

# Where the Mind is **without Fear**

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A publication by Tata Steel Foundation





# The Meaning

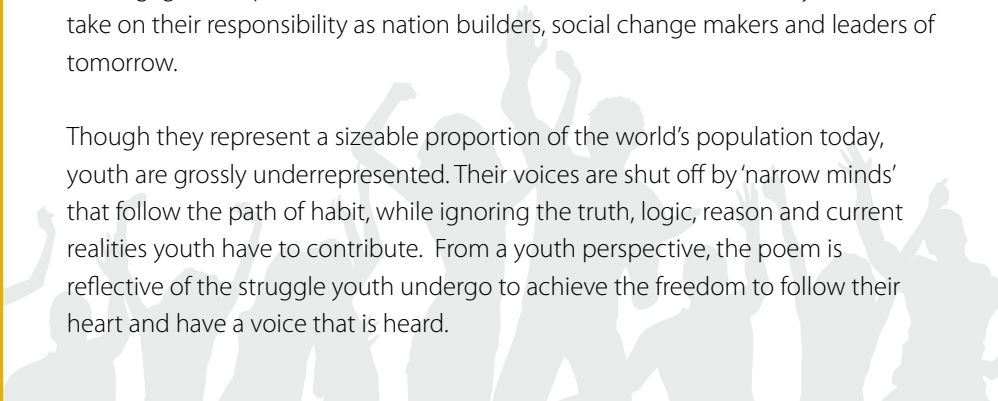
Gurudev Rabindranath's poem is written in the form of a metaphor or conversation with God on an ideal nation. *Chitto jetha bhoysunyo* is Poem 35 from his acclaimed book of poems, *Gitanjali*. The English translation, "Where the mind is without fear" was published in 1912.

Such is the essence of the poem that it resonates with every reader. It is relevant in different eras, to different generations and social classes, with meaning being drawn with every reading. It holds as true today as it was when it was penned in the pre-independence era, a time when India was under British rule.

## **The Dhvani connect**

Much like Gurudev attempted to rouse Indians to achieve a heaven of freedom, the engagement process that culminates in Dhvani strives to arouse youth to take on their responsibility as nation builders, social change makers and leaders of tomorrow.

Though they represent a sizeable proportion of the world's population today, youth are grossly underrepresented. Their voices are shut off by 'narrow minds' that follow the path of habit, while ignoring the truth, logic, reason and current realities youth have to contribute. From a youth perspective, the poem is reflective of the struggle youth undergo to achieve the freedom to follow their heart and have a voice that is heard.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

India is one of the youngest nations in the world. Youth, people in the age group of **15-29** years, constitute **27.5%** of India's population and contribute about **34%** of its Gross National Income (GNI).





India has affirmed the role of youth in its economic development and social change in its National Youth Policy. The size as well as ability of youth to contribute to India's GNI underscores the need for specific actions to address their priorities, to value their voice and accord attention to their priorities. Yet youth are rarely given proportionate credence in the national narrative nor do issues that are a priority for them get inadequate attention.

Tata Steel Foundation instituted Dhwani, a platform for youth engagement in 2017. Each edition of the two-day conclave is the culmination of an over six-month

process of youth engagement every year across the states of Jharkhand and Odisha. It gives youth a voice, highlights their priorities and attempts to have their voices heard. At the same time, it motivates them to become change makers and empowers them to achieve their potential.

The current edition of Dhwani focused on the theme "Youth Engagement For Global Action" is in consonance with the theme for International Youth Day 2020. Held virtually, to adhere to the precautions necessary for COVID-19, the conclave was structured into four sessions; one each on the four priority areas identified by youth during a survey and focused group discussions.

### Four Priority Areas

- Quality education and role of youth
- Youth as catalyst for economic development
- Youth engagement for climate action
- Advancing youth representation in key decision making processes



For each priority area, youth highlighted the challenges they faced, along with possible solutions.

**"We are inspired by the stories of various people at Dhwani. They show us the way."**

*- Focussed Group Discussion (FGD) Participant*

### **Quality education and role of youth**

The key challenges that emerged from the session on Quality Education were the lack of quality teachers in rural schools, excessive overload of additional work on them, which keeps them away from school, poor quality of infrastructure and overcrowding in classes that impedes delivery of quality education. Online classes were seen as a means to improve access to quality education.

### **Youth as catalyst for economic development**

A shrinking job market and lack of employment opportunities in the government or organised sector is a grave concern cited by youth who also pointed to the loss of years they suffer in pursuing these coveted jobs at the behest of their families. The participants clearly appreciate the need to become entrepreneurs with the support of local panchayats, who they believe should use skilled resources available locally to implement local development projects.

**"We need education and livelihoods coupled with awareness on various schemes and policies of the government through the panchayats and district administration."**

**"Our elders do not allow us to voice our opinion during any meeting or discussion on local development because they say we are too young to understand. For a girl it is impossible to voice an opinion." FGD Participant**





## Youth engagement for climate action

Well-informed on the factors and adverse impacts of Climate Change, youth emphasised on the need to continuously drive awareness and for individuals to assume responsibility in bringing about change. Almost all participants agreed that they feel the impact of Climate Change in their regions.

**"Climate Change affects our crops, soil, and health. Reduction in the duration of rainfall during monsoon has led to a decline in productivity in rain-fed areas."**

*- FGD participant*

## Advancing youth representation in key decision-making processes

Keen to make a difference in shaping the policies of our country, the participants were apprised of the various avenues available to them to take forward their desire to contribute to our evolving democracy. The abject lack of youth participation and the proclivity of elders to keep youth out of decision-making was highlighted by them. Most expressed their desire to find a way to represent their voice in the decision-making process.

**"At Dhwani we are able to share our inner thoughts, which we are unable to share on any other platform or with others."**

*- Bhumika, Noamundi*







# Dhwani

## AN OVERVIEW

Dhwani draws youth into free-flowing conversations on issues that are a priority for them with the objective of enabling them to explore and discover their potential, and then take responsibility to effect solutions in unique, individual ways.

Instituted in 2017, this youth conclave is organised annually by Tata Steel Foundation where youth network, voice their aspirations, share their stories, listen to that of other young change makers and draw from these conversations the capability as well as confidence to drive change in their communities.

Dhwani is based on the belief that meaningful change is achieved only when our young minds become stakeholders in development, take responsibility to lead change and ensure that the voices of youth become an integral part of policy making in our country.

**The conclave is designed to serve a four-fold purpose.**



**First,** Dhwani connects youth with each other so that they have the opportunity for peer-to-peer learning through stories of change makers and can tap into the vast pool of wisdom and knowledge available within participants.



**Second,** it connects them to inspiring individuals who have journeyed some distance on a similar course, giving them a possible roadmap to plan their own journeys.



**Third,** it helps them identify areas where they can effect change through individual actions, armed with the belief that no individual action is too small.



**Lastly,** it is a platform to communicate their passion for social change and reach their stories of personal determination to a wider audience, eventually serving as inputs in policy articulation.

# Dhwani

## THE PROCESS

The theme for Dhwani is drawn from that determined each year by the United Nations for International Youth Day (IYD). The focus this year is on “YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR GLOBAL ACTION”.

**Approach:** As a precursor to Dhwani, discussions on the current year's IYD theme were held with youth in eight locations across Jharkhand and Odisha - Gopalpur, Jamadoba, Jamadoba-Sijua, Joda, Kalinganagar, Noamundi, Sukinda and West Bokaro - to understand and develop a universe of issues that are a priority for them. All issues raised by them were mapped to identify the top four high priority areas, which then comprised individual sessions at the youth conclave. Within these priority areas their underlying concerns were also identified to structure the conversations more meaningfully.

**Dipstick Survey:** A sample size of 226 youth, including those who participated in earlier editions of Dhwani and young opinion leaders in Jharkhand and Odisha, was covered by a dipstick survey to understand their thoughts on issues that need immediate solutions. A priority mapping of the views of the youth was also plotted against global issues highlighted by the UN to validate resonance with global issues.

**Manthan Yatra:** Based on the field discussions and issues raised, a questionnaire was designed for Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs) to understand the perspective of youth on these priority areas.

Members of the Tata Steel Foundation undertook a “Manthan Yatra” across all its ten locations to meet youth enrolled under the Rishta programme as well as to touch as many others as possible through the FDGs.

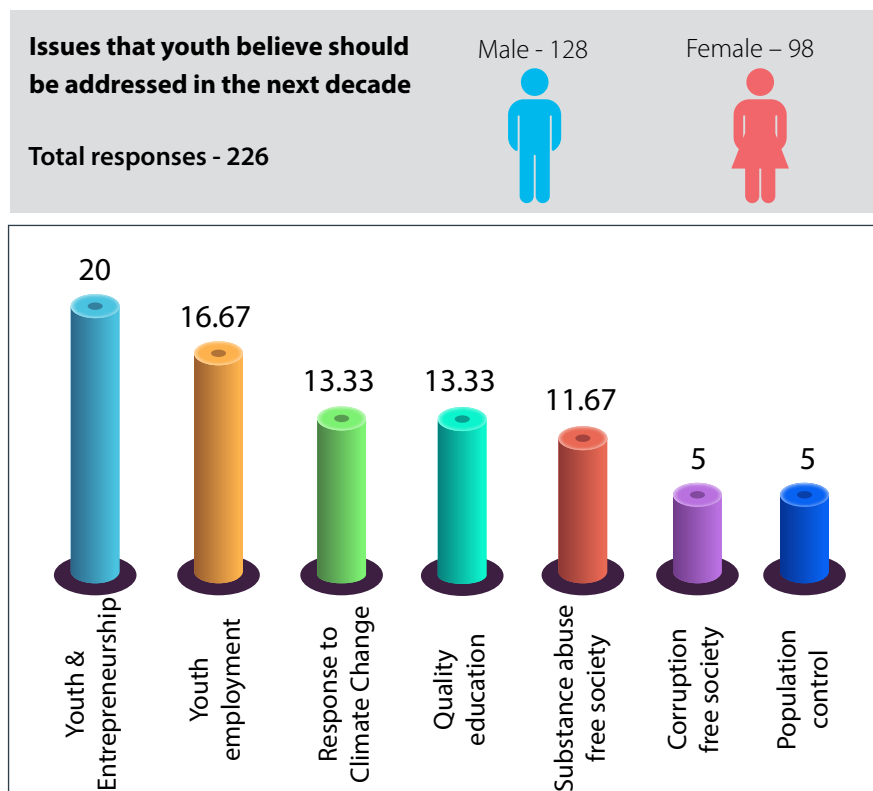


## Manthan Yatra

| Location         | Number of Participants | Number of Meetings |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Odisha</b>    |                        |                    |
| Gopalpur         | 20                     | 1                  |
| Kalinganagar     | 63                     | 2                  |
| Noamundi         | 80                     | 1                  |
| Sukinda          | 32                     | 1                  |
| <b>Jharkhand</b> |                        |                    |
| Jamadoba         | 40                     | 2                  |
| Jamadoba-Sijua   | 35                     | 2                  |
| Joda             | 80                     | 1                  |
| West Bokaro      | 62                     | 2                  |
| Total            | 412                    | 12                 |

Much like the mythological churning of the ocean to extract nectar, this Manthan Yatra, too, was intended to engage youth in deep, searching conversations, to churn out issues that affect them both at functional and subliminal levels.

