

The **UDAAN** Experience:
A Transformational Journey for
Tribal Adolescent Girls

A Research Report



FOREWORD



Udaan is an unique and important intervention of CARE India aimed towards girls from deprived and marginalized sections, who are either dropped out or never gone to school, due to several reasons. The main feature of the program is its curriculum which not only enables these girls to acquire basic competencies equivalent to grade V but also help them to build an independent personalities of a kind who could negotiate with a position of strength.

The successful model in Uttar Pradesh tested out for over twelve years on dalit girls, was contextualised and replicated for the tribal girls in one of the most backward and tribal dominating districts of Odisha. The program in operation for past three years has enabled more than 300 girls to continue their education. Consistent efforts have been made to contextualize processes in Udaan in the backdrop of grassroots realities of tribal Odisha specifically their ethno-cultural diversities.

The whole approach of Udaan is based on the principles of equity and inclusion and a belief to respect child's own language for maximum learning and deeper understanding in subject specific as well as social issues. The constructivist approach to education lays the foundation for pedagogical processes in Udaan.

Three years down the line a need was felt to get an external expert and academic view on the contextualization in Udaan vis a vis the curriculum, pedagogic processes and the approach followed so that the impact of the program with respect to empowering the girls from specific communities can be established. Also it would address the sustainability and mainstreaming issues along with establishing the connect with the contemporary developments in the field of education viz, RTE, life skill education, teacher development and the teaching learning approaches.

This study is an effort to address the above and I express my deepest gratitude to Prof Namita Ranganathan and Ms Nandita Singh who followed an intensive process to unearth the nuances of the field situation linking them with the Udaan strategy.

This research will provide insights to those who are working with out of school children and supporting their mainstreaming. The interesting part of the report is the pictorial epilogue which illustrate vividly the lives of the Udaan girls.

04 November 2012

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



We would like to begin by saying that the experience of Udaan Odisha has been a most memorable one. Set in the natural beauty of beautiful surroundings, replete with large flourishing trees, green paddy fields and an abundance of rivers in the territory around it, is Udaan. The first sight is mesmeric. The building walls are adorned with tribal art, groups of girls are busy with allocated chores and tasks, teachers are here and there supervising some activity or the other..... What they create together is a universe where they live and learn together in what marks the transformational journey of their lives! We would like to thank the Camp Coordinator, the team of teachers and other support staff, the girls at Udaan and those who came from their KGBVs to be part of our study, for making us a part of their lives for 4 days and making us feel such a sense of belonging!

Needless to say, without the organisational support and insights that we got from Digantaji and Bijaynathji and from other members of the CARE Odisha team, who facilitated our field work and lent a patient hearing to our debriefing and experience sharing sessions, this project would not have been accomplished. We greatly value their contributions to our work.

Likewise had Dr. Suman Sachdeva and Ms. Seema Rajput from GEP, CARE not given us this research opportunity, Udaan would have remained an enigma for us. We would like to thank them for reposing faith in us by entrusting us with this assignment.

We would also like to place on record our thanks to Tapas, Toolika and Ashok for helping with test construction, analysis, translation and documentation work. Their efforts have greatly helped in the successful completion of this project.

Finally we would like to thank TCA Jayant for his inputs in enriching the style, get up and presentation of this report.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT AND CONCEPTUALISATION OF KEY IDEAS



As is reflected in the title, this report was envisioned and planned as a research study with two fundamental objectives in mind. The first objective aimed at identifying, describing and analysing the spectrum of visible and invisible experiences that characterise the system and processes in Udaan, in the one year that the tribal girls spend there. As part of the visible experiences, all components of the structured curriculum which include the academic components, the pedagogic practices, the teaching learning material, the patronage given to games and sports, cultural activities and social learning, strategies to encourage collaborative and cooperative living, independence training and the personality development of girls, were observed and studied in detail. The invisible experiences were inferred from the emotions and associations of the girls with Udaan. Among these, the institutional ethos, the teacher student relationship, the peer group, the quality of life that the girls led, and the sense of belonging that they felt, emerged as the most significant experiences.

The second objective aimed at studying the impact of these experiences on the development of the girls' sense of self, identity and future educational aspirations. The sense of self and identity were conceptualized as highly inter related concepts, in which self focused on the personal and subjective perceptions and feelings that the girls have about themselves. Identity was inferred through the different ways in which the girls define themselves in relation to significant influences in their life contexts which include their family, village, tribe and community. Thus

identity was understood as encompassing not only one's feelings about oneself in relation to others, but also the beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes and cultural practices that one is socialized to learn, practice, follow and internalise. In operational terms, in the present research, self was studied through exploring the images, descriptions and visual depictions made by the girls about themselves, particularly with reference to their strengths and weaknesses, level of confidence and perceived talents and abilities. Identity was studied through using specially designed self report and semi projective tasks, described in the section on tools. Future educational aspirations were studied through girls' self narration and visual representation in art. It was felt that future aspirations are what majorly reflect whether a process of change has taken place or not.

