Where the Mind is without Fear

A publication by Tata Steel Foundation

400 young women and men speak about their aspirations and how education can bring about transformation





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Note:

In this publication, unless otherwise indicated, the terms 'youth' and 'youngsters' refer to all those between the ages of 15 and 29, as defined in the National Youth Policy 2014.

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_and the head is held high



Education empowers a generation to change tomorrow.

We are living in fast-changing times, where one innovation soon paves the way for another, where one thought, one voice paves the way for many more voices to usher in a revolution. The present generation will define our future and represent unlimited potential aided by extensive networks, advanced technologies and limitless imagination. The ability to think big and take risks gives today's youth the confidence to think of out-of-the-box solutions and generate astonishing results. They can certainly use the wisdom of older generations. However, taking actions relevant to the existing ecosystem, addressing emerging issues and leveraging young innovative thought-processes to carve out a bright future for themselves depends entirely upon them.

Partnering with youth can bring about paradigm shifts in society for the sheer energy and enthusiasm that the youth possess. It is for this reason that we need to open our minds to ideas and concerns that we can imbibe from the young and the restless. At the Tata Steel Foundation, we endeavour to stand by young changemakers in the vicinity of our operations across Jharkhand and Odisha and attempt to work with youngsters. Having witnessed their extraordinary stories, we retain our belief in the power of youth in transforming the world. In this journey of transformation, quality education is the most potent tool for the youth to catalyse developmental solutions. Focusing on education today and course-correcting when required are elements that are crucial and non-negotiable. As catalysts of change, it is pertinent that dialogues on crucial subjects take place and give way to meaningful action.

It is in this context that Dhwani is organised and the ensuing dialogue that transpires is reflective of the voice of the most silent, inaccessible States of Jharkhand and Odisha. We are hopeful that this voice reaches the decision makers and sparks the muchneeded transformation in society.

Mr Chanakya Chaudhary, Vice President (Corporate Services), Tata Steel

Where Knowledge is Free

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Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls

 •400 youngsters were asked a question, and they came together to weave a story which overcomes barriers and reinforces their faith in the transformative power of education.



• What would you do when you see two



FEW DAYS LATER...



children begging on the street?

And what about school? Do you go to school?

But why? Is it money? or have no documents for schooling?



Let me liaise with relevant authorities to get your documents and funds for schooling sorted.

'Education is expensive but technology is powerful. Social media could be a good medium to raise funds.

With relevant documents and sufficient funds in place, your schooling can now commence.



NO

While the children focus on studies, I will regularly keep in touch with them, provide a safe space for sharing and explore ways of nurturing their talents.



In time I would sit back and feel satisfied that I have raised two accomplished people who can be independent and achieve whatever they want.

Through this story the youngsters have demonstrated their collective belief in the power of education in transforming lives.

Introduction

World youth population is recorded at 1.8 billion and India, world's largest democracy, alone accounts for 345 million youth¹. This vast demography, the largest cohort of young people that has ever been in history, possesses enormous potential which is evident in the powerful youth movements that have contributed to social innovation to address the growing community problems across the world. Be it **Sawa World** addressing poverty, **Restless Development** producing young leaders or **Generations For Peace**, they, and many others like them have contributed immensely to the society at regional, national and international levels.

UNICEF, in September 2018, has launched a multi-stakeholder initiative 'Generation Unlimited' as part of Youth 2030 UN Strategy that aims to ensure all young people are in school, training or employed by 2030. It focuses on skills for learning, employment and empowerment, especially for girls. The Generation Unlimited India Strategy also focusses on enabling India's youth and connects them to socio-economic opportunities and engaging them as active change makers.

Dhwani, a youth conclave, is being organised by Tata Steel Foundation annually since 2017 on the occasion of International Youth Day to provide a platform to youth to network and voice their aspirations. It marks the confluence of the youth of Jharkhand, Odisha, and eminent speakers from across the globe converging over a rich exchange of thoughts and ideas on a plethora of key issues. This platform offers young minds an opportunity to broaden their horizon and absorb multi-faceted perspectives from eminent thinkers, change-makers and subject-matter experts present during the two-day programme. Dhwani voices the opinions and thoughtprocess of the youth of present-day India through group discussions, role plays and storytelling. Each year the event is organised around a theme. In the last two years, Dhwani explored concepts like 'Youth Building Peace' followed by 'Safe Spaces for Youth' and was attended by over 800 youngster. In its third edition, Dhwani adopted the theme of International Youth Day 2019–Transforming Education.

Tata Steel Foundation recognises that youngsters have a much larger role to play going forward which is amply clear in the outstanding work done by young women and men whom we meet as part of our CSR interventions, and whose passion for social change and stories of personal determination must reach a wider audience and eventually feed in to policy articulation – *Dhwani* has been setup as a platform to this end, as well as to bring the best of national and international thinking to these outstanding youngsters. We believe that meaningful change can be brought about only when our young minds become equal stakeholders in the development roadmap.

Tata Steel Foundation, through its various interventions in its two operating States of Jharkhand and Odisha, continually engages with close to two lakh youngsters annually, has created meaningful relationships and has facilitated networking platforms for them. Read more about these CSR interventions under the section Tata Steel Foundation youth initiatives.

1. Global Youth Development Index and Report, 2016, The Commonwealth http://cmydiprod.uksouth.cloudapp.azure.com/sites/default/files/2016-10/2016%20Global%20 Youth%20Development%20Index%20and%20Report.pdf





About the report

400 youngsters from across the two states of Jharkhand and Odisha, the two most silent and inaccessible states in the country, converged at *Dhwani* 2019 on August 12-13 to converse on 'Transforming Education'. *Dhwani* attempted to initiate dialogue around the education system today - to understand what the youth thinks of the relevance of this system, what their aspirations are and what, according to them, can change.