**Priority Mapping:** From the issues raised during the FGDs and Survey, the team narrowed down issues raised via a priority map to arrive at the top four issues for youth across all ten locations of TSF. A dipstick survey and FGDs were inputs used for a Priority Map to finalise the top-four topics/priority areas. The results were validated against priority areas identified by FGD respondents and were found to be the same, ensuring that the perspective of the youth in the identified priority areas were also captured.



### Priority Issues for 2020

- Quality education and role of youth
- Youth as catalyst for economic development
- Youth engagement for climate action
- Advancing youth representation in key decision-making processes

Other issues highlighted by youth as global concerns were health, drinking water, rising population, global warming, deforestation, unemployment, lack of cleanliness and water pollution.



# Dhwani THE CONCLAVE

Youth across Jharkhand and Odisha with whom TSF engages through the year via flagship programmes, including its Regional Initiative for Safe Sexual Health by Today's Adolescents (RISHTA) project, Masti Ki Pathshala, Thousand Schools Programme, Skilling Institutes, Tribal Language Classes, Sabal, Empowerment and Tata Steel Scholars among others, were invited to participate in the two-day Conclave.

**E**ach session of the Conclave gave participants from diverse locations the opportunity to share their viewpoint on the topic, gain greater understanding on the scope and challenges in each area as well as explore routes available to them to become change makers, influencers or entrepreneurs. Also, they were encouraged to connect with each other such that the bonds created, relationships forged and knowledge gained can be leveraged by them for action in each of these areas.

**Dhwani 2021:** On January 11 and 12, 2021, a total of 900 youth and coordinators connected for a virtual conclave, mindful of the restrictions and norms to be followed for COVID-19. It had four thematic sessions, structured and moderated by the TSF team, to discuss each of the four issues prioritised by the youngsters.



The podcast-style discussion hosted by youth and for youth, echoed commentaries and conversations around the world that recognise the importance of youth participation in political, economic and social processes, locally and globally.

Dhwani also brought to light the most outstanding examples of youth engagement during the year in the four priority areas. At the start of the Conclave, youth who have achieved impactful change in their communities were felicitated. Their journey is also highlighted in this publication

(Where the Mind is Without Fear) so as to amplify their ideas, aspirations, perspectives and change initiatives to a wider audience.

**Poll:** During the Conclave, the opinion of youth on a range of subjects was sought and captured via polls, the results of which are shared in the thematic sections of this publication.

**Challenges and Limitations:** Mindful of social distancing and safety requirements to prevent the spread of COVID-19, TSF had opted for a digital conclave rather than a physical one.

### **Fictional Interlude:**

Through the entire course of the Conclave, the story of 'Arohi' was narrated to highlight youth aspirations and the challenges they face in achieving them.





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# Dhwani

## CONCLAVE

a Steel Foundation



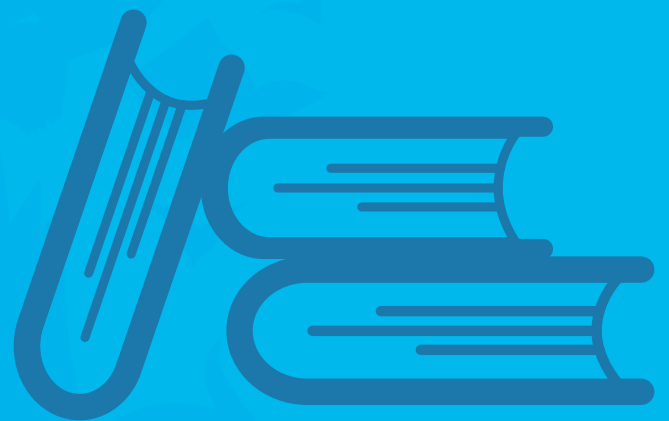
Madhu and Manas, two painters documented Dhwani in a rather unique way. They stood by and heard the stories, the voices of the youth, banter across locations, the experts and the elders as the sessions rolled on. Over eight hours, using pen and paper, Madhu and Manas worked in sync to sketch a composite picture of the two-day event on a single but vast canvas.

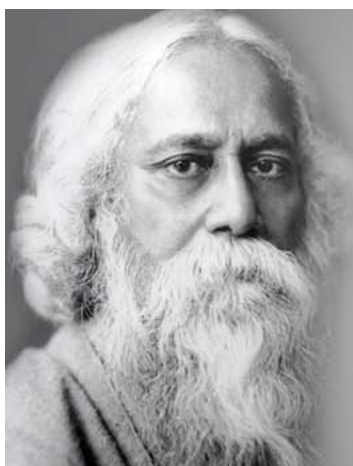


“Where the mind is without fear  
and the head is held high  
Where knowledge is free...”

# QUALITY **EDUCATION** AND ROLE OF YOUTH

The priority accorded by youth to quality education is extremely relevant. Gross inequalities in access to quality education and continued learning leads to inequalities in knowledge or know-how and has a lifelong impact on all quality of life outcomes.





## THE METAPHOR

The poet prays for a nation where people have an independent mind, one without the fear of oppression, where knowledge flows freely because it creates a sense of dignity.

In doing so Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore highlights an important aspect of freedom. He wishes for a nation where people have universal or free access to education and knowledge. He was of the opinion that making quality education accessible to the last person in society, irrespective of social or economic class, is like shaping and putting in place building blocks for the development of the entire nation.

## THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Disparities originating from wealth, sex biases, location, health, social class and cultural identity are factors that cause unequal access to basic education.

India has a total of 15 lakh schools (government and private) and 85 per cent of them are in rural areas. 11 lakh are government schools. The country made Education a Fundamental Right on April 1, 2010, through its Right to Education Act. However, insufficient and inadequate access to quality education persists, resulting in poor learning outcomes in India and children dropping out of school.

- 17.06% of children drop out of school in India at the Secondary level
- 2.97% of children in the primary level are out of school
- ~ 7 in 10 schools in India have at least one teacher for 30 students

(Source: NITI Aayog SDG India Index - Baseline Report 2018)

## IN JHARKHAND AND ODISHA

Children from Muslim, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities account for most of the out-of-school children in India at 67 per cent. In the states of Jharkhand and Odisha, where a higher proportion of the population is from Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe communities, this problem needs greater attention.

## QUALITY EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL AND VULNERABLE YOUTH

Limited access to resources, remoteness of their dwellings, social-norms, socio-cultural gender barriers and language are some of the demand-side barriers to quality education for tribal and vulnerable youth.

On the supply-side, paucity of schools, adverse student-teacher ratio, poor school infrastructure, poor learning environment, non-teaching duties for teachers are all barriers to delivery of quality education.

|                  | Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate at Elementary and Secondary level | % correct responses on Learning Outcomes for Class 5 students* | % of children in the age group of 6-13 who are out of school | Average Annual Dropout rate at secondary level |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Jharkhand</b> | 67.99                                                         | 60.33                                                          | 2.02                                                         | 24                                             |
| <b>Odisha</b>    | 82.24                                                         | 54.00                                                          | 6.1                                                          | 29.56                                          |

\*In Language, Mathematics and EVS

(Source: NITI Aayog SDG India Index - Baseline Report 2018)



# VIEWPOINT OF YOUTH AROUND EDUCATION

*"Education is nothing but the manifestation of inner perfection."*

- Swami Vivekananda

Emphatic in articulating their thoughts at the Conclave, youth across TSF locations voiced specific reasons for the poor quality of education in their regions. Embedded in these cause were solutions to these problems.

## **Dereliction of duty by**

**teachers:** Though many teachers are extremely dedicated, youth felt a significant number ought to have greater sincerity towards their core duty. Teachers often prefer to augment

their income via tuitions, opting to neglect their classes at school. A majority of rural students cannot afford to pay both school and tuition fees, dropping out of school once at the secondary level because of

the inability to cope without lessons being taught. Instead of rote learning or traditional methods, improved teaching methodologies should also be used to make students self motivated learners, the youth insisted.



2021 01

Online classes have given students access to better quality of teachers.

**Lack of Infrastructure:** Physical classes have as many as 70 students with five children to a single bench. On a day when all the students in a class attend school, there was no space to seat them! Lack of Science laboratories makes it difficult for students in schools to understand applications or to effectively use them to develop solutions for everyday challenges.

**Reduce workload on teachers:** The youth emphatically demanded that assignments such as election work or census collection, which force teachers to spend days on end away from school and reduce their teaching hours, be stopped.

**Improper selection of teachers:** Students also urged authorities to strengthen selection committees for teachers to ensure that only teachers who are adequately trained for their specific grades are recruited.

**Role of youth:** In identifying their role in improving the quality of education the young participants felt they can improve awareness of parents on the importance of education and provide free education when possible. At the same time they highlighted the central role of school management committees in monitoring the performance of teachers and improving the quality of education.



## CONCLAVE POLL

**Question: What form of education would you prefer?**

**Responses: 427**

**Digital: 191 (45%)**

**Physical: 236 (55%)**



# HARBINGERS OF CHANGE



## **Pratibha Kumari**

### **A peer educator par excellence**

Pratibha Kumari comes from a village where girls are not allowed to step out even to attend school or college. Undeterred she completed her schooling. She would often see youngsters attending sessions by TSF, and was drawn to them. Her spunk and determination to study prompted TSF to encourage her to become a peer educator. Initially, it was a struggle for Pratibha to get people to attend the meetings she organised. Soon these young girls formed a group and she became a peer educator.

Now the 25-year-old from West Bokaro is a master trainer at the Youth Resource Centre. When the COVID-19 pandemic overwhelmed the world, Pratibha went door-to-door visiting ~300 families to create awareness on safety precautions against the virus. She also felt an acute shortage of masks and learnt to make masks at home. These were distributed amongst the needy free of cost. To ensure a steady supply of masks in the village, Pratibha has now trained people in her neighbourhood in making masks.