The term 'transformational journey' was deliberately included in the title since the emphasis was on capturing the subjective experiences and lived realities that mark the process of change in the girls' lives. A conscious effort has been made to keep the spirit of the report non-judgemental in nature, by relying on a variety of tools and techniques designed specially to incorporate the perspective and views of all significant stakeholder groups. Apart from the girls, the teachers, the parents and the community, the perceptions and experiences of the partner NGO and the CARE functionaries were also sought. It was felt that this would make the data and the insights and inferences drawn from it, more comprehensive, representative and relatively bias free.



Since the report was born out of research concerns, the style adopted in its presentation is not restricted to merely describing or narrating fieldwork experiences as they unfolded.

Neither is the report intended as an information manual on the concept, systems and processes of Udaan. CARE Odisha has already made a very sensitive and comprehensive film titled, 'Give me Wings' which showcases these aspects. They also have some process documents compiled by interns from KISS, through a guided process that address these issues. Similarly, a number of process documents and researches on Udaan, Hardoi are available with the Girls Education Programme team in Delhi, which provide rich and exhaustive information about the concept, the impact of Udaan education and illustrative case studies, demonstrating how psychosocial empowerment takes place in the girls. Keeping the above in mind and respecting the objectives of the present research, the approach that was used to compile this report, was to develop a text narrative which presents the data that was gathered through the use of various tools, in a manner, that the key findings stated both quantitatively and qualitatively, are interspersed with analysis, inferences and highlighting of larger issues and questions that flow from them.

Accordingly, the first objective has been addressed by identifying and describing the best practices (visible and invisible experiences) that were observed in Udaan. The second objective has been addressed at two levels. At the first level, the Udaan impact was studied through how it found reflection in the girls' behavior, learning achievement and ways in which they defined their sense of self and identity. Feedback about their personal experiences in Udaan was also obtained. At the second level, an attempt was made to identify significant issues emerging from the Udaan experience which have implications for policy planning, future strategy building and academic contemplation. Some of the issues that emerged from this pursuit were the following:

- How to address the diverse needs of learners in a multilingual context
- How to enable them to make the transition from their own native dialect of the language to the standard language followed in the formal

school system, especially given the severe time constraints that they operate with

- Examine the appropriateness of an accelerated compacted curriculum like Udaan in preparing learners for mainstream secondary education
- Identify the adaptations that have been made in the programme to meet the contextual needs and the socio-cultural background of the learners
- Study the process of transition from the Udaan curriculum to the regular mainstream middle school curriculum
- Examine whether the bridge course curriculum in Udaan could become a model for older out of school children, especially in the context of the Right to Education Act recommending age appropriate learning
- Contemplate on whether the best practices of Udaan can be replicated or adapted in other state run residential schools.

It would now be appropriate to focus on understanding the goals of Udaan in relation to the context and background from which the girls come.



Understanding the Goals of Udaan and the Context of the Community that it Serves

UDAAN is a unique educational intervention designed as a residential camp for adolescent girls in the age group of 11 to 14 years, who have either never enrolled in school or have dropped out very early. It enables the girls to complete five years of schooling through transacting a compacted and accelerated curriculum in just one year, after which, on passing the class 5 board exam, they move on to middle and secondary schools. The girls who enroll in Udaan are usually victims of social, cultural and community barriers and economic compulsions of extreme poverty which keep them out of school and compel them from late childhood itself, to contribute to the family income, take on the role of care giving to their younger siblings and assume responsibility for all household and family livelihood chores. Based on the experience of Hardoi district in UP where it was initially set up and has been running successfully for eleven years, the programme was

launched in Odisha in the Kushalda block of Mayurbhanj district in 2009. Three batches of about 100 girls each, have graduated from Udaan, of which 90 percent of the girls are pursuing their secondary education.

Mayurbhanj is a tribal dominated district and home to 53 types of tribal communities. While each of these communities are similar in terms of being socially, educationally and economically backward, yet they have a distinctiveness of their own which sets them apart and makes them unique in terms of their habits, lifestyle, culture, marital practices, religion and spoken language. This flows partly from their ethnic origin and partly from the location of their settlement which could range from the plains to the foothills to the thickly forested hilly region that typify the topography of the district. There is thus a daunting heterogeneity to them. Some of the dominant tribal communities are Santal, Bhumija, Munda, Kolha, Khadia, Mankhadia and Lodha. Among these, the latter three are very backward and designated as primitive tribes. The Lodhas are a criminal tribe meriting special attention for their rehabilitation, while the Khadias and Mankhadias are nomadic food gatherers and hunters, inhabiting the hilly tracts of the Similipal forest area. Most of the other tribal communities are economically dependent on settled cultivation which is usually at the subsistence level; those who are landless work as agricultural, mining or small industry labourers, whenever there is an opportunity. Many of the communities are skilled at making handicrafts and utility items from wood, bamboo, grass and leaves which also becomes one of their main sources of livelihood and earning. Men and women are seen to participate equally in the family livelihood. Almost all the tribals have some livestock consisting of cows, goats and hens. The cows are used for agricultural purposes but not for the commercial sale of milk. Goats and hens are reared and sold periodically for money. It is thus a common sight as one drives through the district to see animals grazing around the countryside, accompanied by young boys and girls who shepherd them.

