



Action Village India



PROJECT REPORT

Educating Girls,
Transforming Lives
(April 2025 – March 2026)



Partner Organisation
**Nav Bharat Jagriti
Kendra**

info@actionvillageindia.org.uk
www.actionvillageindia.org.uk

ABOUT

The 'Educating Girls, Transforming Lives' project works to remove the social barriers that prevent girls who belong to minority and vulnerable communities in Bihar and Jharkhand from getting a good quality education. It uses three main approaches:

1. The project aims to improve access to schools, learning facilities and opportunities.
2. To encourage long-term changes in attitudes toward girls' education.

3. Offering early career guidance to help girls plan for their futures and understand the diverse opportunities available to them.

By combining these approaches, the project aims to create lasting change for future generations by blending formal education with non-formal learning, including workshops, career guidance and extracurricular programs. These activities help girls to develop confidence and learn about their rights, and they empower girls to gain an awareness of gender-based violence and ways to seek support.

Partner Organisation in India

Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK) is a grassroots organisation active in Jharkhand and Bihar which is committed to fostering social justice, equity and community development. NBJK was founded more than four decades ago by Girija Satish, who was honoured with the Jamnalal Bajaj Award 2024 for exemplary social work, to readdress the drivers of poverty and marginalisation.



NBJK has established programmes in education, healthcare, disability rights, governance and livelihoods. By following a participatory model, the organisation is guided by the belief that meaningful, long-term change starts within communities themselves.





GEOGRAPHY & SOCIO-ECONOMICS CONTEXT

The project works in four districts; Dumka, Chatra; Hazaribagh, Jharkhand and Gaya in Bihar. In these states, there are high levels of illiteracy, but there are large disparities in education between boys and girls. In Bihar, around 51.5% of women are literate compared to 71.2% of men. While 55.4% of women can read and write versus 76.8% of men in Jharkhand. Both boys and girls often face poor school facilities and other infrastructure problems. However, girls experience extra barriers stemming from social attitudes.

In marginalised communities, families often earn a living as farm labourers, mine workers, or daily wage earners. To help support the household, girls are frequently expected to do domestic work or join their parents in earning income. For example, many families have concerns about their daughters' safety that leads them to stop sending girls to school.

Due to deeply rooted gender biases, many families prefer boys as they offer future financial support, while girls are viewed as financial burdens since they will ultimately leave the household and move into their husband's home after marriage. Further hindering the view of girls, those from poorest communities struggle against the practice of dowries. For these families, a girl's education and nutrition is not a priority because they cause even more of a financial burden.

Action Village India
Educating Girls, Transforming Lives

PARTICIPANTS

The programme will support between 1,000 to 1,050 girls from the ages of 11 up to 18. From this group, approximately 350 girls will need one-on-one support through the sponsorship programme while another 650 girls will attend Learning Centres for extra academic help. At least 250 girls, including both students and dropouts, will join gender-awareness workshops designed to build confidence and challenge harmful social stereotypes.

However, this support will not exclude parents from the programme. 1,500 parents will join counselling sessions and awareness activities to help create a more supportive environment for their daughters' education.



Objectives

- **Educational Continuity through Sponsorship:** Provide direct support to ~350 girls annually from Class 5 to undergraduate level, ensuring progression to the next academic stage and enabling at least 350 girls to pass the 10th board exam and enrol in +2 or higher education.
- **Improved Learning Outcomes through Remedial Support:** Deliver subject-specific coaching in Maths, Science, and English to more than 650 girls at Learning Centres to strengthen foundational skills, boost academic confidence, and reduce dropout and failure rates among girls in Classes 8–10.
- **Community Engagement and Adolescent Empowerment:** Facilitate gender sensitisation, life skills, and career counselling sessions with girls, parents, and communities; build adolescent girls' groups to promote peer leadership, prevent early marriage, and foster sustained support for girls' education.

Action Village India

Educating Girls, Transforming Lives

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (2025-26)



- The programme has made strong and measurable progress in expanding access to education and improving outcomes for vulnerable girls. **To date, a total of 979 girls have been supported, with the highest enrolment observed in Years 8–10.** The programme has successfully reached girls from marginalised and underserved communities, while recognising the continued need to extend outreach to more remote areas.
- During the reporting period, a total of **11,460 participants** were reached through **gender awareness** sessions, **8,197 through life skills interventions**, and **9,172 through career counselling activities**, engaging girls, parents, and the wider community.
- There has been a clear **increase in school enrolment and retention**. More girls are now progressing beyond primary education, reflecting a positive shift in community attitudes towards girls' education. Tuition centres have played a critical role in reducing dropout rates, particularly among girls in upper primary and secondary levels, enabling them to remain in school and complete their education.
- **Regular attendance** at learning centres has contributed to **improved academic performance**, especially in core subjects such as Maths and Science. Targeted academic support and personalised attention from tutors have helped address learning gaps and build stronger foundational skills.
- Beyond academics, **the programme has contributed significantly to girls' confidence, agency, and aspirations**. Many girls now demonstrate greater self-belief and are more aware of how education can positively shape their futures and support their families. Participation in group learning environments has also strengthened teamwork and leadership skills, with several girls emerging as role models within their communities.
- Gender awareness activities and sustained community engagement have led to **encouraging social change**.
- There are early indications of a **reduction in child marriage**, as more families prioritise education for their daughters. Community sensitisation efforts have increased awareness around gender equality and discrimination, creating a more supportive environment for girls.