This report is an attempt to capture this voice and also opens a narrative of youth seizing their responsibility and participation in nation-building.

Obtaining youth opinions acts as a sounding board while making youth-focused policies. With the National Education Policy 2019 just at the brink of being finalised by the Indian Government and with 'Transforming Education' being the 2019 international narrative, the timing and relevance of this report could not have been more apt.

Fearlessness is the key element that enables a full and true expression of ones being and all of the world is striving to tame their fears, their insecurities. World renowned poet Rabindranath Tagore through his poem 'Where the World is without fear' from *Gitanjali* aptly expounds fearlessness, and references to this poem are made to underline the philosophy behind this publication.

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Where words come out from the depth of truth

The 400 youngsters...who are they?

Note on the Methodology

The respondents of the report are spread across 6 locations in the two States of Jharkhand and Odisha where Tata Steel has its operational presence and runs several programmes as part of its CSR interventions. Jamadoba, West Bokaro, Noamundi & Jamshedpur in Jharkhand and Kalinganagar and Joda in Odisha were the locations where the *Dhwani* Team² travelled in search of passionate, enthusiastic youngsters showcasing extraordinary talent and the willingness to effect change in their communities. The search-arm, named '*Pratibha Chayan Yatra*' (Hindi) which translates to Talent Search Journey, was conducted between August 3 - 11, 2019 as one-day workshops (entailed storytelling, group discussions and street plays) across the 6 locations and met close to 850 youngsters in the course of the journey. Of these, 400 youngster were handpicked based on their individual success-stories and enthusiasm to be a part of *Dhwani* 2019 in Jamshedpur.

To capture the voice of youth, contouring the overarching theme of 'Transforming Education', a live polling was conducted at Dhwani 2019 and the findings of the poll have been used to substantiate points in the report.

Respondent details





Gender-wise

58%	42%	
	Female	Male
2. Dhwani team consists of the Tata Steel Foundation	ask force team and representatives of Akart Production.	

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection; Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit

Introducing stories of young changemakers



The young continue to break internal and external barriers addressing issues without necessarily depending on external support for change. The drive is selfmotivated and the results are astounding. Here are a few stories of unsung heroes from Jharkhand and Odisha, unearthed during *Pratibha Chayan Yatra* who, we think, are taking ordinary actions to cater to the need of the hour, but for the rest of the world, these can be jaw-dropping legends.

Child marriage? At no cost!



16-year-old Premnath Solanki, a student of class 10, demonstrated exceptional courage in mobilising his own community against child marriage. Being forced into marrying at a young age, two people who hardly know their responsibilities are knotted together for a lifetime with no recourse. This, he understood well – having been raised in an estranged family himself – the repercussions that child marriage brings with itself: lack of awareness, health problems, burdened with financial and societal problems, and most importantly, the psyche of the children born through the wedlock.

In order to address this peril in his village, Rakesh along with a group of ten youngsters from the village Youth Resource Centers formed a group, and through *nukkad nataks* (street plays) attempted to create awareness in and around their village. He recalls an account when they had to intervene in a wedding to stop a 16-year old girl from getting married. This was difficult as the groom himself was no stranger, but a friend of Premnath.

Premnath admits that it is indeed difficult to stay in a society where one's thoughts differ considerably from the rest; the points of view are often misunderstood by the society. However, he accepts life the way it is and says, '**My life path is clear. What is to be done, has to be done no matter what!**





She is unshakable in her stand



Rani passed her 10th standard examinations and as is the case with every other girl in Joda - a mining hub dominated by social evils - she was forced to get married at 15. However, Rani stood her ground and decided to stand up against early marriage. She deferred her wedding to pursue higher education.

Realising that this was a critical issue that needed a wider community focus, Rani walked the extra mile to convince her village elders to establish a child marriage protection committee. Once formed, the committee helped her in being vigilant and thereby bringing down the number of early marriages. Presently, in addition to monitoring, the committee also engages in organising awareness sessions with families to create a socially aware society.

Rani is pursuing her higher education and has decided not to marry until she completes her graduation. At 18 now, she is also an independent lady, earning a steady sum of money by making and selling paper bags, her own little contribution to a greener planet

She believes in education for all

3 Sunita Kumari Jamadoba, Jharkhand

After Sunita's father passed away in 2007, her education took a backseat due to financial constraints. However, sensing the desire to continue studies, Sunita found an able support in her sister who ensured the former's secondary education continued. Such was Sunita's dedication that she eagerly cycled 10 kms one way to take additional classes once she bagged an opportunity to pursue science in higher secondary.

During this period, she witnessed a lot of young boys and girls dropping out of school, unable to pursue education as they lacked resources. This pained her. Sunita believes that it is only through education that real transformation in the society can be brought about. Sunita took up teaching in the same school from where she had once studied, besides giving private tuitions to students from classes VI to X. Having gone through financial troubles herself at a very young age, Sunita empathises with others like her and gives coaching free of cost to those who are unable to pay fees.

After her class XII, Sunita went to pursue Diploma in Elementary Education from The National Institute of Open Schooling. Currently, she is undergoing training as Machinist at Industrial Training Institute, Dhanbad. This enables her to support her brother's as well as her own education fees. She is all set to enroll for B.Sc next.

It gives her extreme satisfaction to see her students perform well in school and secure good grades. Apart from undergoing diploma course and teaching in school, Sunita takes up four batches of tuitions through the day. Her day begins at 5 am and this is true, even on Sundays!





Encouraging a career in sports

Rajesh Kumar Mahato West Bokaro, Jharkhand

A young sports enthusiast, Rajesh's life saw its share of ups and downs. He soon realised that his family was undergoing troubled times, his sisters' education was compromised, only so that the family could continue his education. Rajesh soon came back home and took up the task of educating his sisters. It was his belief that while a boy's education was important, the developing nation needed its daughters to become literate as well.