We visited two villages to interact with the community in our quest to build an understanding about their mindset, attitudes and identify the socio cultural practices that influence girls' education. Of these, one was village Mundhakata, essentially consisting of about 80 Santal households. The other village Sarat, had approximately 60 households in which the dominant community was the Kolhas.

In both Mundhakata and Sarat, we found that the significance of girls' education and its enabling and empowering influence in girls' lives had not been fully understood. While the community was ready to send their girls to school and to Udaan as well, the specific role of education in promoting upward social and occupational mobility and improving the quality of girls' existence had not been thought about or realized. The concern was much more with finding means of livelihood that ensured a steady flow of family income and engaging all children, including the grown up girls in them.

The other interesting dimension that was observed was, that gender inequalities were not so apparent. Although the division of labour, especially in household chores was traditional, yet the position of girls and women was not one of inferiority or subjugation. They enjoyed considerable freedom of movement and space and somewhere, the marital practices of the male offering a bride price to settle a marriage and the accepted practice of love marriages, also ensured that they were not considered a burden or a curse, as in other patriarchal belts in India. The age of marriage was also seen to be more or less consonant with legal prescriptions, barring a few cases.

The unifying features in both the villages and many more, we were told was, that all the households faced survival pressures because of meager earnings and no sources for occupation or employment in and around the village. A few adult members had ventured out to Kerala, Hyderabad and urban belts of Odisha to earn money, but their employment was also contractual and cyclical. Very few households had any savings and those with bank accounts were negligible. Every household had a BPL Card which entitled them to purchase rice, sugar and kerosene every month at subsidized rates. They were found to be availing of this facility. They were also in possession of Job Cards, but the employment guarantee schemes had not reached their villages. Their economic condition thus remained at status quo. The awareness levels about politics, the economy, law etc. were very low, as was the literacy level. The number of persons who had completed their schooling could be counted in single digits. The relationship between education and employment was thus a remote idea for most of them.

During our interaction with the community we learnt that the Santals were the most dominant tribal group in terms of their population, number of



village habitations, level of development and the fact that their language script Alchiki has received constitutional recognition. In contrast, the primitive tribes were considered the most backward and lower in the tribal hierarchy and thus kept to themselves. This dynamic was interesting for it influenced the pattern of social interaction among the different tribal communities. We were told that every year, even in Udaan in the initial two weeks, girls from different tribal groups tended to stick with their own tribe mates, until suitable strategies were adopted to dissolve the differences between them and integrate them. Thus the tribal context is seen to present a number of challenges stemming from the diversity that exists across the communities. In many ways it becomes a multicultural context. The girls who enroll in Udaan bring their community beliefs and attitudes with them. The biggest challenge however is that they speak their own tribal language and are thus not able to communicate with each other or even their teachers, until they learn standard Odiya.

At present, Udaan caters to girls from six educationally backward blocks. These include Khunta, Shyamakhunta, GB Nagar, Udala, Kaptipada and Badsahi. The state school system, especially at the primary level in these blocks faces a number of problems and difficulties. To begin with, most of the schools are in very remote areas, seventy percent being in the forest area, making access difficult for teachers, students and for Government functionaries to make regular monitoring visits. The area is also prone to frequent outbreaks of malaria, leading to absenteeism. In addition, the undervaluing of education and ignorance about the instrumental gains that can accrue from it, the frequent celebration of festivals and the opportunity cost involved in sending girls to school, are some of the other significant factors that reinforce the educational backwardness of the region.



Education in UDAAN

In the backdrop given above, Education in Udaan is best understood as a life changing experience, more in the genre of re-socialization that is provided to adolescent girls, targeting the twin goals of providing them formal education and facilitating their psychosocial empowerment. The idea of providing them formal education through an accelerated curriculum, is to enable them to catch up on the time that was lost and also utilise their greater

developmental readiness and cognitive capacities to make up, so that eventually they are placed in grades which are age appropriate and included in the mainstream system of education. It is based on the assumption that since the girls are older, they have greater grasping power, wider exposure to life, and a number of thinking and reasoning abilities, which enable them to learn at a faster pace.

The goal of psychosocial empowerment is rooted in the belief that if the girls are provided experiences that help them to build their self confidence, self esteem, sense of identity, critically examine their attitudes and beliefs and change them where necessary, discover their voice, agency and capacity to express resistance, then they can also become change agents and role models in their own community.



Design of the Study and Description of Participants

Keeping the aims of the study in mind which have already been discussed in an earlier section, the present study used a combination of different research strategies like observation, questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion, achievement tests, case profiling, semi projective techniques and visual art representation, as part of its design. How each of these have been used will be discussed in the section on Description of Tools.

Preliminary Scouting Task

Before the research design was envisioned, or any of the tools were constructed, a scouting task was conducted for familiarization with and building up of better conceptual understanding about the tribal context in Odisha and the curriculum and processes at Udaan. A list of questions seeking information about the socio cultural features, community practices, prevalent attitudes and beliefs and the district profile on different developmental indicators that influence education in Mayurbhanj district and Kushalda Block in particular, were sent to the State Coordinator of Education. A very detailed response which was both informative and analytical was received. This helped us to build preliminary understanding of the contextual backdrop. The film, Give me Wings also contributed to this process. In addition, it provided exposure to the processes followed in Udaan.