## **Lalsa Kumari**

### **Hurdling against language**

From a tribal belt, 24 year-old Lalsa is well-aware of the semantic barriers faced by Ho-speaking students in school that eventually prevents them from being able to keep pace with the age-appropriate curriculum in school. An active field mobiliser with the ASPIRE team in Noamundi, Lalsa uses the Teaching Learning Module to provide free coaching classes to students and help them keep pace with their school syllabus. She has coached 40 such students so far.



# SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

## DON'T LET LIFE CHANGE YOUR GOALS

**T**he development potential of Eastern India is immense, making it imperative for the youth of Eastern India to develop the knowledge and know-

how to use the resources that exist here. Youth have many productive years ahead of them and we as an organisation constantly strive to connect with them to ensure that they stay focused and committed to improving the future.

Even as each one of them chart out their individual paths, we must not only prepare them to accept any failure but also to rise and fly again. I firmly believe that those who can handle failure are the ones who are eventually the most successful. Failure should be accepted with the same spirit as we embrace success, this

would make us stronger and give us the courage to keep moving forward. Remember, like in a boxing match the fight is not over till the match is done, one must labour on.

The poem, "where the mind is without fear", reminds us that we will encounter both encouragement and discouragement when we strive for perfection, perhaps

because those close to us themselves fear seeing our disappointment. But as youth your mind must be "without fear", and you must tap into the wide range of opportunities available, especially to become entrepreneurs. Let me assure our youth that Tata Steel is ever willing to work with you in our communities to bring about change.

Dhwani is a platform is for us to meet youth, listen to them and to be informed on how we can work with you. I am glad that this strong platform has been created to benefit society and our communities.

Personally, when I joined Tata Steel I never imagined that I would be the Managing Director of this great organisation. But I joined what I believed was an institution that contributes to the country. In the last 10 years I have met a large number of people from the community, we have done a lot of work but Tata Steel and I would like to continue to do much more, especially with and through our youth.

**- T V Narendran**

**CEO & Managing Director, Tata Steel**

*(Excerpted from Mr Narendran's address at Dhwani)*



# YOUTH VOICES



It is really very important to educate women. If they are left uneducated then a large part of the nation will not be contributing towards its growth, which is a major problem. Therefore, educating women will promote the development of a country. Education is a basic right for everyone and when we say everyone we should not forget that women are also a part of this lot. All the girls and women have their basic right of education. Education is not a privilege but a fundamental right.

- *Saloni Gupta, West Bokaro*

The root causes for the poor delivery of quality education and poor outcomes are the multiple demands placed on teachers, skewed student-teacher ratio, improper selection of teachers, disproportionate emphasis on theory and rote learning.

- *Anjali, St Xavier's College, Ranchi*

Education is the biggest and most important aspect in life after food & clothing. But we have changed the meaning of education. Today education is equated to a degree. But if we don't change this concept then we will be left with people with degrees but not 'gyan' or knowledge in our pursuit of marks.

- *Seema Yadav, +2 Student, West Bokaro*

Our nation can never progress until both the genders are provided with adequate education and opportunities. When we educate a girl, we are not just educating her, but also the children that she will be a mother to, who in turn will educate their families.

- *Mona Behra, Kalinganagar*

Most students tend to drop out of the education system after high school. The Digital India platform should be used to improve the quality of education.

- *FGD participant*





# EXPERT OPINION

Youth were introduced to two experts who have charted unique journeys in the field of education.

## Connecting students to their roots:

An active social worker and himself a member of a tribal community, Ramo Soren from Kharsawan District runs 30 language centers that teach tribal youth Olchiki, the Santhali Language. The centres, established with the help of Tata Steel Foundation, have 50 students who are taught free of cost. Now, Ramo has

also started a residential school where 100 students receive free education.

## A passion for learning:

Swatantra Talim was born in 2013 due to the efforts of Rahul and Ridhi Aggarwal. The name literally means giving children the independence to choose who, what and when they want to study so that they learn

from their experiences. It follows the Gandhian philosophy of Education, that a child's head, heart and hand must be in sync: Head – learning to know; Hand – learning to earn a livelihood; and Heart – learning to be. Swatantra Talim contextualises education with respect to a village and village life.



Ramo Soren

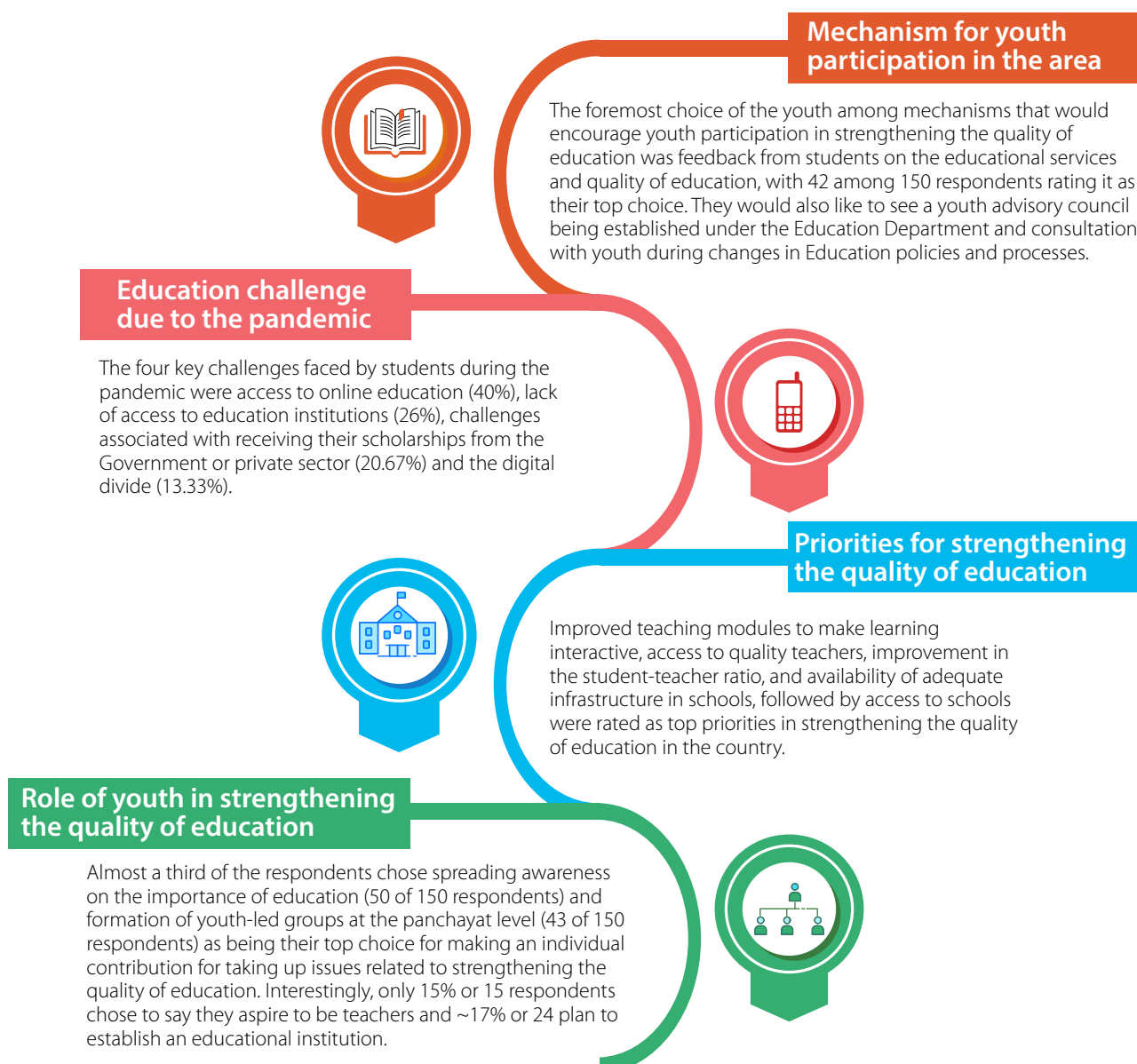


Ridhi Aggarwal

# OUTCOME OF FOCUSSED GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The Focussed Group Discussions on Quality Education addressed five key themes.

The most immediate was the challenge faced by students during the pandemic, while chronic issues highlighted were the need to strengthen the quality of education, youth participation in strengthening the quality of education and the preferred choice of youth in contributing to better quality of education.





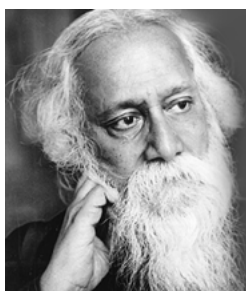
“Where the world has not  
been broken up into fragments  
by narrow domestic walls;  
where words come out from  
the depths of truth;”

# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR **CLIMATE ACTION**

Climate Change needs the world to come to grips with the “inconvenient truth” of the impact of human actions on future livelihoods, especially those dependent on climatic conditions such as agriculture. Youth witness the changes in their local areas and are, therefore, acutely aware of the impact Climate Change can have on their future food security, life and livelihoods.







## THE METAPHOR

The poet is opposed to any kind of division based on exclusivity, nationalities, caste, creed, region or religion but believes in a world where people and nations believe in the truth that has at its core the greater good of all.

## THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

India has great geographic diversity, with a variety of climate regimes and regional and local weather conditions.

In 2020, the country experienced erratic rainfall in March, inordinately high rainfall in 222 districts, locust attacks across North India and then no rainfall in 265 districts. All of these point to the country's vulnerability to climate-induced risks. Increase in the area under irrigation notwithstanding, over half of India's total cropped area and 40 per cent of all crop production is still rain-fed and, therefore, most vulnerable to the vagaries of nature.

(Source: [www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/cold-waves-to-locust-attack-how-climate-crisis-impacted-india-in-2020-74690](http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/cold-waves-to-locust-attack-how-climate-crisis-impacted-india-in-2020-74690))

**"The reason why we saw a rise in onion prices last year is Climate Change when the unseasonal rains damaged our onion crop. As a result, we have to import onions from other countries."**

*- Anshu Singh, West Bokaro*

## JHARKHAND AND ODISHA

Unseasonal and heavy rains prior to summer led to cooler than normal temperatures through the season in North, Central and East India. As the buildup of high temperatures in Central India is critical to the onset of Monsoons, rains were delayed during the year.

**"Last year the rains came two months later than they usually do."**

*- FGD participant*

The overall decrease of seasonal monsoon rainfall during the last six to seven decades has led to an increased propensity for droughts over India. In particular, areas over Central India, southwest coast, southern peninsula and north-eastern India have experienced more than two droughts per decade, on average, during this period.

