

## SOUTH ASIA SOCIAL NORMS LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

### CASE STUDY

## Project Umang: Shifting social norms and empowering young girls to trust their talents

*A mother's grit and determination for prioritising her daughter's schooling despite myriad challenges pay off with the latter's unprecedented success in sports.*

It came as a surprise for Mani Maddi when her 13-year-old daughter, Vandana Murmu, returned from hostel and informed that she had been selected for an inter-school *kho kho* championship. As a child growing up in Madhuban village of Jamtara district, Jharkhand, Vandana had hardly ever displayed her calibre in sports, probably because she never really got a chance.

Mani and Vandana belong to a region in India where social norms, dictated by a patriarchal outlook, don't allow girls a chance to exhibit their skills in domains other than domesticity. Furthermore, women like Mani, who only have daughters, are often shamed for not bearing a male child and educating their daughters instead of preparing them for household responsibilities.



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*“Girls from Jharkhand have no dearth of stamina. However, they often lag owing to lack of awareness and guidance. Many talented girls don't excel because their parents considered sports as a futile activity for girls. Luckily, Vandana has a supportive mother who allows her to pursue her interests.”*

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- By Madhuri Sinha, Vandana's Physical Education Teacher at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (Jamtara, Jharkhand).

In fact, Jamtara features top among the high-prevalence districts of child marriage in Jharkhand, with 51% (women aged 20-24 years who have been married before the age of 18) as against the national average of 24% (NFHS 5 2019-21). In such a scenario, talent such as Vandana's tends to remain disguised.

## Project Umang



**Launched:** 2019

**Implemented by:** PCI India in partnership with Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS) and ICRW.



**Target Audience:** Adolescent Girls

**Social Norms:** Relies on the potential of mother-daughter bond in facilitating a normative shift towards addressing gender norms and child/early marriage.



**Intervention area:** 13 blocks in Godda and Jamtara, Jharkhand

**Impact:** Impacted the lives of more than 36,000 women and over 9000 adolescent girls.

## Methodology

*How did Mani then manage to break the patriarchal barriers?* Added to her grit and determination, Mani's success can be attributed to her **association with the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS) as an Active Woman and with Project Umang.**

Working on the principle of "Inter-generational Transmission of Empowerment from Mother to Daughter", Umang aspires to reduce prevalence of child/early marriage by 15-20% in high prevalence districts in Jharkhand and empower adolescent girls. It is currently active in 2 districts of Jharkhand – Jamtara and Godda. It strongly advocates for the fact that an aware mother will raise empowered daughters. Its primary objectives include capacitating women collectives to create an enabling environment & encouraging adolescent girls to fulfil their aspirations & life choices; and establishing a scalable and sustainable model for addressing child/early marriage through the Self Help Group (SHG) platform. As an Active Woman Mani's role involves – ensuring that all SHG members participate in Umang sessions; encouraging mothers to participate in household decision making, especially those pertaining to their daughters' future; encouraging mothers to send their daughters to school; informing them about Prohibition of Child Marriage Act and the ill effects of child/early marriage.

*"Umang has made me realise the potential of my influence in shaping the future of my daughters. Repeated deliberations during Umang sessions, followed by home visits by Village Organisation leaders and members, have reinforced the idea of me participating in major decision making for my daughters' lives and how I should be negotiating with my husband to protect their interests."*

- Mani



## Success

Vandana Murmu is a classic case of how placing girls in the education system (schools) can help identify and channelise their hidden potential. This is also the story of a mother's grit and determination for prioritising her daughter's schooling despite myriad challenges at her end. Fighting the regressive gender norms, Vandana has won accolades for her village by representing Jamtara at state level championship and representing Jharkhand at the 32nd Sub Junior National Kho Kho Championship, held in Maharashtra in 2022.

## Conclusion

Mani is among the 178,000+ women Umang has engaged with so far, since its inception in October 2019. These include 1,314 Active Women who are associated with it. What started with one block each in Jamtara & Godda districts as a pilot in 2019, has expanded to 13 blocks in both the districts. By far it has reached out to 3,400+ villages and capacitated 15,035 SHGs, 1,218 VOs and 61 CLFs.

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## Author

- Monalisa Das, Assistant Manager - Documentation & Communication, Project Umang, PCI India

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## About SA-SNLC

South Asia Social Norms Learning Collaborative (SA-SNLC) is a platform for discussing various facets of social norms, their impact on the lives of men and women, programming to address regressive norms and measurement of the same. The platform for researchers, practitioners, academicians and other enthusiasts. PCI India and CSBC (Ashoka University) jointly host this platform in India. To know more about our work, click [here](#).