Rajesh is presently one of the most active youngsters of his village. He has been nominated as the President of the sports department by the Panchayat Samiti of his village. By promoting various sporting activities including football and cricket through the sports department, Rajesh has been instrumental in spreading a sports culture in his village and also in the neighbouring villages in West Bokaro.

People can now dream of making a career as a sportsperson in his village.

She teaches The Super 15

5 Rajini Malik Kalinganagar, Odisha

Rajini reminisces of a time when she faced a dearth of learning opportunities and inadequate education. Troubled by the state of ignorance around, she began giving tuitions free of cost to the underprivileged children. What began with a class of five, now has grown to 15 across grades II-VI. However, this required continuous engagement with the parents to convince them to send their children to schools and tuitions. With constant mobilisation, more and more parents began sending their children to tuitions.

Rajini says: 'Education is an important aspect of development in villages and the communities need to realise this. When my students began benefitting from the tuitions, the village folks appreciated my efforts.'





Hobbies are as important as education

6 Hemant Honaga Noamundi, Jharkhand

A man actively engaged in ushering change in his community – that's Hemant. He realised the criticality of education as he moved to 16. He joined his school teachers in visiting door-to-door, convincing parents to send their children to school. Hemant spoke about learnings from his school to highlight the benefits of education.

This apart, performing arts was where his passion lay ever since he was a little boy. Since 2015, he has been teaching a group of 15 students who now perform at various functions both in and around their village. Hemant is also involved in community mobilisation against alcoholism, deforestation, etc. To watch a girl toil away at home while the menfolk remain suited in offices, is simply not his idea of a developed nation, and hence Hemant initiated the first steps at home – promoting his sister's education.

With an aim to reduce dependence on trees for biogas, Hemant along with 16 other youngsters from his village formed the '*Abhiman*' group who facilitated in bringing gas stoves to the homes of village members. Protecting their forests has remained the prime intent of the group and the members regularly go about surveying the outskirts of the forests, especially along the rivers, cleaning up plastic waste and garbage.

While the world has bigger plans, Hemant and his 'gang' are quietly contributing their fair share towards a greener and healthier planet.

Breaking limiting beliefs, he dreams of becoming a Racer

Yamini Kant Nag Jagannathpur, Jharkhand

Move aside, as Jharkhand now emerges on the racing map. Yamini's aspiration of taking up racing as a sport saw the light of day in 2018 when he informed his father about getting selected for an 8-day training at Prudent Motorsports, Bangalore. Yamini's father, first a little hesitant, not knowing much about F1 racing, took some time to think over the proposal. He consulted with his friends and soon decided to stand by his son's aspiration. To him it was clear, if his son was so passionate about racing then he should pursue it. He borrowed money from his friends to support Yamini's training at Bangalore. As the days rolled, the road became clearer. Yamini is now training for national championship and his family is immensely proud of him.

F1 Racing – quite unusual even for an urbanised youngster – such is the power of youth and its passion.





Come to learn and go to serve is her motto



Punam's curiosity about the team that had come to her village, encouraging youngsters like her to engage in awareness sessions on adolescent behaviour, soon found answers. After engaging in a few sessions herself, Punam changed her approach towards education, ridding herself of the notion that marks and topping exams were actually the be-all and end-all of the system. **She began to believe in acquiring knowledge through practical methods and sharing that with others. 'Come to learn and Go to serve' – is the motto that defines this young lady.**

Punam is sensitive towards the issue of fraudulent relationships among youngsters, often leading to unwanted pregnancies, abortions, etc. Having collected paper cutouts just for a month, culling out unpleasant news of young girls or boys wasting their time and energy in fraudulent activities, worried her deeply. She slowly began engaging with such youngsters in an effort to spread awareness on early romantic relationships and its unwanted consequences.

Small steps lead to big impact

Schetan Singh Jamadoba, Jharkhand

A few classes on adolescent behaviour encouraged Chetan to propagate awareness sessions on the subject, for the larger community. To him, these sessions were sounding boards or even a safe ecosystem where youngsters voiced their fear and imbibed useful lessons on life. Chetan presently engages in allocating time for children in his neighbourhood and counsels them. He continually strives to make a difference in his society through multiple projects which he feels will create a greater community connect.

Chetan has helped the people in his neighbourhood avail documents like Aadhar cards and claim old-age pensions. In addition to this, he has also facilitated in building toilets for a number of households. As a conscious citizen, **Chetan is now focussing on tree plantation to make his neighbourhood clean and green.**





Creating an enlightened society

10 Chameli Kumari Mahato Jamadoba, Jharkhand

A recent college pass-out, Chameli traces her journey to a time in 2014 when she engaged in lessons on adolescent behaviour.

Raised in a family that constantly battled the angst of an alcoholic father, Chameli had her set of struggles in life already. The exposure at these sessions introduced her to many youngsters who had equally or sometimes more challenging lives. Their stories inspired her and left a lasting impression which allowed her to find a platform for herself and for the impoverished. This gave her the courage to rise above self-pity and to work towards a more enlightened community where youngsters, like her, have a platform to share and learn from each other. Spreading awareness on menstrual cycle, peer pressure, etc. subjects which are either not known or not spoken about openly in villages, Chameli does her bit in co-creating a more aware society. Once shy, she now has the confidence to address an audience. In her own way she tries to find and encourage talent among rural children. Chameli is presently a teacher at Aasha Ki Kiran, a profession that enables her to remain closely associated to her cause.