(Source: *Assessment of Climate Change over the Indian region: A report of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Government of India*, <https://www.moes.gov.in/programmes/climate-change-science>)



- *Swami Vivekananda*

- FDG Participant, Kalinganagar

Well-informed on Climate Change and its causes factors, youth representatives at Dhwani were on point and vocal on the need to curb Climate Change, factors contributing to it and attributing responsibility for it to human actions, besides the role youth can play in mitigating it.









# HARBINGERS OF CHANGE



## **Bhimsingh Chatomba** **Protector of forests**

Bhimsingh Chatomba and his team from *Van Suraksha Vikas Samiti* have been deeply concerned with the decreasing forest cover around them and have taken it upon themselves to conserve their forests and conduct plantation drives. A 20-year-old peer educator and also a regular participant at Gram Sabhas in the Noamundi area, Bhimsingh has created a committee consisting of members from six neighbouring villages. He himself is a senior member of this committee and actively engages in spreading awareness on the importance of trees and forest cover.

## **Mukesh Kumar Ravidas**

### **Every action counts**

Troubled by the disease and damage caused every Monsoon as the local river in West Bokaro overflowed, Mukesh took it upon himself to form a youth group that voluntarily undertakes a two-week cleanliness drive once every six months in five neighbouring villages. These young people clean community places, including areas around the water pump, common bathing areas and also ensure garbage is disposed off hygienically.

Under Mukesh's guidance another group conducts awareness drives on use of single-use plastic, garbage disposal and the importance of cleanliness. He believes that individual action by everyone towards conserving the environment can create a great impact.



# SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

## ADOPT A NATION-BUILDING MINDSET

I find great joy in interacting with the youth not only because they keep me mentally young but also it is youth that will take this nation forward, hence it is exciting to understand their viewpoints.

The potential of youth to impact change in all the four aspects highlighted by them in the FGDs is

very interesting. I would especially like to congratulate the change makers felicitated this year at Dhvani and am glad that they did not think that their effort would be too small.

I would like the voices of Dhvani not only to reach us at Tata Steel Foundation but also across the country to our policy makers because the potential of youth is immense, especially in areas such as Climate Change where they can add greater purpose and energy to our efforts.

When you see any change in your community, you should not remain mute witnesses but must always think about how the process or project may work for the greater benefit of all. Development, growth and Climate must move forward together and are not mutually exclusive. We

must work together to influence opinion within our communities on sustainable development through dialogue.

Today, any development project mandates community participation and stakeholder consultation, gram sabhas or public hearing. This is your opportunity to influence the impact on Climate Change. You do not have to be a bureaucrat or a policy maker to include such decisions. You must adopt a nation-building mindset to bring about positive change.

You are responsible for bringing about both development in your community and for protecting the environment hence improving your awareness on progress in other countries and other states is very important.

A platform such as Dhawani gives youth the opportunity to learn from peers and from experts in various fields. Even when not directly engaged in an endeavour, youth must influence Climate Change decisions by posting their opinion when consultations by various Climate forums, the Prime Minister's office or state governments are invited via online processes.

**- Chanakya Chaudhary**  
*Vice President, Corporate Services,  
Tata Steel*

*(Excerpted from Mr Chaudhary's address at Dhvani)*





# YOUTH VOICES



"Climate Change has affected our lives. With changing weather conditions, winter and summer both are becoming harsh and uneven. This has impacted our agriculture yield. Climate Change also leads to breathing problems. We need to stop cutting trees. The impact of climate change on humans is far reaching, including causing adverse health reactions, environmental impacts, displacement and migration. Climate Change poses a wide range of risks to our health. If the Climate Change continues these risks will increase in the decades to come to potentially critical levels."

- Seema Kumari Yadav, group leader,  
West Bokaro

"If we plant the sapling of a tree, not everyday, not every week but only once a month and look after it like a family member then our Earth will soon become green. We must pledge today to 'Go Green'."

- Sanaat, Kalinganagar

"Often we are given a range of advice from experts or people in urban areas, but they are the very people who discard old wooden furniture for new pieces, which results in more trees being cut down."

- FGD participant

"Climate Change affects our crops, soil, and health. Reduction in rainfall duration during monsoon leads to a decline in productivity in rain-fed areas."

- FGD participant

"We should plant trees in any open space we can and should also control our population so that demands for habitation, food and industry can be reduced."

- FGD participant

"Most issues related to Climate Change and over consumption of resources such as water occur due to lack of awareness or those individuals are unconcerned about the impact of their actions."

- FGD participant

"Monsoons have shifted by almost two months and the ability of our land to produce plants and crops is reducing."

- FGD participant



# EXPERT OPINION

Ravi Choudhary and Anjali Dalmiya are working at the ground level in India's fight against Climate Change.

## From NCC Cadet to Climate

**Hero:** As an NCC Cadet Ravi Choudhary was inspired to contribute to national building. Along with a few of his fellow cadets he established Prayas Youth Foundation in 2010. After only one of 37 trees planted by them in the first year survived, they decided to use modern techniques such as the Japanese Miyaki method, agro-forestry as well as traditional methods for afforestation and water conservation in Aurangabad, an area which has only 3 per cent green cover.

Today, Prayas Youth Foundation has created the largest man-made forest in Maharashtra with 75,000 trees comprising 83 species and has planted a total of 1.5 lakhs trees.

## Awareness leads to action:

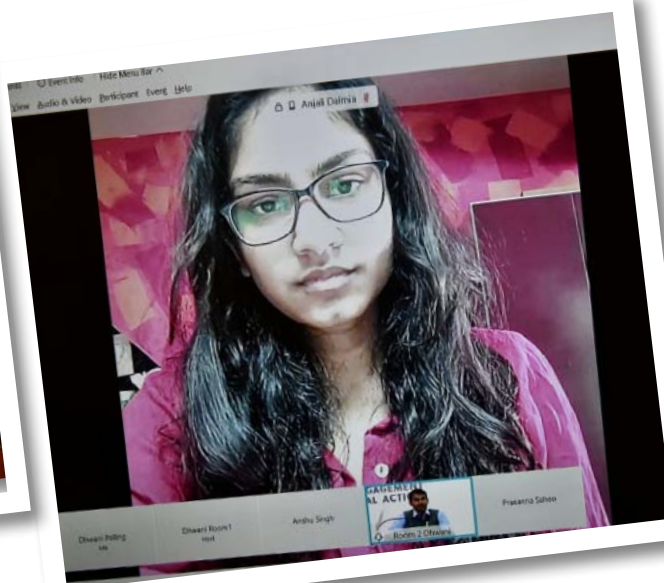
Climate Change is not limited to global warming alone. It includes all forms of pollution, including water or air pollution and extends to the manner in which people live on a day-to-day basis and the way they earn their livelihoods. Therefore, awareness at all levels is required to change

harmful practices Anjali Dalmia, a student of Ashoka University told the Dhvani audience.

She has adopted a three-pronged strategy to effect change: Education, Engagement with local governments and preservation of indigenous knowledge by teaching school children to love their environment, explain climate change and take this learning outside their classrooms for real action. Greater impact has been achieved through story-telling in local languages.



Ravi Choudhary



Anjali Dalmia

# OUTCOME OF FOCUSSED GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The Focussed Group Discussions on Youth Engagement for Climate Action addressed three themes apart from a detailed discussion to explore the understanding of Climate Change at a local level.



## Impact of Climate Change on the rural economy

An overwhelming large number at 79 per cent responded in the affirmative when asked if Climate Change had impacted the rural economy. Economic and ecological impacts such as adverse weather conditions leading to crop failure, loss of cattle, mites and the decreasing trend in the quantity and duration of the annual rainfall were all cited as obvious impacts of Climate Change.

## Priority Areas to combat Climate Change

Efficient management of water resources (23%), curbs on deforestation as well as waste management (both 20%) were high on the priority list of youth in combatting Climate Change. There were followed by reductions in Carbon emissions (~16%) and focus on renewable sources of energy (~15%).



## Youth Participation

Among mechanisms preferred for youth participation in a climate action regimes, the clear choices for the participants, with 25% each voting for them, were a VHSNC for working to address sanitation and cleanliness in their areas and self or collective action on afforestation. Organic farming (~19%), water conservation (14%) and being a part of a disaster management team (14%) were among other options preferred by the respondents.

## Key enablers in dealing with Climate Change

In the opinion of the participants, improved education and awareness on climate change mitigation is key to mitigating the impacts of Climate Change aside from creating institutions and developing policies and plans (19%) as well as early warning and response by authorities (19%).



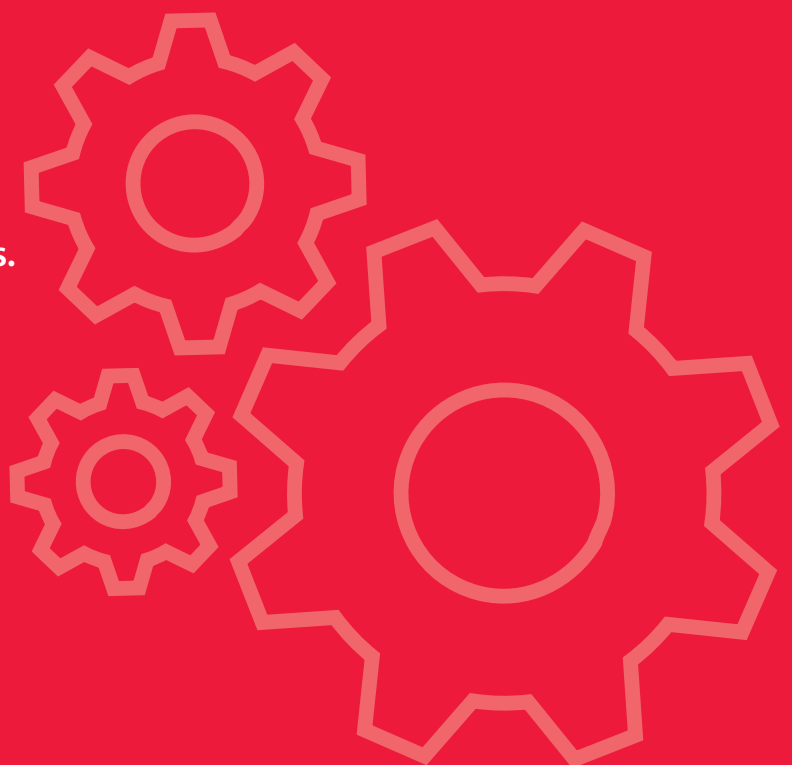




“Where tireless striving  
stretches its arms towards perfection;”  
Where the clear stream of reason  
has not lost its way  
into the dreary desert sand of  
dead habit;

# YOUTH AS CATALYST FOR **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Wholly aware that their burgeoning numbers cannot be employed by the government, industrial or services sector in India, educated youth are willing to tirelessly strive for success, keen to gain the skills to do so, access seed capital to set up dream projects and find mentors to guide them in building small business in their villages.





