



Action Village India



PROJECT REPORT

Educating Girls,
Transforming Lives
Half-Yearly



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.

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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.

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ACTIVITIES



Remedial Coaching Centres

Tuition classes are accessible, flexible and designed to meet the needs of girls from marginalised communities. These centres provide extra academic support in key subjects, such as maths, science and English. These classes are held five days a week with additional sessions around exam season. Located within or near villages, the centres are run by trusted local facilitators. Currently 17 RCCs are being supported with more than 650 girls receiving quality education.



Direct Sponsorship Support

350 girls from Class 5 to undergraduate received individual sponsorship across four programme blocks in Jharkhand and Bihar. Support included:

- Tuition fees, uniforms, books, and exam costs
- Continuous engagement with girls and their families to encourage long-term educational continuity

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ACTIVITIES



Career Counselling

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. These sessions give girls the information, motivation and confidence to make informed decisions about their future.



ACTIVITIES



Sports, Quizes and Extra Cirruculars

Extracurricular activities, such as quiz contests, drawing competitions and group performances, give girls the opportunity to develop confidence: an opportunity that they may rarely receive in their daily lives. In addition to annual celebrations, smaller events are organised around festivals and special occasions. These activities promote teamwork and self-expression that are often only available to students in more privileged settings.



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.

Life Skills Training in Adolescent Girls' Groups

Girls meet twice a month in Adolescent Girls' Groups which provide a safe space for learning, sharing and support. Framed as an extension of academic support, these sessions are accepted by parents and focus on essential life skills, including decision-making, communication and self-confidence, alongside lessons on rights, health, career awareness, and gender-based violence. The groups also act as an early-warning system to identify risks of early marriage and provide timely support.

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IMPACT OF SCHOOLS

- NBJK provided 80 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."
- NBJK helped reduce the number of early marriages with the Vikas Foundation Trust, Stri Shakti, Birsa High School and Gram Nirman Kendra (GNK).
- Some older girls who stay in lodges in Gaya are continuing their studies and preparing for competitive exams. Ms. Putul, a field counsellor, visits them regularly and provides guidance on career planning, gender issues, health and hygiene. Her support plays an important role in the overall growth and development of the girls.
- GNK have been given support with tuition fees and stationery to encourage attendance.

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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.

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OVERALL RESULTS

- A total of 280 vulnerable girls has been supported by the programme so far.
 - The program has increased the number of girls enrolling in school. Many are now studying beyond primary classes, showing that community attitudes are improving.
 - Tuition centres have reduced dropout rates and helped more girls stay in school and finish their education.
 - Regular attendance at learning centres has improved girls' academic performance, especially in difficult subjects like math and science, where they receive personal support from tutors.
 - Girls are becoming more confident and empowered. They now see education to improve their lives and support their families.
 - The program helps develop leadership skills, and many girls are becoming role models in their communities.
 - Gender awareness activities have led to a decrease in early marriages as more parents now prioritize their daughters' education.
 - Community sensitization programs teach people about gender discrimination and encourage girls to speak up against unfair treatment.
 - Girls are more confident about their rights and are more dedicated to their education and future goals.
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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. Between April and September 2025, approximately 900 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.



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