Women standing for women

11 Puja Kumari Rajak Jamadoba, Jharkhand

Menstruation continues to be a taboo from where Puja hails. Drowned in superstitions, the womenfolk aren't allowed in temples during their menstrual cycles. The ill-treatment meted out to women triggered Puja to muster up the courage and discuss these sensitive issues in her community. The intent was to create awareness and eventually stop this harassment. It is the lack of education coupled with a dismal economic background that provides a breeding ground for superstitions and atrocities.

Being the eldest in the family, Puja shoulders most of the responsibilities at home. Puja joined an incense stick packaging company - Puja Sugandhit Agarbatti Pvt.Ltd. to earn her livelihood. Gradually, becoming economically independent herself, she started mobilising other women in the village to join the company. Packaging incense sticks from home is something any woman has bandwidth to do, resulting in extra income for those who joined the company. It sowed the seeds of an empowered community. Today, the company employs 1500 strong independent women.





Fighting against addiction

12 Rakesh Sahoo Joda, Odisha

In 2016, Rakesh was preparing for his class X board examinations. However, with liquor shops widespread in their village and the resultant chaos with drunk mob around, adversely impacted his studies. Along with his friend, Rakesh took up the matter with neighbouring liquor sellers but in vain. His family also discouraged him from getting into the mess, lest he got into trouble. Rakesh would not let this turmoil come in between his studies. At the same time, he realized that other youngsters in his neighbourhood were also becoming increasingly victimized by this situation and that they would never be able to break the shackles of addiction if no action was taken to address the current situation. Alcohol had to be eradicated at any cost.

Having seen that women happen to suffer more at the cost of alcoholism, Rakesh and his friend, went on to convincing women from Self-Help Groups to join hands with them. Having gathered sufficient momentum, they took out a rally one day with 70 odd people to protest against alcohol sale in the village. With 200 such liquor shops, their job was tough; they continued nevertheless. Their rally included women members, and since their safety was a matter to be thought for, they sought help of the police. The resultant effort reduced the sale of alcohol in their village significantly. Presently, people in his community live a more peaceful life.

Today Rakesh has completed his higher secondary education and looks forward to working for his community for the satisfaction it gives. **Rakesh firmly believes that youth has the power to drive positive change in the community.**

Persistent in her efforts, despite all odds

13 Sukmati M Noamundi, Jharkhand

Sukmati, part of Youth Resource Center (YRC), has been involved in various youth initiatives. Rallying against excessive consumption of alcohol in her locality had been a fruitful initiative that led to the shutting down of liquor shops in her area. This has curbed consumption of alcohol by even small children which was otherwise easily accessible and consumed by all.

In addition to this, **she confesses that changing the mindsets of parents against child marriage is a challenge but she would take a stand for them to ensure a better future.** Intimated once by an Anganwadi Sevika about a 15 year old being forced to marry by her family, Sukmati approached the girl and asked if the marriage had her consent. Receiving a negative answer, she circulated the issue in her YRC network and sought support. Her team, together, visited the family and counselled them on emotional and biological ill-effects of early marriage. Thanks to an increasing resistance, the marriage was stopped eventually.





She is fighting to end age-old taboos

Kayyari Tiriya Noamundi, Jharkhand

There is not much awareness about menstruation in rural villages and even if there is, no one chooses to speak about it. It's a taboo, and girls continue to suffer due to lack of awareness. Kayyari, equipped by the training programmes on adolescent behaviour, demonstrated courage to speak about menstrual cycle and menstrual hygiene to young girls in her village. With the right kind of advice and having someone to talk to about emotional changes during menstruation, the girls under Kayyari have formed a small group that provides a safe space for such discussions. **This support system** gives assurance to young girls and helps them grow in a safe dignified environment.

At 15 years, Kayyari truly proves that age is just a number.

He is using education to solve community problems

15 Naresh Munda Noamundi, Jharkhand

Currently undergoing graduation in B.Sc and having received ample opportunities to pursue higher education, Naresh is satisfied by the way he was raised by his family. However, when he saw children dropping out of school from families having insufficient resources to support their child's education, he was disappointed, but not discouraged.

In 2018, Naresh began engaging with the village Youth Resource Center (YRC) and took upon the task of main streaming out-of-school children. Through his mobilisation and continued negotiation with families, Naresh was able to mainstream 5 children who had dropped out of school due to financial problems, under pressures of marriage or even alcohol addiction.

Apart from this he also teaches digital skills to children who come to the YRC. Naresh says, 'In today's world nothing happens without technology – it has become a necessity'.

He believes that education is the answer to all the problems of the community. Today, he has a lot of experience on his side and emerges as a promising change maker.



Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action

Their voices...a call for change

Education is the most potent tool for social change that acts as a catalyst to addressing development issues across segments. Youth-led transformational initiatives are innovative and sustainable, and through *Dhwani* this year we aimed to explore and capture their narrative on education, its problems and probable solutions. This part of the report deals with questions posed to 400 youngsters through live polling and their responses which are used to substantiate points in the report. The report explores the aspirations and the preparedness of youth, and the enablers that pave the way for the voices that will drive change.

Their aspirations and preparedness...

With a group of 400 youngsters assembled together, representing the voice of ~14 million of their generation³ across Jharkhand and Odisha, it was most essential to understand their aspirations, what they think about the world and how confident and prepared do they feel about achieving their dreams.

10 years from now you see yourself as...

SDG:	íl 💰 🔀
A voice of change in my community	39.6 %
A business person	17.9 %
Working for peace and conflict resolution	14.0%
A world renowned artist	9.0%
A political and administrative representative	7.5%
An award winning sportsperson	7.5%
Making breakthroughs in science, technology & innovation	4.5 %

Source: Live polling at Dhwani 2019

How prepared do you feel to achieve your aspirations?