## THE METAPHOR

The poet urges everyone to work hard and tirelessly till they achieve their goal of a perfect society, a perfect nation. He urges them not to tire or to give into habit, superstitious beliefs or conventional beliefs that may limit their pursuit but to establish a stream of clear or and logical thinking.

## THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

India is a very young country. As per the 2011 census, youth comprise 20 per cent of India's population. This number is expected to touch 30 per cent in the 2020 census.

In a country with such a large proportion of youth the opportunity for economic development is immense. At the same time, a large youth population poses a great challenge. The capacity of the government or organised sector, with a GDP growth rate of 6.5 per cent, to absorb the numbers entering the workforce each year is woefully inadequate.

India has launched three key initiatives for employment generation, self-employment and vocational training: Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Start-up India and Skill India.

## JHARKHAND AND ODISHA

NITI Aayog's SDX Index, 2018 has ranked the states of Jharkhand and Odisha as "performers" in the area of economic growth.

| State     | Annual growth rate of GDP per capita* | Average unemployment rate per 1000 persons** | SDG 8 Index Score |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Jharkhand | 4.17                                  | 96.00                                        | 52                |
| Odisha    | 7.30                                  | 76.00                                        | 53                |

\*(at a constant price of 2011-12) \*\* for males and females



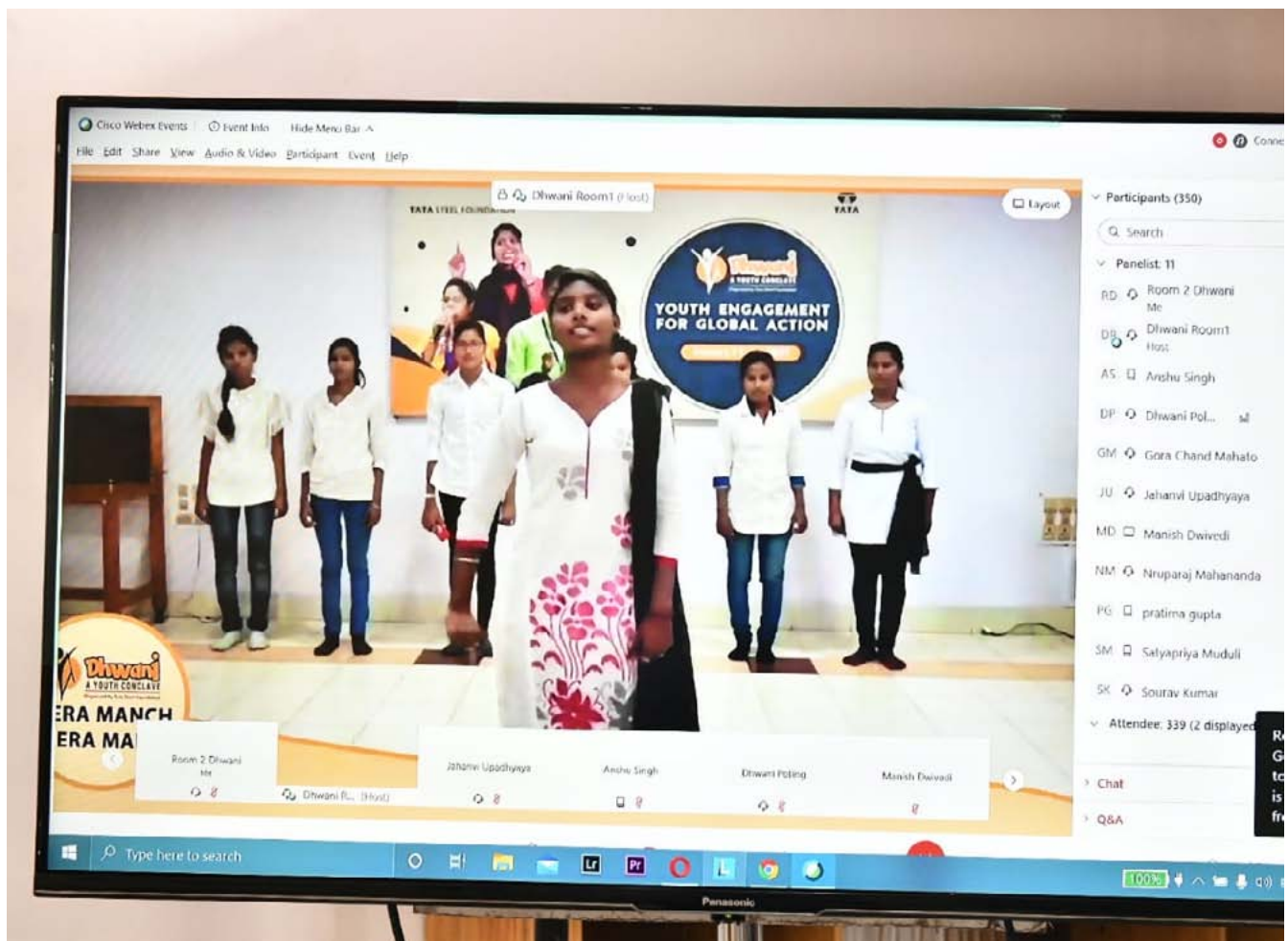
# VIEWPOINT OF YOUTH

## AROUND YOUTH AS CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*"If a founder has passion and innovation, he needs to be supported."*

– Ratan N Tata

The objective of the session was to help youth overcome their fears of abjuring the traditional path of *"pado, likho, naukri karo"* in favour of becoming self-reliant or *atmanirbhar* through start-ups, entrepreneurship and self-employment. Business should not be seen as anathema anymore.





### **Overturing 'conventional wisdom':**

The desire for a stable income makes family members insist that youth apply for government or private sector 'vacancies' year-after-year disregarding their acute disappointment at being without work or their dream, skill and ability to become entrepreneurs not being put to use. The consequence, youth representatives say, is rising open unemployment in our country. Youth are forced to navigate a battle within the family to pursue their dream of becoming contributing members of society.

When asked if they would like to be employed or self-employed, two-thirds of the youth clearly wished to use new age-technologies to launch their own enterprise given that only 10 per cent of the youth population is likely to find jobs in the organised sector.

### **Seeding entrepreneurship:**

Youth possess the confidence and determination to overcome challenges they may face on ground while setting up an enterprise. The need is for easy access to seed capital, vocational training during school and mentorship to be available to them to help them succeed.




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## **CONCLAVE POLL**

**How do you aspire to earn your livelihood?**

**Responses: 267**

**Entrepreneurship: 178 (67%)**

**Salaried Job: 89 (33%)**

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# HARBINGERS OF CHANGE



## **Puja Kumari Rajak** **Menstrual hygiene educator**

Puja Kumari Rajak, a 21-year-old from Jamadoba has been an active member of the RISHTA youth group at Sijua since 2014 and is a repository of information on adolescent health issues, especially girls. An active field mobiliser under the Tejaswini Project executed by Jharkhand Women Development Society, the aim of the project and of Puja is to achieve socio-economic empowerment of adolescent girls and young women. In her sessions for adolescent girls on menstrual hygiene at the Panchayat level, she actively promotes the use of sanitary napkins to ensure a reduction in dropout rates of adolescent girls from schools.



### **Chandan Tiria (18)** **Kalinganagar**

The disparities between the education of a boy and a girl shook Chandan and led him to thinking ways of propagating the importance of schooling amongst girls. Organising several meetings with parents, Chandan was able to convince them to send their wards to schools. To help bring newcomers up to speed on the school syllabus, Chandan started taking tuitions free of cost. He also supports dropout children to get enrolled back into school. So far he has enabled enrolment of over 50 students.





# YOUTH VOICES



Across the world, most youth live in rural locations. They are capable of catalysing economic development in their communities if they have the benefit of mentorship and direction. We know that Indian youth complete various degrees but are unable to find jobs. Technology, however, has given us access to a plethora of self-employment opportunities and we should tap in them. Would it not be better to employ others rather be employed by another?

- *Rehnuma Firdaus, West Bokaro*

We must change the perception society has of entrepreneurship and promote it as a viable option to earn a livelihood. The job loss caused by the pandemic has made it even more urgent for us to seek new self-employment opportunities. Right from our school years, youth should be exposed to and be encouraged to explore entrepreneurship options. Promotion of new enterprises can benefit youth and the country through a reduction of our dependence on imports of non-essential goods by producing them ourselves under the "Made in India" concept.

- *Ashish Pelei from Joda*

We should learn to become atmanibhar.

- *FGD participant*

If we start a small business then we can help employ others. Along with helping ourselves we are also helping others to become economically prosperous.

- *FGD participant*

I feel that youth are in every sense the fundamental factor for development. No country can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital. As youth improve the quality of their own lives, it will lead to broader social benefits to other individuals and society.

- *Puja Kumari, Sijua, Jharkhand*

We can grow crops on fallow land. If we can do it on a large scale then we can supply to various markets.

- *FGD participant*

My association with the Rishta project helped me realise I was too young to get married. Had I got married at an early age I would have had to drop out of school and my dream of making a mark for myself would not have been fulfilled. I was able to prevent my marriage and now I am a national-level sportsperson. I have represented the State and I am all set to be a part of the National team.

- *Seema Yadav, West Bokaro*

# ALL THEY NEED IS A LITTLE SUPPORT



I firmly subscribe to the view that 'No action is too little'. Any individual action is not a drop in the ocean or a speck in this universe, which makes it important for each of us to raise our hands, join in and share our views.

During Dhwani, we endeavour to respond to every question raised by the youth and record every comment, because we believe that every voice is important and every thought has the potential to induce change, especially when heard by those who can help it grow. The voices and thoughts of youth from the states of Jharkhand and Odisha are being amplified via this publication to a much wider audience in the hope of a larger impact, one beyond the immediate impact area of the youth.

Much like their voices are representa-

tive of thought at a micro level, the enterprises that the youth behind these voice can create have the potential to transform our economy. According to a Nasscom report, the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) segment of the Indian economy contributes 31 per cent to its India and accounts for 45 per cent of its exports. There are an estimated 55.80 million MSMEs in India, who employ ~ 130 million people. It is worth noting that 14 percent of these MSMEs are enterprises spearheaded by women and well over half or 59.5 percent are in the rural areas. In light of the demographic dividend that India enjoys, the next couple of decades are critical to us leveraging the potential of youth and MSMEs to continue to turbo power economic growth in our country, accelerating to a much greater pace than achieved in the last few decades.