As part of the scouting task, we also read some of the documents prepared for Udaan, Hardoi and focused mainly on understanding the structure, assumptions and principles underlying the Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Learning Curricula. The unit cards for language and mathematics were also studied. This enabled us to form a basic idea, following which we identified the different aspects of Udaan that we wished to observe and the different participant groups whom we wished to interact with, in order to collect data. These were as follows:

Observation

Observations were done for three full school days of the *bal sabha*, the teaching learning processes in language and mathematics, the recreational period in which games and sports are played in the evening, the transaction of the social learning curriculum, other day to day functions like the distribution of meals, the living spaces of girls and the nature of their peer interaction. Descriptive field notes were written to document these processes.

Sample of Participants from the Present Batch

The present batch of 101 girls in Udaan was our primary participant group. We conducted a focus group discussion with them as a large group to gauge the primary associative emotional responses that they had with Udaan. We were told that only 60 percent of them could understand the standard language. From among these 60 girls, we asked teachers to identify a sample of 25 girls for us, whose learning abilities represented above average, average and below average capacity. Care was taken to ensure that within this group, there was representation of all the three tribal communities, who are enrolled in Udaan in the current batch. These girls then became the sample participant group on whom we administered two achievement tests, one in language and the other in mathematics.

Consultative Process for Identification of Best Practices

Since the first objective of the study was to identify the best practices at Udaan, instead of relying on observation alone, a focus group discussion was conducted with the 6 teachers of Udaan, the Headmistress and the CARE Functionaries to obtain

their views. The best practices were thus identified through a consultative process.

Sample of Participants for Studying the Impact of Udaan Education and Selection of Case Studies

The other major objective of the research was to study the impact of Udaan Education and present some illustrative case studies which reflect the impact. To meet this objective, a group of 21 girls, who had passed out of Udaan in the earlier three batches and were now studying in KGBVs, were identified in advance in consultation with the teachers and Care functionaries. They constituted the sample of participants for studying the impact of Udaan Education. Once again it was ensured in advance that they represented varying levels of academic performance and all the different tribal communities. They spent two days in Udaan to enable our interaction with them. Each of these girls were put through individual tests in Language and Mathematics and Group tasks in Science and Social Learning. In addition, they were asked to draw images of themselves, their village and their dream and weave a personal narrative around them. Five girls were identified from this group of 21 girls for the case studies. They were observed to be the most participative and forthcoming ones, were bold, communicative, had views of their own and were willing to share what they had learnt during the group tasks.

Description of Tools

The different tools that were developed to gather data from the different participant groups, as have already been mentioned in the earlier section are described in detail here.

Learning Achievement Tests

Since the main goal of Udaan is to provide formal education to the girls from class 1 to class 5 in a span of one year, to gauge whether the girls are actually able to learn in accordance with the expectations spelt out at each grade level, five sets of achievement tests were developed. Of these, two tests, one each in Language and Mathematics, were developed for the sample participant group of girls that was currently

studying in Udaan and nearing completion of Class 1. The other three tests, one each in Language, Mathematics and Science were developed for the sample participant group of girls who had passed out of Udaan and were studying in class 6 or 7, in KGBVs at present. The curriculum indicators spelt out in the Udaan curriculum and operationalised in the Unit cards were used as the benchmark for test construction.

Language Achievement Test for Class 1

The language test for Class 1 had more oral and fewer written components. The girls were tested for their reading skills through a reading task, comprehension skills through two narrations- one being a descriptive account of a baby goat with follow up questions and the other being an Odiya folk tale, requiring a higher level of conceptual understanding, once again with questions based on it. Both these were oral tasks. In addition, action pictures were shown to them and they were asked to talk about the pictures. Both these tasks provided insights about their expression and articulation skills. The written tasks tested for simple clarity of writing, spelling and comfort level with the Odiya script. Girls were asked to write the alphabets in Odiya, take a dictation of ten words in which five each were with and without matras, complete simple fill in the blank sentences aimed at gauging their imagination skills and write their name, parents' name and village name.

Mathematics Achievement Test for Class 1

The Mathematics achievement test for Class 1 was designed as a written test, consisting of distinctive mathematical skills ranging from simple understanding of numbers to more complex mathematical functions. The test had a total of 11 items arranged in an ascending order of difficulty. Thus the initial items focused on completing number series, arranging numbers in ascending and descending order, number sequencing through before and after blanks, putting into serial order the days of the week and then moved on to calculations involving addition with and without carry over, subtraction with and without borrowing, simple word problems and recognition and creative use of geometrical shapes. All of these were in consonance with the learning objectives of the curriculum.

Language Achievement Test for the Participant Group that had passed out of Udaan

The emphasis in this test was more on understanding the language expression skills of the girls through a variety of written tasks that tested their ability to weave together ideas through appropriate language usage, their vocabulary, their understanding of grammar and their ability to write informal and formal letters, personal descriptions and give directions. Their understanding of tense was also woven in by giving questions requiring them to do a past to present to future self analysis. Space was provided within all the questions for visualization and imagination to see how they find articulation. There were ten questions and one passage in which the girls were expected to do a grammar based task.

