), POCSO, Domestic Violence Act, etc
Session 7-7b: Identification of village level organization promoting adolescent education

For CLFs

Session 1: Current status of adolescent girls in Jharkhand and the role of CLF
Session 2: Welfare scheme related to adolescent education
Session 3: Awareness on existing laws on child marriage and sexual abuse
Session 4: Child Protection Committee
Sessions 5, 6, 7, 8: Childline 1098, Domestic Violence, Dowry, Women helpline
Session 9: Engagement with stakeholders on education & security of adolescent girls
Session 10-11: Data Collection & Analysis
Session 12: Discussion with block level officers
Session 13: Preparation of Demand Note, Advocacy
Session 14: Kishori Help Desk

Umang is layered on 3-tier SHG structure in order to reach a critical mass for bringing a social normative shift. It uses graded approach to sensitize and create awareness among SHG federated structure.

The 3-tier structure inputs focus on changes at:

1. Household level
2. Community / village level
3. Improved system engagement

Focus of Modules

At SHG Level

- Sensitization of members
- Reflection on the harmful practice of child marriage
- Awareness generation about possible alternative future and endless options for daughters
- Enriching mother-daughter communication around daughter's education, career goals and aspirations
- Emphasis on the significant role of mothers in supporting their daughters fulfil aspirations

At VO Level

- Checking and addressing school dropout among girls
- Checking and preventing cases of child and early marriages
- Linking girls with government schemes for any support or entitlements

At CLF Level

- Developing leadership skills and competencies among the members and office bearers
- Training women to engage with child protection committees and raise demand for quality services
- Training women on various laws regarding safeguarding child rights and promoting education, especially among girls

Kishori Help Desk

Kishori (adolescent girl) Help Desk is a unique, community-led initiative under Project Umang that offers a platform to adolescents girls & their parents to talk about girls' future. Located at CLF offices, Help Desks address the gap between educational & career aspirations and guide adolescent girls through a healthy passage to adulthood.

Counselling Topics

- Pathways for Higher Education
- Career Choices
- Mental Health & SRHR
- Life Skills Guidance

Initiated in July 2022, a total of 14 Kishori Help Desks have been instituted in Godda and Jamtara districts so far, that have together offered counselling to more than 1,100 adolescent girls and their parents.

Need for Kishori Help Desk

Baseline study conducted by PCI India in 2021 revealed that there is a huge disparity between educational and career aspirations of adolescent girls. While girls aimed higher in terms of their career, most did not have matching educational aspirations, as in, not all of them wanted to complete their graduation or specific degrees (which is a minimum requirement to pursue such careers). A key reason identified for this mismatch was lack of mentoring and career guidance. While both mothers and their adolescent daughters give priority to studies, there is telling story when aspirations for 65% of mother-daughter pair does not match.

Services Available at Kishori Help Desk

- Information on options available after 10th & 12th grades, on courses, institutes & vocational training
- Complete guidance on various educational schemes & support in filling forms, registrations, etc
- Support in linking with govt schemes, especially those dedicated to adolescent girls, including scholarships, Sukanya Samriddhi Account, etc
- Counselling on SRHR (Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights) and on changes during adolescence
- Career counselling through RIASEC (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, & Conventional) Test

Scan to visit **Umang Microsite**

UMANG

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