Youth by nature have a certain sense of adventure. All they require, as they have so eloquently stated, is a little guidance and seed capital, which experienced minds and the capital of larger enterprises, can provide to youth in the vicinity of their operations. In the 1970s, when Tata Steel launched its rural development initiative, JRD Tata had exhorted experienced minds in industry to reach out to the rural economy because he firmly believed that industry could not be an island of wealth in a sea of poverty.

Tata Steel has since created XX Self Help Groups with linkage to micro enterprises in XX villages, which in the last year earned Rs XXX crores in earning and saved Rs XXX crores. These SHGs gave gainful employment to XXXX women and youth. Dhwani is an opportunity for us to gain deeper understand on the changing aspirations of youth, to share the stories of experts with them, individuals who have travelled the same course, on how to take forward these aspirations, to connect them with change makers within their peer groups and to reach out and support them in catalyzing change.

**- Sourav Roy**  
Chief, CSR, Tata Steel

# EXPERT OPINION

Two inspiring women entrepreneurs were introduced to the participants. Passionate about the environment, Ekta worked on various initiatives before launching ONganic, while Raziya works with Forest Products.

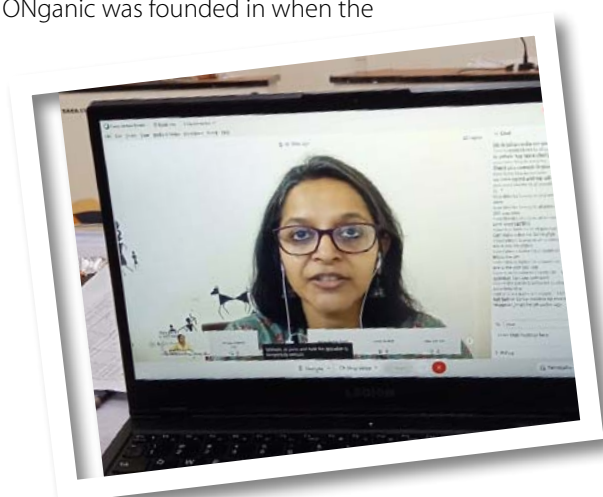
**Organic produce gives farmers strength:** ONganic, an award winning Organic Social Enterprise based in East India, works with 1000+ farmers in four districts, 23 villages and on 18 crops. Founder by Ekta Jaju, it takes the produce of organic smallholder certified grower groups from seed-to-the-shelf. Initially, Ekta worked to bring together small farmers to form a farm producer cooperative but soon realised that organic farming can solve a number of issues faced by small and marginal farmers, especially in reducing their input costs to almost zero.

ONganic was founded in when the

farmers Ekta worked with found it impossible to markets their products. The team continues to explore traditional crops, new varieties and is developing specialty products that have a demand in the market.

**Bringing the forests alive:** Born to a middle-class business family in Chhattisgarh, Raziya Sheik, Founder, Bastar Food was forced to attempt the UPSC exams rather than pursue her passion for business. Eventually the level of unemployment she saw in villages motivate her to break traditional barriers to become an entrepreneur.

Raziya realised that Chhattisgarh's forests are its greatest wealth yet it remains untapped because her area does not have large companies or production units. She has gone on to develop a variety of products from the abundantly available range of forest products, including mahua laddus, cookies, jam, jellies and energy bars, setting small units across the area with the support of local officials of the forest department. Raziya established her company in 2017 and has already expanded into 10-12 districts of Chhattisgarh.



Ekta Jaju



Raziya Sheik

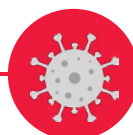


# OUTCOME OF FOCUSSED GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The Focussed Group Discussions on Youth As Catalyst For Economic Development addressed broad themes related to the impact of the pandemic and migration versus self-employment.

## Post pandemic employment outlook

The participants were divided in their opinion on whether the pandemic has impacted their future employment opportunities, with 38.67% believing that it would be worse than before because of the digital divide and 28% emphatic that it would be better than before. Nevertheless, the pandemic has seen a clear shift with 40% of youth reconsidering the nature of employment they intend to seek.



## Area of economic development

Self-employment is the clear front-runner as the choice for economic development for the individual and the country with as many as 60% preferring self-employment, against ~29% aspiring for government jobs and 10% for private jobs.



## Preferred vocation among farm-based opportunities

During the FDGs the moderators were delighted with the level of awareness displayed by youth on issues including the recent Farm legislations. Over 36% of the respondents would prefer to pursue animal husbandry as an opportunity and 25% are inclined to attempt contract farming with companies. Smaller segments of the youth believe opportunity exists in Poultry and Fisheries (21%) or in Dairy Farming (17%).



## Measures to prepare the younger generation

The key concern of youth in taking on their role as catalysts for economic development is understanding the nuances of self-employment opportunities (33%), followed by access to finance and resources (17%), representation of youngsters in policy formulation (18%) and vocational programmes in school curriculum (16%).





"Where the mind is led  
forward by thee

Into ever widening  
thought and action

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

# ADVANCING YOUTH REPRESENTATION IN KEY **DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES**

Youth by nature are forward-looking and ever willing to challenge the status quo to explore new vistas. They are also determined to work hard to achieve the future they envision. Hence in a young country, youth must have greater representation in grassroots level democratic institutions so that they influence the socio-economic course charted by the country and inherit a world full of opportunities.





## THE METAPHOR

Rabindranath's prayer for a people with a progressive mindset that continuously evolves and grows, is captured in the words "led forward" to "ever-widening thought and action". A nation with individuals open to change, who follow the path less trodden, can create new, unusual and extraordinary opportunities to benefit all.

## THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

India has adopted a three-tier panchayati raj system of local governance, with elected bodies at the village, taluk and district levels.

The Gram Sabha is a mechanism ideally suited for direct intervention and engagement of youth in local governance. In most states, the age of a majority of panchayats range between 36 and 50, indicative of the underrepresentation of rural youth even in local governance bodies. Odisha has the youngest panchayats with 60.80 per cent aged between 21–35 years. Factors that contribute to lower numbers of youth in local bodies are migration in search of jobs, nepotism, disparities in wealth and the uncertainty inherent in politics.

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**"Youth can change the world, if given the opportunity. If youth participate in nation building and strengthening the roots of our country, then much like a tree with strong roots our country can withstand any storm or adversity."**

*- Pratibha Kumari, West Bokaro*

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## JHARKHAND AND ODISHA

Tribal communities in the nine tribal states of India, including Jharkhand and Odisha, have two systems of local governance or policy-making at the village level. The first is the Gram Sabha or the Panchayati Raj Institutions and the second is the centuries old or traditional tribal decision-making process and leadership system among tribes such as Santhal. The Constitution of India provides for and recognises the capacity of tribal communities to strengthen their own systems of self-governance and create the opportunities to control their own destinies.

**"Youth can bring social reform and improvement in society. A society cannot do without the youth in its country. Furthermore, the nation requires their participation to achieve its goals and help in taking the country towards progress."**

*- Mukesh Kumar Ravidas, West Bokaro*



# VIEWPOINT OF YOUTH

## AROUND YOUTH REPRESENTATION IN POLICY-MAKING

*“Be Educated, Be Organised and Be Agitated”*

- Baba Saheb Ambedkar

The conversation was structured to drive awareness and understanding on the innumerable decision-making levels, within the family, at the community level, regional, national or

global levels, where youth can play a determining role and impact future outcomes.

Youth were insistent that an individual

inevitably associates participation in decision or policy-making with the dignity or the respect accorded to them within their family, community or nation.



### Village or Community Level participation:

To contribute to decision or policy-making it is imperative that youth reach out to participate in family, village and community conversations. This facilitates awareness on local policy-making processes and government policies, especially those intended for local area development. This understanding is critical to positive contribution to the development of their community or local region. Youth pointed to the need for local government bodies, especially gram sabhas, to include youth in their consultation processes.

In tribal communities, youth can work with the *Majhi*, *Manki*, *Munda* or *Pargana* to help support the progress and development of their community. The Majhis in all *tolas* always inform their communities of the date and time of meetings on any key decision and youth can participate in these meetings to make a difference to tribal decision-making.

### National and Global Policy Making:

Participation of youth in decision-making broadens the knowledge and resource pool, creating stronger and more inclusive communities that strengthen a country's democratic institutions and accelerates economic growth.

Participants were of the opinion that given the opportunity to participate in policy-making they can share their opinions on a range of topics, especially decisions that directly

affect them, their well-being and the communities where they live.

Gender discrimination and other forms of social discrimination prevent youth from all representative groups

to participate in policy making.

This is especially true for girls, who are seldom allowed into meetings or given the same right even to education as male members within a family.



## CONCLAVE POLL

How will you represent your voice in the decision making process?

**Respondents: 357**   **Myself: 148 (41%)**   **Support my friend: 62 (17%)**   **Support my community: 147 (41%)**

# A YOUTH ICON FOR HIS DISTRICT

*Chakravarti Singh Rathore, District Magistrate, Jajpur, has promised to speak to our youth but pressing affairs of the state kept him away. Here is a snapshot of what makes him a youth icon.*



As a young child, growing up in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, if anyone asked Chakravati Singh Rathore, what he aspired to be as a grown, his response always was, “an IAS officer”.

Inspired by his father, Harisingh Rathore, who was a Rajasthan Administrative Services Officer, Chakravarti was determined to become an IAS officer even though as a child he did not know how one could become one. He knew, though, that his father wanted him to be an IAS officer. He saw the impact his father, as a RAS officer, would have on lives of ordinary people. He watched him meet people, try and understand

their problems and concerns and then work to help them overcome them. The same people would return to bless his father.

Chakravarti too was determined to work to help the poor and disadvantaged. He went on to attain the 85th All India Rank in the excruciatingly competitive UPSC examination to realize his dream.

In pursuit of dream, this management graduate from National Law University, Jodhpur, moved to Delhi to join the IAS coaching of the Khan Study Group. While the course itself was difficult, what he ‘missed’ most was home

and home-cooked food. That’s when Chakravarti asked himself, “Can food and living space matter more to me than the dream of becoming an IAS officer and of realizing my father’s dream?” His response was to set his feelings aside and to passionately devote himself to the task at hand.