Mathematics Achievement Test for the Same Participant Group

This test was once again based on the competencies that girls were supposed to master at the end of Class 5. Taking into consideration the mathematical skills and concepts listed out in the final stage of the Mathematics Curriculum in Udaan, 10 questions once again moving from simple to complex in their level of difficulty, were developed as part of this test. These included: writing numbers in expanded form, LCM, HCF, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division with three, four and five digit numbers and multiple rows, identifying mistakes in some solved questions based on these functions, accurate measurement of lines, drawing angles, word problems involving calculation of expenditure and calculating the area of a square and rectangle through case examples. The test was a written one.

Science Achievement Test for the Same Group

This was designed as a set of 25 questions, to be conducted orally as a large group task. The questions tested for understanding of facts, scientific processes and their applications. The course content on which they were based, was once again drawn from the Science Curriculum in Udaan which begins in Class 4. It is more in the framework of Environmental Studies and thus encompasses Science and Social Science. Care was taken to ensure that there was adequate representation of questions pertaining to Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, History and Civics. The decision to make this an oral test was based on the assumption, that

many more counter questions could be created in a verbal mode and examples and illustrations could be sought, based on the responses given by the girls. Also, their ability to articulate ideas and present arguments in the language of Science, was being gauged.



SOCIAL LEARNING TASKS

(For the Same Participant Group)

One of the major aims of Udaan Education is to facilitate the psychosocial empowerment of the girls. Apart from other activities that they are exposed to, legitimate allocation of two hours a day in their daily schedule to a formally designed Social Learning Curriculum is a major step in this direction. The objectives of this curriculum are to expand awareness and understanding of the girls about different social issues, examine the beliefs and attitudes that they hold and reformulate them wherever considered necessary, understand their rights to equality, justice, inclusion, participatory democracy and dignity, dispel myths and misconceptions about age old folk traditions and healing practices that are unscientific, especially in relation to health issues and learn to appreciate a more modern, scientific approach to life. The larger aim is to enable them through this process to develop their voice, a sense of agency and express resistance if required in their family and community contexts. The ultimate goal is to enable them to build a sense of self and identity.

To gauge the extent to which the transaction of the Social Learning Curriculum was achieving its aims, four semi projective tasks were developed. Of these, three were group tasks and one was an individual task. They are explained below.

Gender Sorting Checklist

This task consisted of a list of 25 human qualities, mainly in the form of adjectives, representing physical, social and emotional characteristics and roles, traditionally associated with men and women. Each of these had to be classified by the girls in terms of whether they were considered more appropriate for boys, girls or for both, giving reasons in support of the position that they took. This was done as a large group task. The idea behind this task was to know what stereotypes the girls hold about gender appropriate behavior and

roles and to see whether there was evidence of rethinking on any of them.

Picture Description and Analysis

This consisted of a set of 6 pictures, showing men and women performing non-stereotyped activities with reference to traditional gender roles. These included:

- A woman sarpanch addressing a panchayat meeting
- Men drawing and fetching water from the well
- A woman driving a tractor
- A man cooking while his wife was resting
- Two women enjoying their leisure time, smoking and playing cards
- A father looking after his children.

The girls were asked to describe the pictures and comment on the gender roles which were depicted in them. They were also asked some additional questions to get to the genesis of their beliefs and know their worldview. The larger aim of this task was to analyse whether the girls perceive certain tasks and roles as fixed and given, or whether, in their attitudes and beliefs they show evidence and openness for change. This was also done as a group task.

Situational Analysis Task

This consisted of a set of 6 situations presented in the form of case vignettes, each of which focused on a social issue that merits change. The issues that were addressed, included beliefs and practices associated with menstruation, attitudes towards girls' education, the custom of early age marriages, unscientific healing practices in dealing with diseases needing scientific medication, alcoholism and ways of dealing with it and envisioning of a more progressive and modern village. The girls were expected to analyse each of the situations and comment on how they would deal with them.

In addition, a group discussion was generated on topics like: the appropriate age of marriage for boys and girls, ideal family size, different careers that girls can have and superstitions and folk beliefs. The idea was to know how the girls perceive and understand these issues and see whether they show

any inclination for change with respect to them. Once again, this was done as a verbal large group task.

Visual Depiction of Oneself, One's Village and One's Dream through Art

This was done individually by each girl. The idea was not to gauge the quality of the art, but focus on the nature and form of images, ideas and experiences depicted within it. The girls were encouraged to share personal narratives about these which were noted.



Interview Guides

All interviews were planned and conducted as open ended dialogues on a set of themes that had been identified for the purpose. In the course of the study, to gather data and validate field insights, interviews were conducted with the following stakeholder groups:

- Udaan Teachers
- CARE functionaries
- Community in the two villages Mudhakata and Sarat that were visited
- Teachers in two KGBVs, Khunta and Barsoi where post Udaan, the girls are admitted
- The five girls who were part of the case studies.