Well prepared	55.0%
Moderately prepared	33.0%
Less prepared	12.0%

Source: Live polling at Dhwani 2019



3. Population Projection, 2016, Ministry of Human Resource Development https://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/PopulationProjection2016.pdf Despite historical inequalities, injustice and inadequacies in the region, coupled with absence of role models to rely on, youngsters in the two states of Jharkhand and Odisha continue to dream big. The diversity of aspirations, rooted deeply in their socio-economic and geographical context, ranges from being a voice of change in their communities at 39.6% to making breakthroughs in science, technology and innovation.

Stories, in the earlier segment of the report are reflective of these youth aspirations and potential. To acquire fame and name which was never there, to come out from the vicious cycle of poverty, to shift from being seeker to a giver by becoming an entrepreneur – the youngsters are everaspiring to move the needle. Entrepreneurship equally finds its roots in education. Being a tech person, innovator, sportsperson, artist, F1 racer, all require moving from limited academic syllabi to more enhanced, nuanced and diverse educational portfolios including a fair sprinkling of liberal arts.

Dalai Lama says, 'We will only make the 21st century an era of peace on the basis of inner peace.' Having grown up in an era of conflict and also as a part of it, to understand the opportunities of resolution, is a challenge.

The youngsters have realised the importance of education, not just as a tool for social change but a key for emancipation. With a whopping 55% of the youth feeling well-prepared to achieve their dreams, there is no dearth in self-confidence. It is now up to the enablers and the support system that the community provides to see them through.

Naga Sravan Kiralu keynote speaker at *Dhwani* 2019, at 25 now, has already been awarded the National Youth Award (2017) for active citizenship, he is the founder of Vijayawada Needs U, a youth organization aimed to empower Vijayawada's youth. He cycled across Andhra Pradesh for 50 odd days with an aim to meet communities, understand their problems and draft a manifesto reflecting their aspirations. He believes, 'Youth is not the future of our country, they are the present'. He emphasises on the need to have education relevant to one's skills that builds into a career that both quenches the aspirations of the youth and enables progress of the country.

With tall aspirations and unshakeable confidence, what youth of the present require is an ecosystem where they can grow and flourish. This segment deals with youth expectations of the enablers that, according to them, will help carve their future and serve in realising their dreams.

The pathway to your aspirations rest upon...

	SDG:
Supportive Family	47.0 %
Mentors / role models	20.0 %
Network of friends and peers	16.0 %
Information	8.0 %
Supportive community	6.0 %
Existing schemes and policies	3.0 %

Source: Live polling at Dhwani 2019

The psychological development in the adolescent phase is crucial to one's future and plays a decisive role in the kind of adult a person grows up to be. For the first time, adolescents have found a place in the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030)⁴ by the United Nations as it is felt that the young play a pivotal role as drivers of change in the society.

In the regions that this report talks about which are geographically as well as technologically isolated; the social relationships be it family, friends, peers or role models surrounding the young, play a vital role in their evolution. Amidst fighting superstitions, child labour, lack of livelihoods, rampant substance abuse among other social evils, the young find it extremely overwhelming to chart out a future that is different from what seems to be the normal scheme of things.

Of all social relationships, 47% of the youngsters believe that a supportive family is a key enabler in their development. An example of this, is Sheshma's story. Being a girl child, Sheshma's father refused to pay for her education beyond class 10. It was her dedication for learning that triggered her mother to sell-off her jewellery to pay for her college fees. Today, she is a graduate in political science and is working as a community mobiliser in Odisha. Lack of education leads to people in power taking advantage of the unlettered village folk. This bothered Sheshma and also what troubled her was so many children out of school idling away their time. Sheshma has been working on behavioural change communication in the community since the past three years to create awareness on the importance of education. She visits households and organises camps to understand the families, their problems and through positive engagement persuades them to send their children to schools.

This is just one Sheshma who is mobilising communities and effecting change, but the realities of poor education and lack of awareness is true for so many villages.

The status quo needs to shift and that will shift with relevant education. An enlightened society will create enlightened youth and vice versa.



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SDG:	M	Ţ	0

Respects individuals irrespective of race/caste/societal status/ gender/religion, etc.	54.0 %
Emphasizes education for all	35.0 %
Encourages space for youngsters to communicate & interact	11.0 %

Source: Live polling at Dhwani 2019

Jharkhand and Odisha have a dominant population of tribal communities. Historically, this section of the society has faced discrimination. The average rate of exclusion for primary school going children from Scheduled Castes is 5.6 per cent and Scheduled Tribes 5.3 per cent compared to the national average of 3.6 per cent⁵. The side-effects of discrimination is deep rooted in tribal communities from a very young age which has led to low self-esteem. To overcome these self-confidence issues and then to compete with the rest of the society, takes huge effort and only a few are able to achieve this. One rarely hears of a tribal CXO or an established entrepreneur. 54% of the youngsters look forward to an ideal society sans discrimination.

4. Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, 2015, World Health Organization. <u>https://www.who.int/life-course/partners/global-strategy/globalstrategyreport2016</u> -2030-lowres.pdf?ua=1

5. Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, 2014, UNICEF and UNESCO_http://uis.unesco.org/sites/ default/files/documents/out-of-school-children-south-asia-country-study-education-2014-en.pdf



With these realities around, an education system that is both unbiased and propagates equality as well as equity becomes a necessity. B.R. Ambedkar, celebrated Indian economist, politician and social reformer, who campaigned against atrocities towards untouchables; promoted the idea of 'Educate, Organise and Agitate'. Only through education, can one stand up for one's rights in the society. 35% of the youngsters believe that education is meant for all and should be accessible to all.

'Education is far too important to be left solely to the government or educational institutions. We have a call as youth leaders to work hand-in-hand to ensure that education for sustainable development is evenly distributed, starting with our communities,' says Victoria Ibiwoye - Founding Director of the One African Child Foundation for Creative Learning & youth representative for the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.