Overall, girls are becoming more confident in expressing their views, more aware of their rights, and more committed to continuing their education and pursuing long-term goals

ACTIVITIES REPORT

Remedial Coaching Centres (RCC)



Tuition classes were designed to be accessible and flexible, responding to the needs of secondary school girls from marginalised communities. The centres provided supplementary academic support in key subjects, including Maths, Science, and English.

Classes were conducted five days a week, with additional sessions organised during examination periods. Located within or close to the villages, the centres were managed by trusted local facilitators, ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment.

During the project year, 16 RCCs were supported, reaching 629 girls with quality education. One centre was closed and a new one was opened during this period. Regular parent-teacher meetings and teacher training sessions were also conducted.



Action Village India
Educating Girls, Transforming Lives

ACTIVITIES REPORT



Direct Sponsorship Support

A total of 350 girls, from Class 5 to undergraduate level, received individual sponsorship support across four programme blocks in Jharkhand and Bihar.

The support covered tuition and examination fees, as well as essential learning materials such as uniforms, books, and stationery. In addition, some girls were provided with items including umbrellas, dictionaries, and slates to support their schooling needs.

Ongoing engagement was maintained with the girls and their families to encourage sustained participation in education and promote long-term educational continuity.



Action Village India
Educating Girls, Transforming Lives

ACTIVITIES

Gender, Life Skills and Career Counselling



Girls and their parents were engaged in awareness sessions: influencing attitudes to educating girls and creating a supportive environment.

Confidence building, practical abilities and decision making were taught to the girls, with parents reinforcing lessons at home.

Regular career guidance sessions help girls explore their goals and plan practical steps to achieve them. In these sessions, girls receive advice on choosing academic subjects and identifying career paths as well as preparing for courses or competitive exams.

A community leader stepped in to prevent the illegal child marriage of a girl in Year 10, highlighting the value of community involvement.



Latitude: 24.060206
Longitude: 84.93664
Elevation: 576.3±1.9 m

Action Village India

Educating Girls, Transforming Lives

ACTIVITIES



Gender Awareness, Life Skills, and Career Counselling

During the reporting period, a total of 11,460 participants were reached through gender awareness sessions, 8,197 through life skills training, and 9,172 through career counselling, including girls, parents, and community members.

Gender Awareness

Sessions reached girls (50%), parents (41%), and community members (9%), with over 1,000 sessions conducted. The focus was on building awareness around gender equality and fostering a supportive environment for girls, particularly through engagement with parents.

Life Skills

Over 700 sessions were delivered, primarily to girls (59%), with participation from parents (34%) and the community (7%). These sessions strengthened confidence, decision-making, and practical skills, with parental involvement reinforcing learning at home.

Career Counselling

Career counselling reached predominantly girls (73%), alongside parents (21%) and community members (6%). The sessions supported informed decision-making around education pathways and future careers.

Overall, the interventions remained strongly girl-focused, with consistent engagement of parents to support sustained impact.

Action Village India

Educating Girls, Transforming Lives



GENDER AWARENESS, LIFE SKILLS AND CAREER COUNSELLING

Gender awareness activities support the girls' education program and help strengthen community involvement. Seven trained women community leaders play an important role in this work. They have received training in gender awareness, life skills, and career counselling, and they regularly meet with school-going girls, out-of-school girls, their mothers, and other community members.

The program focuses on important issues such as gender equality, discrimination, life skills and career planning. The community leaders help girls set practical career goals and guide them on how to achieve those goals. They also share information about schools, colleges, and training institutions for further studies.

Every day, these leaders meet girls in their villages and schools. They work with teachers to conduct sessions on gender issues, life skills and career

opportunities. These open discussions help girls understand these topics better, and many girls participate with enthusiasm to ask thoughtful questions that the leaders answer with care.

Gender awareness activities support the girls' education program and help strengthen community involvement. Seven trained women community leaders play an important role in this work. They have received training in gender awareness, life skills, and career counselling, and they regularly meet with school-going girls, out-of-school girls, their mothers, and other community members.

The program focuses on important issues such as gender equality, discrimination, life skills and career planning. The community leaders help girls set practical career goals and guide them on how to achieve those goals. They also share information about schools, colleges, and training institutions for further studies.