Themes for Udaan Teachers

- Their views about the programme, its successes, outreach and challenges
- Problems faced at the initial stage when girls are first admitted and ways of dealing with them
- Views about multilingualism and ways of dealing with the problems of multilingualism and transition to the standard language
- The cultural and behavioural diversities that arise from girls belonging to different tribal communities and how they are dealt with
- Perception and Views about the Udaan Curriculum, the pedagogic process followed and the evaluation scheme
- Enlisting of the tasks that constitute their task and role profile
- Views and experiences on the connect/disconnect of Odisha State Board Curriculum

especially in Classes 4 and 5 and the corresponding Udaan Curriculum.

- Difficulties faced in preparing the girls for the Class 5 Board Examination and suggestions on what could be done to make the transition from the Udaan Curriculum to the State Board Curriculum smoother
- How well the Udaan Unit Cards fit in with the contents and style of topic coverage in the SCERT Text books. What are the points of congruence and conflict if any?
- Ways in which they contextualize the Language, Mathematics and Science Curriculum to suit the tribal background of their learners
- Explore their theories about how girls actually learn. How do they explain the process as it takes place? Do they find it easier to teach Language or Mathematics? Why?
- Views about the Social Learning Curriculum: its aim, purpose, impact and meaningfulness. What are the tangible benefits that accrue to girls through it?
- What are the visible signs of transformation that are seen in the girls in the one year spent in Udaan?
- Their views on all the five girls selected for case studies, particularly changes in their attitudes, behavior, self confidence, aspirations etc.
- How they feel girls cope with the new school environment post Udaan. What is the feedback they receive? How do they contribute to this transition process? Do they prepare girls for it?
- How Udaan has changed their own notions, ideas and personalities.

Themes for CARE Functionaries

All the themes that were put to teachers were also posed to the CARE Functionaries, i.e. the State Coordinator and Programme Coordinator, since they play a very significant role in implementing, monitoring and providing quality inputs in the Programme. Data about the field context had already been obtained from them as was described in the Preliminary Scouting Task. However, in the long drives

during our field trip, nuanced discussions with them continued to help us sharpen our understanding. Our interaction with them also helped us to validate our insights and findings. We had a long and detailed debriefing session on the last day with them to share the proposed structure of the Report and noted their suggestions and ideas.

Some of the themes other than those posed to the teachers included were:

- How was community volition to send their girls to Udaan obtained? What were the specific strategies?
- How is parental interest in girls' education sustained? How meaningful are the periodic community meetings and the institution of Community Seminar?
- Is the Udaan Approach likely to make change agents in the community? What processes are they likely to influence?
- How are networks created for girls to transit to secondary education? Why is the thrust so much on admitting girls to KGBVs and not in the residential tribal schools which go up to class 10? Why is there a decline in networking with The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences after the first year?
- How long will a Programme like Udaan be relevant in the context of Right to Education? In what way can lessons learnt from it contribute towards the issue of age appropriate learning and development of meaningful bridge courses?

Themes for Teachers in KGBVs where the girls study

- Their views about the Udaan Curriculum
- Their experiences with the Udaan Girls in making the transition to the mainstream system

- Since the girls have studied a compacted curriculum, what difficulties arise in learning middle school Mathematics, Language and Science
- Are they able to write grammatically correct and spelling appropriate language?
- How do they compare in their learning and performance with their peers who have gone through the graded system of Education?
- What aspects about the Udaan Educated girls stand out as noteworthy?
- Are there any special scaffolds that are provided to these girls? What kind?
- What are their views about Bridge Courses?
- Detailed exploration about girls enlisted for case study.

Themes for Detailed Case Studies

Here the focus was on understanding how girls define their sense of self, identity and future educational aspirations through analysis of how they describe themselves, identify their strengths and weaknesses, locate their role models, plan a career goal, envision ideal spaces of the home and village they would like to have and envision the life that they would like to lead. Their personal narratives about their art illustrations were also obtained through interaction with them. The basic idea was to capture the transformational journey.

All the data that was gathered through the different tools that were used has been used at various appropriate places in the report. Each tool was analysed separately but has been presented under the issue/issues that it signifies or explains. Needless to say the thrust of the study was qualitative. However enrolment and achievement data which was also obtained has been quantified to arrive at macro trends which also present a telling picture of the outcomes of Udaan.





Structure of the Report

The written text of the report has been organized into three sections as follows:

SECTION 1: The first section which has just been concluded, focused on the Central Thrust and Spirit of the Research Study, the Specific Aims that it addressed and a Detailed Description of the Methodology used.

SECTION 2: The second Section provides an understanding of the Udaan Experience through Identification, Description and Analysis of its Best Practices.

SECTION 3: The Third Section has two sub parts: 3.1 and 3.2.

SUB SECTION 3.1: This focuses on the Impact of Udaan Education as reflected in Learning Achievement, Social Learning and Development of Self and Identity of the girls. The transformational process is also highlighted through the presentation of 5 illustrative case studies.

SUB SECTION 3.2: This section presents a discussion of the Issues of Significance to Policy and the Way Forward and also links some of the practices in Udaan to Contemporary Developments in Education.