Which education lever will bring you closer to your aspirations?

	SDG: 🛍 📗
Teachers who can be mentors	59.0 %
Curriculum which enables exposure to pursue non-conventional career pathways	20.5 %
Optimum student - teacher ratio / presence of teachers	12.5 %
Good infrastructure	8.0 %

ource: Live polling at Dhwani 2019



Paulo Freire, Brazilian educator, when talking about conscientization, pressed upon the importance of reflection and dialogue as a means to solving problems and where co-ordinators and students held equal status. Student-teacher bond creates a sense of belonging and a safe environment that enables meaningful learning opportunities. 59% of the youth believe that teachers who can be mentors are crucial to achieving aspirations.

Some of these bonds are quite visible in the stories that emanate at *Masti Ki Pathshala* (a residential bridge course programme run by Tata Steel Foundation across 5 centres in Jamshedpur aiming to get children off the streets and into learning).

Sabitri Murmu (Teacher at *Masti Ki Pathshala*, Bagunhatu centre) recollects, 'It pains us to see small children with acute drug addiction. Children justify inhaling dendrite so that they can sleep through the day and sometimes even days together without feeling hunger or cold. When children from such backgrounds come to our residential school, we take extra care to first counsel them to get out of addiction. That is the first step to learning. Months are spent just to groom them, feed them ensuring they get adequate nutrition and care. Once they start feeling at home, it is only then that we introduce them to formal studies. When we see these children transformed and in school uniforms, we feel proud. That is the reward we look forward to.'

Marshall Ho (Teacher at *Masti Ki Pathshala,* Tinplate centre) recalls, 'We keep encouraging students through the day to instil a sense of curiosity and willingness amongst them to learn. One time a student-boy came to me at midnight expressing his desire to study at that time. I turned him away saying it was an untimely hour to study and that I would teach him in the morning. Reflecting on my own actions the next morning I realised I had committed a mistake. There is no good or bad time to study. From that day I promised myself that I will be available for my children at any time of the day they need me.'

In addition to student-teacher bonds and adequate ratio between the two; to enable greater flexibility, school and college curriculum should allow integrating diverse subjects into one stream of study. This will aid critical thinking, deeper learning, enhance communication skills and enable overall development of a child. Studies have shown that introducing liberal arts earlier in the education curriculum leaves a child with greater choices of employment and more scope of fully using her/his potential and skills.



Do you feel the need for more awareness of government scholarships and schemes for education?



When Mr Manoj Kar, Professor, Indian Institute of Education, Pune, who was present at Dhwani 2019, asked the audience about the existing problems in their respective communities, the youngsters responded by saying that there is less focus on education related schemes, however, other schemes like Aadhar and Pan Card are promoted with greater push. They also highlighted that certain policy decisions taken at the state level don't always find relevance when implemented at the village level and therefore never actually end up achieving the purposes for which the policies were made in the first instance. Communities in the remote, interior regions of the country often lack awareness of their entitlements and therefore are unable to reap the benefits.

With 97% of the youth being of the view that there needs to be more awareness on educational schemes and policies, government can explore viable partnerships, especially with youngsters, to branch out and reach the remotest interiors of India to deploy educational schemes successfully, make information available and known to the larger masses thereby enabling them to leverage the benefits.

With 97% youth of the view that there needs to be more awareness on educational schemes and policies, Government can explore viable partnerships to branch out and reach the remotest interiors of India to deploy educational schemes successfully.



What transformation is required in the education system to make it more effective?

Contraction of Street,

SDG:	
Technology-aided education	33.0 %
Affordable education	31.0 %
Availability of a wide choice of subject/discipline/institution	18.0 %
Inclusion of regional language as a medium of instruction	9.0 %
Increased emphasis on Arts & Sports	9.0 %
Source: Live p	oolling at Dhwani 2019

Real transformation can be brought about by unlocking youth aspirations which are both alive and in some cases even dormant due to non-availability of resources.

With a variety of tech buzzwords in vogue such as smart classrooms, Artificial Intelligence, Industry 4.0, there is an equal need to bring these to the remote interiors of the country. 33% of the youngsters look forward to a technology-aided education system which is capable of providing enhanced experience to students, increases productivity, aids faster learning and familiarises young children with technology that has become indispensable today.

6. National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, 2018, NITI Aayog

https://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/document_publication/NationalStrategy-for-Al-Discussion-Paper.pdf 7. Future of jobs in India: A 2022 Perspective, 2017, EY,NASSCOM and FICCI

https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/ey-future-of-jobs-in-india/%24FILE/ey-future-of-jobs-in-india.pdf

8. Higher Education in India – The Need for Change, 2006, Pawan Agarwal http://icrier.org/pdf/ICRIER_WP180__Higher_Education_in_India_.pdf Artificial Intelligence, on the other hand, is entering critical sectors like agriculture and health⁶, and with this the future workforce will be engaged in jobs that require radically changed skillsets than are deployed today⁷. Education today, therefore, needs suitable tweaking to aid future workforce in securing jobs.

Having established that education is important to unlock ones' aspirations and its accessibility is to be extended to one and all, the next big question is affordability. 31% of the youngsters feel the need for more affordable education systems without which the aspirations will perish and with it the untapped potential. More of welfare educational institutes need to be encouraged that provide quality education at affordable fees. A working paper by Pawan Agarwal⁸, deep dives into the realities of affordability of higher education in the country and the need for change.

While including liberal arts in the curriculum and a scope of bundling diverse subjects into one stream have been spoken in the earlier segment of the report, mode of imparting education in regional language has been the current narrative in the country. Especially in Jharkhand and Odisha, where majority of the population belong to tribal communities, regional languages carry much of the culture and with culture, the identity of native communities. Imparting education in the regional language then serves dual purpose: Enabling easier and stronger foundational learnings and conserving culture.