ACTIVITIES



Academic Events

Extra curricular activities, such as quiz contests, reading and speech competitions were organised to give girls the opportunity to develop confidence: an opportunity that they may rarely receive otherwise in their daily lives.



ACTIVITIES



Sports

Sports competitions in football and kabaddi were held. These activities promote teamwork, leadership and self-expression that are often only available to students in more privileged settings.



Action Village India
Educating Girls, Transforming Lives

ACTIVITIES



Monthly Performance Assessment

Girls' academic progress is monitored through regular, low-pressure assessments which identify areas needing extra support. These evaluations also help girls get comfortable with test-taking and build resilience to stress before formal school exams.



Action Village India
Educating Girls, Transforming Lives

IMPACT OF SCHOOLS



- NBJK helped reduce the number of early marriages with the Vikas Foundation Trust, Stri Shakti, Birsa High School and Gram Nirman Kendra (GNK).
- A clear fall in the number of school dropouts was visible this year, thanks to 350 girls receiving direct sponsorship support. Community support and encouragement to travel to school – in the form of bicycles and umbrellas – also helped. NBJK provided 40 bicycles to Birsa High School and Stri Shakti under the School Cycle Bank initiative for girls who travel long distances that are re-used each year to improve attendance. One girl shared, “I wouldn’t be here today if I hadn’t received support from this program. I would have dropped out of school and been married by now.”
- 307 girls appeared for the Year 10 board exam (O level equivalent) and are awaiting their results.

INDIVIDUAL STORIES

Against All Odds: The Inspiring Journey of Sumanti Soren

Sumanti Soren's story shows how strong determination and the right support can change a girl's life. At just 15 years old, Sumanti—a tribal girl from Gobardaha village in the Churchu block of Hazaribagh district—faced great hardship. She lost both her parents when she was in Class 3, and her education came to a sudden stop. Her elder siblings were already married, and one brother had gone to Bengaluru for work. This left Sumanti alone to manage the household and support the family. Even though she wanted to continue studying, she had to stay out of school for two years.

Things began to change when two village girls studying at Gyandarshan Vidyalaya under the Stri Shakti-AVI Sponsorship Program told a field supervisor about Sumanti's situation. He visited her home several times and convinced her guardian brother to allow her to return to school. With the help of the sponsorship program, Sumanti was able to join Class 6 and restart her education which covered her school expenses and provided a bicycle for her 4 km journey.



With hard work and strong willpower, Sumanti recently passed her Class 10 board exams with a second division. She now dreams of learning computers and getting a government job—dreams that once felt impossible. She is deeply thankful to Stri Shakti and Action Village India for supporting her education and giving her confidence and hope.

Sumanti's journey shows how community support, sponsorship, and a girl's own courage can help overcome even the toughest obstacles, inspiring many other girls who face similar struggles.

INDIVIDUAL STORIES

Rekindling Education for Kranti Kumari

Kranti Kumari is a 14-year-old girl from Pahridih village in the Jarmundi block of Dumka district, Jharkhand. She is the eldest of three sisters in a family of five. They live in a mud house with very few basic facilities. The family has no access to safe drinking water and practices open defecation. Kranti's father works as a daily wage labourer, but most of his earnings are spent on alcohol, leaving the family in serious financial trouble.

Due to poverty and lack of support at home, Kranti had to stop studying after completing Class 8. Her family environment offered little encouragement or resources for her to continue school.

During a Panchayat meeting, Kranti shared her wish to continue her studies. A community leader, Asha Devi, stood up for her and spoke to the Headmaster of High School Jarmundi. Even though all seats were already taken, the Headmaster agreed to reconsider her case. With this support, Kranti was admitted to Class 9.



This timely support helped Kranti restart her education. Her story shows her strength and the importance of community help in supporting girls from disadvantaged families. Kranti's courage combined with the efforts of local leaders proves that strong advocacy can break barriers and bring new hope to girls who want to study.

Kranti's story highlights how local partnerships, caring leaders, and community support can bring real change. Helping girls like Kranti continue their education not only changes their lives but also creates stronger, more empowered communities.

CONCLUSION

The AVI–NBJK Girls' Education Program demonstrates the power of encouraging families and aiding girls to remain in education. Since 2005–06, the program has supported thousands of girls in Hazaribag, Chatra, and Dumka in Jharkhand, and Gaya in Bihar, helping them complete secondary education, pursue higher studies and access employment. During April 2025 – March 2026 approximately 925 girls benefited from the program with 350 receiving direct sponsorship and 538 supported through tuition at 16 learning centres.

In addition to academics, the program promotes gender awareness, life skills, and career counselling, engaging girls, parents, and communities to create a supportive environment for education. The results this year show clear positive impacts—building confidence, reducing dropouts and nurturing aspirations among adolescent girls. The program's work highlights the ways in which sustained support and empowerment can transform lives and contribute to a more equitable and prosperous society.



Action Village India

info@actionvillageindia.org.uk

www.actionvillageindia.org.uk