But success did not come easy for this young man who refused to accept disappointment. He worked hard, following the instructions of “Khan Sir”, completing every assignment and carefully following the guidance of his tutor faithfully. In his first attempt, he reached the interview stage and in the second only cleared the main examination. Finally in his third attempt, his hard work, perseverance and constant review of his errors paid off, ensuring he achieved his goal.

“One can earn money in the private sector but the satisfaction I desire is not available”, he said when he became an IAS officer in 2014. His role recently in the management of COVID, which was appreciated by all, would have given him the satisfaction he truly desired. Working for the people and getting their blessings!



# YOUTH VOICES



I got an opportunity to participate in MRA workshops organised by TSF. During the sessions, we talked about effective leadership, team activity and organised activities to get youth to learn to network among themselves better. The whole process aims at mobilising the new generation of change-makers, while also being equipped with integrity and faith. If children know what is right and wrong at an early age, they will be responsible. Sharing incidents from one's life is one important activity. I have seen many youngsters who indulged in anti-social activities but after these sessions, they have changed for the better.

- *Neeta Tudu, West Bokaro*

Youth are being precluded from policy making or are disinterested in it because they spend far too much time on themselves or thinking of their own well-being rather than of society.

- *Priyanka Kumari, Jamadoba*

Panchayats or office bearers in local bodies refuse to allow youth to participate in local decision-making.

- *FGD participant*

Gorachand ( RISHTA staff) is our greatest source of information.

- *FGD participant*

Our greatest source of information for youth is via Social Media, Google or Newspapers.

- *FGD participant*

We don't get support from villagers when we attempt to voice our opinion.

- *FGD participant*

A robust panchayat system or youth groups to network is very important since the legislators rarely have time to address them.

- *FGD participant*



# EXPERT SPEAK

Young, energetic and visionary, both Bhakta Hansda and Arati Devi represent the two forms of governance that co-exist in India's tribal state.

## A 'traditional' policy maker:

For centuries tribal communities have depended on a traditional command structure or *Majhi Baba* for 'policy-making' in their village. Bhakta Hansda is one such *Majhi Baba* with influence over 21 *tolas* under Pudiasa gram sabha despite being much younger than the traditional *Majhis*. He works along with the *Upa Majhis* of the *tolas* to ensure that various community development projects are implemented. Aside from performing his traditional role, Bhakta Hansda has established village funds to help families during events such as weddings as well as developed innovative ways to use community

activities and sports to connect tribal youth.

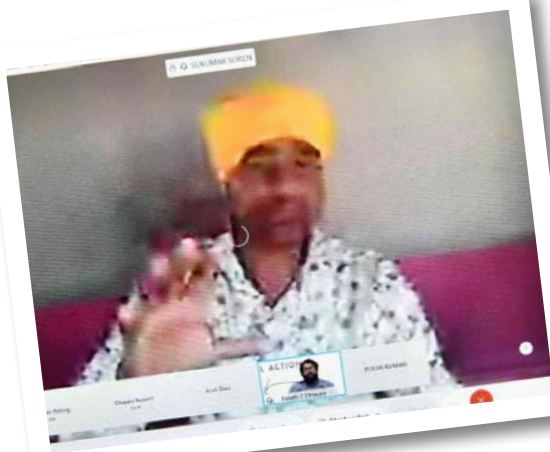
Bhakta Hansda explained how tribal youth can participate in tribal policy-making processes.

## The youngest sarpanch of India:

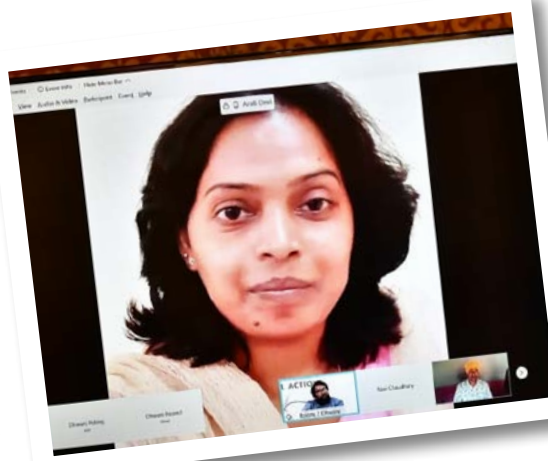
As an Investment Officer in IDBI Bank, Arati Devi would regularly visit villages. During her visits she felt that the villages or society needs her more than a corporate and in 2010 she resigned to pursue her passion for social work.

From 2012 to 2017 she served as the youngest Sarpanch in India.

Arati Devi believes that all students hope to complete their studies and become professionals, bureaucrats or executives but instead if students devote themselves to participating in nation building as sarpanchs, legislators or even the President of the country, our nation can progress very rapidly. "Never assume", she says, "that a student from an English medium institution cannot work in a village." She instituted the first woman gram sabha in Odisha, started a campaign on "no thumbs impression, only signatures" to empower women through education, economic development through SHGs by using Government funds.



Bhakta Hansda



Arati Devi

# OUTCOME OF FOCUSSED GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The Focussed Group Discussions on Advancing Youth Representation In Key Decision-Making Processes sought to gain an understanding on how youth would like to contribute and the inroads made by

## Increasing engagement in policy-making

Of the options suggested to the participants, they clearly preferred one of three routes to increasing their engagement.

Working as an aid in the offices of the local government institution was the top choice with 62 youth voting for it. There was an almost even balance for the other two, with 45 preferring to apply through a structured process to work as a research assistant to the local MP/ MLA and 43 wishing to work with Non-Government Organisations.

## Participation in key decision-making processes

The opinion of youth was equally divided, with half of the 150 respondents stating they have been a part of the key decision-making process at the local and national level, while the other half affirming that they have not had such an opportunity.

## Options for youth to raise or highlight concerns and issues of the community

There appeared to be a fair balance between three of the seven options placed before the youth. Of the 150 respondents, 35 wished to become a part of the judiciary, legislative or executive function of the government machinery to raise or highlight concerns, 38 were clearly in favour of formation of youth-led groups for advocacy with appropriate authorities, while 34 wanted to leverage the power of social media. Others believed print and electronic media or becoming a part of a campaign is the best choice.

## Facilitating young people in highlighting the issues of the community

Youth fervently wished that society would adopt a positive attitude to the role of youth in highlighting issues of the community, with as many as 62 of the 150 respondents arguing in favour of it. Support from the media and training on the necessary skill sets received equal votes at 44 and 42 as being enablers to allow youth to make a larger impact in highlighting issues of the community.

## Level of youth's participation in key decision-making processes

The vote was clearly in favour of active participation (81 of 150) and adequate participation (36 of 150) of youth in local and national level decision-making processes, enforcing the view that youth feel they are doing as much as possible within the space given to them.



# MERA MAANCH MERA MAAN

Through skits, songs and dances youth in each TSF location brought alive issues that are a priority for them. Here is a snap shot of the wonderful methods used to share their message with the Dhvani audience.





## Noamundi



## West Bokaro



## Gopalpur



# LOOKING BACK

## Dhwani 2017

### Theme: Youth Building Peace

Around 500 youth from across Jharkhand converged at the Conclave and deliberated on topics ranging from peace building, innovative approaches to address adolescent health and societal problems faced by the youth of today.



## Dhwani 2018

### Theme: Safe Spaces for Youth

In the second edition of Dhwani, under the overarching theme of safe spaces for youth, discussions centred on provision of safe spaces for youth, usage and using digital media in connection with civic and social matters. More than 450 youth from the states of Jharkhand and Odisha participated in the programme.





## Dhwani 2019

### Theme: Transforming Education

Dhwani moved from an annual event to a platform that lends itself to youth and their aspirations. TSF embarked on a journey of unearthing hidden talent with the *Pratibha Chayan Yatra* between August 3-8, 2019, which was a series of one-day workshops held across West Bokaro, Jamadoba, Noamundi, Joda and Kalinganagar to handpick participants for Dhwani 2019.

500 young minds from across the two states of Jharkhand and Odisha assembled at Jamshedpur to share ideas and action plans for social change while interacting with eminent speakers and subject matter experts of global repute and capturing the larger youth perspective on the narrative of education, its problems and probable solutions.

In an attempt to capture the richness of the discussions that transpired at Dhwani, the publication 'Where the mind is without fear' showcasing stories of young agents of social change, was released in 2019. The name and the philosophy underpinning the publication took a cue from Tagore's Gitanjali as fearlessness is the key element that enables full and true expression of ones being and the entire world is striving to tame their fears, their insecurities. Through this publication, we aspire to take these bold voices driving change to forums that can transform the narrative.



# TSF's YOUTH INITIATIVES



## 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 the way for their overall holistic development. The programme engages with 20,000 adolescents annually.



## Maternal and Newborn Survival Initiative (MANSI)

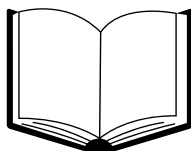
Launched in 2009, MANSI focusses on improving the healthcare delivery skills of Sahiyyas and ASHAs in the Home Based Newborn Care system and providing hand-holding support on ground. The project works with pregnant women, mothers and children to address infant and maternal mortality and is supported by partnerships with government, national and international NGOs. The programme touches ~1,00,000 young mothers and also empowers and trains 2,400 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 per cent and 63 per cent respectively in the original 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.

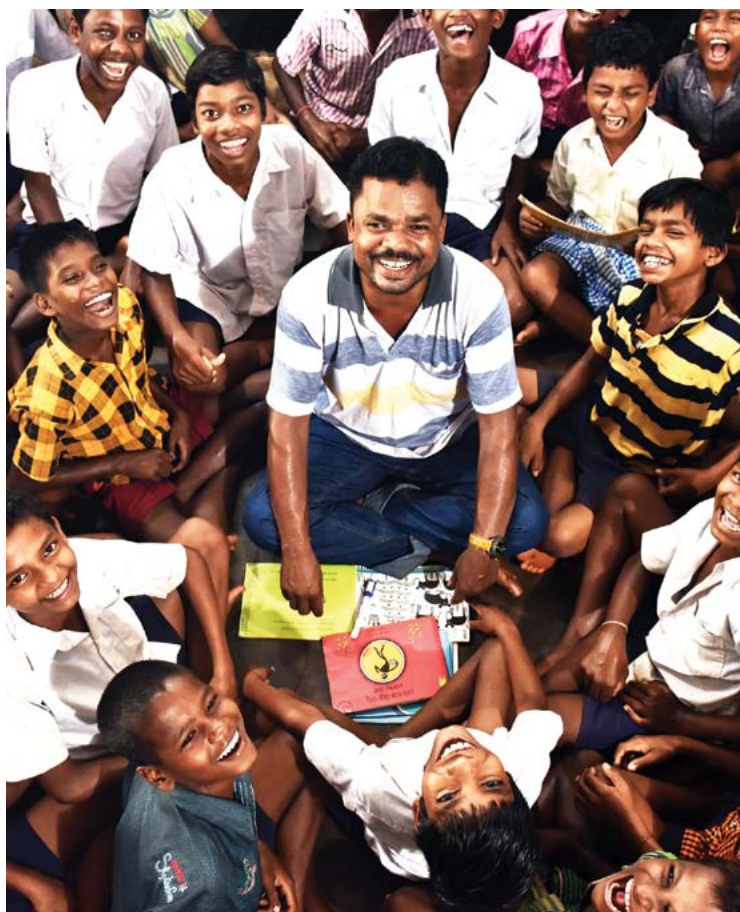
*Jyoti Fellowship* extends financial aid to deserving school and college students (pursuing Intermediate, Graduation, Post-Graduation and various professional courses). This scholarship is extended to close to 2,588 youngsters from Jharkhand and Odisha annually.