Having explored the aspirations and the enablers to such aspirations, it was time to understand what and how the youth plan to bring change.

When asked how their voice can reach the decision makers...

S	SDG:		N.
Active engagement with community	5	7.0	%
My continued participation in existing forums (like Gram Sabl	ha) 2	1.0	%
By being part of focussed discussions on policies	1	1.0	%
The correct understanding of operating social media	1	1.0	%
Source	e: Live polling a	t Dhwa	ani 2019

57% of the youngsters believe in the power of communities in bringing transformation. With increased awareness on Panchayati Raj System, communities are persevering to get their voice reach the decision makers through these channels. In rural India, parents have taken the onus of monitoring the workings of the school and making sure that quality education is being imparted to their children by being active members of the School Management Committee.

The Floating School in Manipur⁹ and the Parijat Academy¹⁰ in Assam would not have been successful institutes without the support of communities. It was the community realising the need for education through constant mobilizing that both institutes are now imparting affordable or even free education to children in the remote corners of North East India.

While there is a resounding voice for change, agency in some cases is lacking and it is platforms like *Dhwani* that endeavour to provide agency to these voices with the hope that it will reach decision makers and ultimately result in policy articulation.



9. Read more about Floating School at: <u>http://e-pao.net/epPageExtractor.asp?src=education.</u> School on a Phum Innovative Learning Place By Ingudam Yaipharemba.html.

10. Read more about Parijat Academy at: https://www.parijatacademy.org.in/

SDG: 💴	ę" 📶 🖲
Enhance the knowledge base of my community	37.0 %
Create responsible leaders in the society	36.0 %
Make a more inclusive society	21.0 %
Boost the economy	6.0 %

Source: Live polling at Dhwani 2019

1.000

Having expressed their aspirations and explored modes of achieving them, it was time to understand what transformation the youngsters will bring, once they achieve their aspirations. This is how the cohort responded:

- I will become a civil servant. I believe only a civil servant has the authority and power to bring about change in the community
- I will become that mother who guides and teaches her children to study and become able citizens of the country
- I will work towards finding solutions to overcoming language barriers
- I will become the Education Minister, make strict rules and ensure they are implemented. Teachers will be selected on their merit and the dedication to teach
- I will become a community mobiliser and persuade the community to check if the village schools are running properly
- I will put out a mandate where all government school teachers are required to send their children necessarily to government schools. This will create a sense of ownership and belonging amongst the teachers

37% of the youth expressed the desire to come back to their communities and boost education. More and more youngsters wish to bring positive changes in their communities and co-create an ideal society that they dream of through vast knowledge base, capable leaders and a more inclusive society.

With digitalization and technology at its peak and with India entering a period of demographic dividend with working population mainly consisting of youth, a phase of massive strides and paradigms shifts is envisioned. These youngsters, unshakeable in their determination, will achieve what they have set themselves to achieve.

As a community, are we enabling them in their aspirations?

_Vision behind Dhwani



The young and the restless will lead the charge towards the India of tomorrow.

There is a fervour in the country right now which signifies that youngsters have a huge role to play. Fact is that they always had a role to play but increasingly the need is felt now for multiple reasons. First is the pace at which the world is changing especially with the advent of technology both in positive and negative ways. Second, we believe there is a lot of empathy locked in this generation and these are the forces that drive business. Tata Steel Foundation recognises that youngsters have a much larger role to play as change agents going forward and so our programs and policies have started encouraging younger, unfettered thinking.

Concepts like demographic dividend are in vogue now. India's young population is in stark contrast to Japan's ageing population and for these reasons, there is a growing emphasis on youngsters' involvement in policy articulation and politics in the country. We firmly believe that the kind of stories and the voices of change we found at *Dhwani* really deserve to be heard in places where it matters. These are energetic youngsters with powerful dreams and as we deal with many of them as part of interventions we strongly feel that we need to be there when they need us.

Our challenge is to take these voices to forums where these could be heard and where people can be inspired from these stories. These are the voices which are instrumental in articulating policy and we believe that meaningful change can be brought about only when our youth become equal stakeholders in the development roadmap.

Dhwani is one such initiative to offer youngsters a platform to voice their opinions and thoughts, and through this report we attempt to take their voices forward and highlight their aspirations.

Sourav Roy Chief, Corporate Social Responsibility, Tata Steel

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Tata Steel Foundation Youth Initiatives



HEALTH

Project RISHTA

RISHTA programme (Regional Initiative for Safe Sexual Health by Today's Adolescents), launched in 2004, creates awareness on reproductive and sexual health, nutrition, consequences of early marriage, substance abuse and family planning; facilitates linkage with health services and Government Programmes and imparts life skills training amongst youth to pave way for their overall holistic development. The programme engages with **20,000 youngsters** annually.



Maternal and Neonatal Survival Initiative (MANSI)

MANSI, launched in 2009 focuses on improving the healthcare delivery skills of Sahiyyas and ASHAs in the Home Based Newborn Care system and providing handholding support on ground. The project works with pregnant women, mothers and children to address infant and maternal mortality and is supported by partnerships with government and national and international NGOs. The programme reaches close to one lakh young mothers and also empowers and trains **2400 Sahiyyas** across 12 blocks in Jharkhand and Odisha.

As per the last Vital Rate Survey (2015/16) conducted at a census level, the reduction in Neonatal Mortality Rate NMR) and Infant Mortality (IMR) was by 61% and 63% respectively in the Seraikela block of Seraikela Kharsawan District, Jharkhand.