CONCLUSIVE EPILOGUE: The Report ends with some scanned illustrations of the drawings made by the girls about themselves and their aspirations as reflections of their sense of self and identity followed by the pictorial prologue which aims to provide glimpses into the lived experiences and realities characterise Udaan.

IDENTIFICATION, DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE BEST PRACTICES IN UDAAN



As has already been mentioned in the introductory section, the best practices in Udaan were identified at both the visible and invisible levels. All those significant life experiences that constituted the realm of girls' experiences and seemed to contribute to their development, particularly building in them a sense of self and identity, were identified. This was done through our own observations during our field work, through interacting with teachers and CARE Functionaries to obtain their perspective and through informal interaction with the girls themselves. In fact, it was the interaction with the girls that contributed majorly towards identifying some very potent invisible experiences at Udaan, that had changed their lives. Since the goals of Udaan are twofold and

focus on both the formal education and psychosocial empowerment of the girls, the best practices have also been identified keeping these in mind.



Pedagogical Processes and Practices

These are indeed unique in Udaan. Girls are taught concepts in Language and Mathematics and subsequently Science from the scratch and five years' curriculum is covered in one year!

On any working day the scene in the **Language class** is as follows:

A group of 25 girls with their copies slates and pencils in hand are seen sitting in a large circle eagerly waiting for the teacher sitting in the centre, to begin the day's work. Meanwhile the teacher ensures that all the teaching learning material which will help to concretise the concept being taught and serve as the material for the activities to be organized around the concept, is kept in the centre of the circle. There is a lesson plan sheet briefly spelling out what will be covered and the methodology to be followed.

We observed two very effective language classes. In one class, where the girls were nearing completion of Class 1, the teacher was trying to teach them how to identify, read and write joint words (Sanyukta Akshar) A set of learning cards, discrete spelling cards in standard Odiya, a variety of simple story books and drawing sheets and crayons were kept in the centre as the teaching learning material. The teacher stood up and wrote the names of different things on the board, all of which represented joint words. One by one, the girls came to the board, read out the word and indicated the two discrete words that made up the joint word. The teacher then wrote each deconstructed word on the board and the girls copied them in their notebooks, saying them out aloud.

Then the teacher organized the girls into five groups, sorted by ability. She distributed one story book to each group and asked the girls to identify and say aloud the words which were joint ones. In the groups that were struggling to do so, she picked up her copy of the book, read aloud from it and asked the group to follow in the book given to them, instructing them to outline the words as patterns with their fingers, as she was saying them. She kept giving them this practice through this approach, till they were able to begin reading on their own.

Meanwhile the groups that had completed the assigned task were then given the spelling cards and asked to match them and constitute joint words and likewise deconstruct the words listed in the learning cards. Finally they were asked to list some joint words and draw illustrations of them.

A full span of two hours were spent on this class, but time just sped by. None of the girls looked bored, tired or restless. The classroom was truly a learning space where through a set of simple but purposefully planned activities, the girls became active participants in the process of learning, trying to learn through a meaning making process that involved cognition, rather than just rote memorization. Emphasis was given by the teachers to planning the activities/learning tasks in a manner that they would become the means to the end. Mastery of the learning goal as the learning outcome was thus not what the focus was on. The belief was quite contrary to this. It rested on the assumption, that girls have abilities to think, to discriminate, to form patterns, to recognize with meaning, to perceive and to use their sense organs meaningfully, and so if all of these are woven into the language learning process, they will enable more effective language acquisition. In such an approach, the teachers play the role of facilitators as was visible in the Udaan classroom, providing adult to child scaffolding, while the group scenario ensured that peer learning and facilitation also went on. There is visible evidence of what in the constructivist approach to learning, would be called, child to child scaffolding and collaborative learning. The group formations also permitted girls to be at different levels of the learning process and yet feel included in the classroom processes. There was no fear of feeling inferior to others or having self doubt on not being able to keep to the standard pace of the class, as is usually the case in normative teaching. There was thus an automatic space generated for accommodating diversity in learning levels. At the end of the class most girls emerged having learnt something worthwhile. Those who were still confused or unsure, were given time in the next class or helped by the teachers or their peers, in the evening.

In the other language class too the same approach was visible. Girls were supposed to comprehend a story that was read out to them by the teacher, then read it on their own, then enact it as a simple drama and finally write a small story of their own, based on the ideas obtained through the experiences provided. The story could be illustrated with drawings. All of this was actually happening, the curricular time phase being end of class 1 and beginning of class 2.

Mathematics Class

The Mathematics class is very similar in its pedagogical practices. A span of two hours is broken into five small concepts that the girls are once again expected to engage with, through planned activities either in a large group or in small groups. Here also, the process of learning is given far more time and importance than the product to be learnt. The assumption is that if the process allows for use of cognitive functions, the product will emerge as a natural consequence of these. Since the girls were at a very elementary stage of mathematics, all the activities took recourse to using concrete teaching learning material like sticks

and pebbles for counting and computations and objects bearing a specific geometrical shape, to learn the characteristics and name of the shape.