Going a step further, *Tata Steel Scholars Programme* offers mentoring support along with financial assistance to marginalised Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students who gain admission to some of the country's premier institutes like IIT, NIT, TISS, XIMB, etc. Tata Steel Scholars Programme has benefitted 185 students so far.



## Residential Bridge Schools -Masti Ki Pathshala

Masti Ki Pathshala – Towards a Child-Labour-Free Jamshedpur is both an idea and a programme. The programme is run across five centres in Jamshedpur in collaboration with several companies and schools, in the last five years, these residential centres have reached out to over 550 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. 17 youth teachers across these five centres continually support the education of these children. The Non Residential Bridge Schools, initiated in 2018-19, are reaching 400 children across five centres under the supervision of 10 youth teachers.





# TRIBAL IDENTITY



## Samvaad

Tata Steel Foundation launched Samvaad – an annual tribal conclave in 2014 with the objective of putting on view 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 six years over 5000 youngsters have been touched through Samvaad as well as its ancillary forums including regional Samvaad, paper presentations, fellowship, handicrafts, music collaboration, healers and cuisines.

## Tribal Leadership Programme

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 added wings to the aspirations of 279 youngsters from across 22 states,

representing more than 90 tribes of India.

## Tribal language Training Centres

With the objective of re-acquainting tribal youth with their own heritage by encouraging preservation and promotion of tribal languages, 421

centres have been set up by Tata Steel Foundation across Jharkhand and Odisha to impart training in six tribal languages, benefitting close to 12,000 students annually. 532 youth teachers across 421 centres are engaged in providing language training to these students.



# SKILL

## Project Samriddhi

Addressing the issues of poverty, unemployment and mass migration among the socially and economically marginalised communities especially in areas affected by extremists Tata Steel Foundation, through Project Samriddhi, imparts nursing training to young girls from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes with the aim of developing employability skills. In the last five years, more than 500 young girls have pursued General Nursing and Midwifery, B.Sc and Paramedical courses in the nursing college.

## Sabal Centre 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 sensitising communities to ensure they lead productive and dignified lives. This programme has impacted the lives of 300 youngsters.

## Ek Pahal

Ek Pahal is a skilling initiative to constructively engage prison inmates by imparting in-house training including soft skills, computer literacy, baking and mushroom cultivation, to enable them secure gainful employment, both within as well as outside the jail. Meaningful

engagement with more than 300 youngsters is made through this initiative.

## Technical Skills

Tata Steel Foundation, with Nettur Technical Training Foundation as its 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. Almost 700 students across the three

institutes are part of the training programme.

## Model Career Centre

Model Career Centre is an industry-led platform initiated in 2000 by Tata Steel Foundation at Jamshedpur in partnership with Confederation of Indian Industry. Its aim is to guide job seekers to pursue the right career choice with the help of career counselling sessions, while supporting Industries to get skilled workforce through rigorous screening process, from across Jharkhand. In the last one year, the centre has registered 2050 candidates and created tie-ups with 16 institutions from Jamshedpur.





# EMPOWERMENT

## Sports

Tata Steel Foundation empowers youth through training and providing access to good sports facilities and nurturing sporting talent with career potential. Close to 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 an enabling environment for positive change. Close to 500 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.

14,000 women are meaningfully engaged across 1,200 self-help groups supported by the Company.

## English and 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 900 youngsters.





# YOUTH ASPIRATIONS TODAY

The young participants at Dhwani have faith and belief in themselves and are committed to their purpose. They actively promote access to education, act against child marriage, build health awareness, work to keep their communities clean and disease-free as well as promote income generation initiatives.

I have added a new zeal in my life... we formed a group that was involved in cleaning the local places. We have spread awareness on the importance of cleanliness and hygiene. This has helped us to become more socially responsible.

- *Mukesh Kumar, West Bokaro*

During the COVID-19 nation-wide lockdown, I got opportunity to spread awareness on maintaining social distancing. I personally made masks and distributed them to people. I have been participating in camps organised by Tata Steel Foundation at Uttarkashi and they helped me developed my personality and gain confidence.

- *Neeta Tudu, West Bokaro*

My endeavour is to bring back school dropouts into the formal school system.

- *Ajit Kumar Patra, Odisha and  
Manoj Bindani, Kalinganagar*

After being inspired by Dhwani I now give free tuition to the children of my village.

- *Gulshan Laguri, Noamundi*

learned about the ills of child marriage, harmful effects of chewing tobacco, importance of hygiene and changes in mind and body during adolescence.

- *Toofan Behera, Jamkhandi, Odisha*



# AN INSPIRING DAY FOR YOUTH

In 1985, Government of India began celebrating National Youth Day on 12th January, Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary, because it believed that "the philosophy of Swamiji and the ideals for which he lived and worked could be a great source of inspiration for the Indian Youth."

## **Dhwani commemorates Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary.**

Swami Vivekananda's single-minded commitment to his purpose, despite being buffeted by very many challenges, serves as a guiding force for all youth.

**His life:** Swami Vivekananda was born Narendranath Datta in an affluent family of Kolkata on 12 January 1863. He joined Presidency College in 1879 and by the time he graduated from Calcutta University in 1884, he had acquired a vast knowledge of different subjects, especially Western philosophy and history. It was from a college professor that he heard of Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Assailed by doubts about the existence of God, Narendranath went to meet Ramakrishna Paramhansa, which resulted in their guru-shishya relationship.

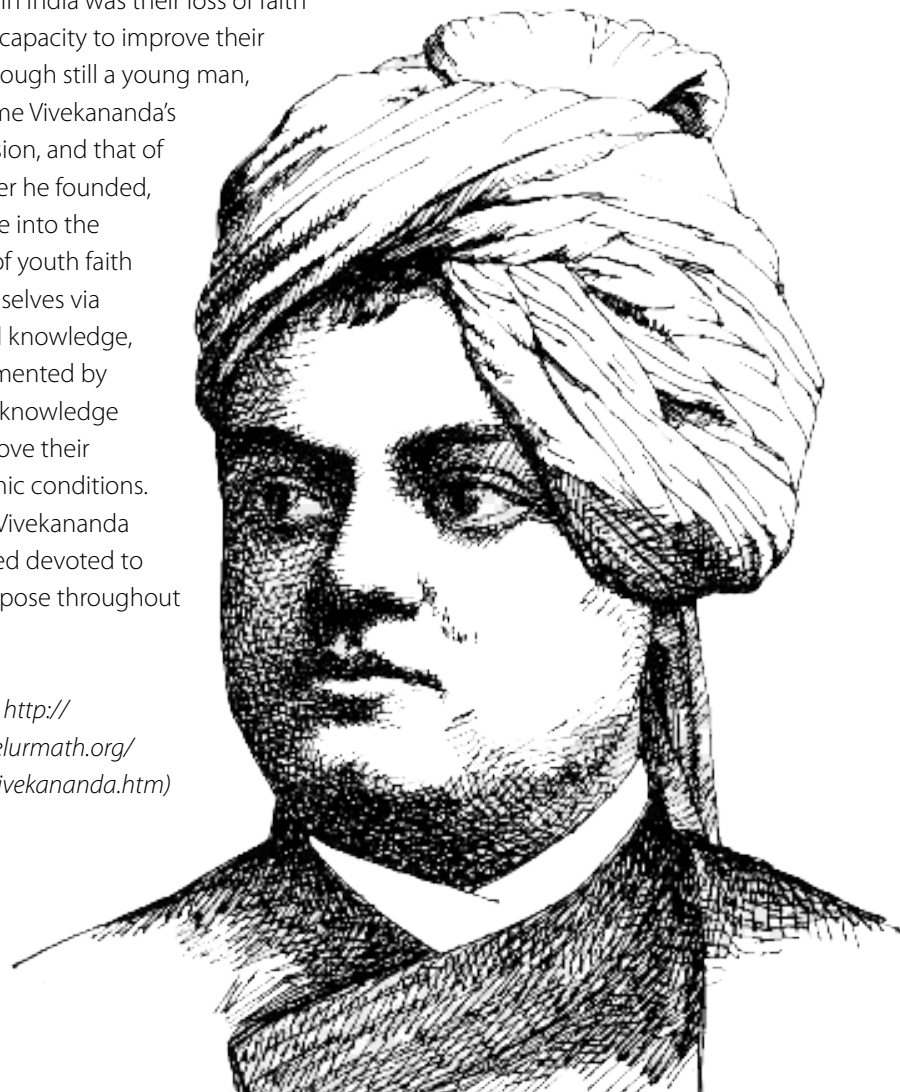
The sudden demise of his father and a terminally ill Ramakrishna thrust on Narendranath two choices, one of supporting his mother, brothers

and sisters who faced penury or, two, following his master's path of renunciation. His decision to follow his teacher's instruction, to institute a new monastic order, plunged him into a life that brought on an extremely harsh struggle during which he faced hunger and extreme deprivation.

**His purpose:** His own experience with poverty and hunger made Swami Vivekananda realise that at the core of the poverty among the masses in India was their loss of faith in their capacity to improve their lives. Though still a young man, it became Vivekananda's life mission, and that of the order he founded, to infuse into the minds of youth faith in themselves via spiritual knowledge, supplemented by secular knowledge to improve their economic conditions. Swami Vivekananda remained devoted to this purpose throughout his life.

(Source: <http://www.belurmath.org/swamivivekananda.htm>)

"Whatever you think, that you will be. If you think yourselves weak, weak you will be; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be."



## Acknowledgements

The Dhwani Report 2021 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. 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 2021 at : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uljdLN0G2DE>