EDUCATION

Scholarship Support

Tata Steel Foundation enables meritorious but financially disadvantaged Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students to complete their studies through its scholarship programmes.

Jyoti Fellowship extends financial aid to deserving school and college students (pursuing Intermediate, Graduation, Post-Graduation and various professional courses). This scholarship is extended to close to **300 youngsters** from Jharkhand and Odisha annually.

Going a step further, **Tata Steel Scholars Programme** offers mentoring support along with financial assistance to underprivileged Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students who make it some of the country's top-notch institutes like IIT, NIT, TISS, XIMB, etc. Tata Steel Scholars Programme has benefitted **159 students** so far.

Residential Bridge Schools - Masti Ki Pathshala

Masti Ki Pathshala – Towards a Child-Labour-Free Jamshedpur is both an idea and a program. Running across five centres in Jamshedpur in collaboration with several companies and schools, in the last two years, these residential centres have reached out to over 450 children living in difficult circumstances, engaged in the worst forms of child labour including daily wage labour, brick-making, rag-picking, slag- picking, begging, etc. **18 youth teachers** across these five centres continually support the education of these children



Tata Steel Foundation Youth Initiatives



TRIBAL IDENTITY

Samvaad

Tata Steel Foundation launched *Samvaad* – an annual tribal conclave in 2014 with the objective of bringing forth the culture, heritage and development perspectives of indigenous communities from across the world. This platform engages with tribal communities across all ages and in the last five years close to **5000 youngsters** have been engaged through Samvaad as well as its ancillary forums including regional *Samvaad*, paper presentations, fellowship, handicrafts, music collaboration, healers, cuisines, etc.



Tribal Leadership Program

A specially tailored residential programme for youth under tribal identity is the Tribal Leadership Programme, launched in 2017, which is aimed at identifying and fostering leaders from all corners of tribal India. The programme brings together these youngsters on a one-of-its-kind platform to learn, co-learn and share stories of their successes, failures and inspiration, while connecting with diverse but similarly motivated peers. It also provides an opportunity to connect with experts and potential mentors to enable rich learning on leadership for social change. Over the last three editions, the programme has seen **279 youngsters** from across 22 states and representing more than 90 tribes of India.

Tribal language Training Centre

With the objective of re-acquainting tribal youth with their own heritage by encouraging preservation and promotion of tribal languages, 297 centres have been set up by Tata Steel Foundation across Jharkhand and Odisha imparting training in six tribal languages and benefitting close to 19,000 students annually. **300 youth teachers** across 297 centres are engaged in proving language training to these students.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Project Samriddhi

Addressing the issues of poverty, unemployment and mass migration among the socially and economically underprivileged communities especially in naxal infested areas, Tata Steel Foundation, through Project *Samriddhi*, imparts nursing training to young girls from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes with an aim to provide employability skills. **150 girls** are currently pursuing GNM, B.Sc and Paramedical courses in the nursing college.

Sabal Center for Abilities

Sabal Centre for Abilities in Jharkhand has been set up by Tata Steel Foundation in partnership with Enable India to empower Persons with Disabilities through skilling programmes enabling gainful employment as well as sensitizing communities to enable them to lead productive and dignified lives. This programme has reached the lives of **200 youngsters**.

Ek Pahal

Ek Pahal is a skilling initiative to constructively engage prison inmates by imparting inhouse trainings including soft skills, computer literacy, baking, mushroom cultivation, etc. to enable them secure gainful employment, both within as well as outside the jail. Meaningful engagement with **300 youngsters** is made through this initiative.

Tata Steel Foundation Youth Initiatives

Technical Skills

Tata Steel Foundation, with Nettur Technical Training Foundation as training partner, runs three institutes across Jharkhand and Odisha - Tata Steel Technical Institute, Burmamines, Industrial Training Institute, Tamar and Industrial Training Institute Jagannathpur, imparting technical training in various fields including Mechatronics and Electrical and Electronics and trades like Electrician, Fitter, Turner, Welder and Mason, etc. Close to **700 students** across the three institutes are part of the training programme.



EMPOWERMENT

Sports

Tata Steel Foundation empowers youth through training and providing access to good sports facilities and nurturing sporting talent with career potential. **Close 12,000 players** are engaged through football tournaments, **1500 players** through tribal sports like Kati, Sekkor etc. Close to **90 coaches** are provided certificate programme trainings to promote grassroots sports.

Outdoor Leadership Camps and Self-reflection camps

To mobilise change agents and inculcate leadership skills, Tata Steel Foundation organises outdoor leadership camps in Tumung and adventure expeditions to the Himalayas. Close to **400 youngsters** annually are reached through these camps.

Self-reflection camps are organised across Jharkhand and Odisha for youngsters to offer them and enabling environment for positive change. Close to **800 youngsters** are engaged in these camps.



Self Help Groups

Self-help groups are mainly formed to eradicate exploitation, generate confidence for the economic independence of rural people, particularly among women who are mostly imperceptible in society. **6000 women** are meaningfully engaged across 885 self-help groups supported by the Company.



English & IT Learning Centre

Proficiency in English and computer literacy is a prerequisite to improving employability. To meet this end, four training centres are run in Odisha in partnership with NIIT Foundation imparting training to close to **700 youngsters.**



Acknowledgements

The *Dhwani* Report 2019 is the first such report prepared by Tata Steel Foundation, and is an attempt to capture the voice of youth in present day Jharkhand and Odisha.

Our warmest appreciation to the 400 youngsters who attended Dhwani – A youth conclave – organised by Tata Steel Foundation at Jamshedpur on August 12-13, 2019. Without the inspiring stories of change that each of them stand by and their vibrant response captured during live polling, the report would not have been as rooted as it stands today.

Catch a glimpse of *Dhwani* 2019 at : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uljdLN0G2DE