From the descriptions and analysis presented below it is evident that the pedagogical approach and the corresponding classroom practices that flow from this approach, target process based learning and tap intrinsic learner abilities to facilitate the learning process. They allow individuals to work at their own pace, construct meaning from what they are doing, use their own intuitive ways of learning before they move on to well defined formal cognitive methods and make the act of learning a natural quest. Curiosity

In one of the mathematics classes that we observed, the first of the five concepts taken up, was subtraction with borrowing which some girls were doing with sticks, others by drawing lines and some others by mental calculation. It struck us that this is the beauty of the pedagogic practices in Udaan- they permit students in the same class to use whichever computational strategy they are comfortable with, not insisting on a unified standard or approach. It was also clear that since the age cohort of the class ranged from 10 to 15 years, the younger girls were using more concrete methods, while on account of cognitive maturation, the older girls were able to move on to more abstract mental operations, much faster. Also, since the sums had been given on learning cards, the pace of doing them could vary. The teacher's role was one of facilitation. As she moved around, she was able to clarify and help those who needed it, correct the efforts of those who were progressing at a faster pace and request those who had finished successfully, to explain to their peers, who were still struggling. Thus diversity in achievement levels could also be addressed. The subsequent activities in the same period included: identification of shapes using concrete coloured blocks initially and then moving on to shape identification in the environment, revising number names through writing practice from 1 to 50 while saying them aloud, so that an associative bond could build up, arranging in sequence the names of the days of the week given on learning cards in a jumbled up way to sharpen both language and seriation skills and developing reasoning, ordering and sequencing skills which are of paramount importance in the foundations of mathematics learning, through a worksheet requiring the girls to complete a given pattern.

and inquiry are promoted. Pedagogy thus does not translate narrowly to methods of teaching alone, as it does in most formal school scenarios. In Udaan it has a more expansive connotation which includes understanding the nature of the learner, the context in which learning is taking place and accordingly using strategies of teaching and engagement which augment the learning process.



Creation of a Facilitative Learning Environment

Closely related to the pedagogic approach at Udaan, is the practice of creating a learner friendly, inquiry oriented culture and environment which is relatively stress free and adopts what may be called a 'whole school approach' to learning. The girls are encouraged to have a variety of experiences and learn from them, ask questions, get hands on experience, learn from mistakes, visualize, imagine and see the world from a different lens. This approach is visible both within the classroom and outside of it, as well. In the classroom space, the freedom to explore, putting the learner at the centre of the learning tasks, providing for self paced learning, enabling peer learning and allowing for personal meaning making to take place- all ensure that a conducive and supportive environment is created. In addition, the teacher student relationship is democratic, benevolent and replete with genuine affection and bonding. This is one of the most significant invisible aspects that girls treasure and carry with them forever. When the girls who were part of our feedback study (the Udaan passouts) were asked to state their primary associations with Udaan, all of them said in a single voice, 'the Didis', adding further that they had never received so much care, concern and nurture, as they had experienced in Udaan!

In addition, the physical space of the classroom is made very attractive by displaying and pasting students' own art work, craft and using the walls effectively as a learning space. Mathematical devices have been painted on the walls in the mode of using the building as a learning aid. A number of concepts in geometry, estimation and mensuration are taught through them. The teaching learning material that is used includes pebbles, sticks, pictures, story books for children, wooden puzzles, small clay objects crafted by the girls themselves and several learning cards, alphabet and number cards made by the teachers. There is plenty of art material available in all

the classrooms. What makes the material very attractive and effective is that it is drawn from the natural environment of the girls and so is not perceived as alien or intimidating. They relate with it and use it with ease. It helps to concretise their learning experience and also enables them to act upon the material, manipulate it and learn through the process.

The other somewhat invisible but very significant aspect of the learning environment is the space and encouragement given to cooperative and collaborative learning. This is seen both within the class and in life at Udaan in general. Girls live together, share duties and responsibilities, help each other and always have a companion by their side whether it is for studies, play, cultural activities, sharing one's experiences or seeking advice. The residential mode has well institutionalised systems envisaged as different committees to maintain order and ensure that the system runs smoothly. What is very noteworthy is that the committees formally constituted, retain a humane and personalised character. Girls are given rotational duties in the various committees. They have to help with cleanliness, discipline, food distribution, games and sports and cultural activities, all of which teach them to take on leadership roles and develop life skills. In fact the entire experience of living in Udaan may be seen as an illustrative example of 'life skills education'. Communicating, empathizing, taking decisions, perspective taking, sharing and assuming responsibility for oneself are some of the qualities that can be seen in all the girls, stemming from their lived experiences in Udaan. This was an aspect that the teachers of the KGBVs also highlighted as their experience with the Udaan girls and greatly appreciated them for it. A very significant learning that flows from this in the arena of Life Skills Education in Schools is, that when life skills are integrated into the life and ethos of the institution, they develop, get internalized and are better sustained, as well. The ongoing debate in life skills education about whether an interventionist approach is better or an integrated one, is answered by the Udaan experience in favour of the latter.



The Social Learning Curriculum

A very striking component of life at Udaan is the formal transaction of a Social Learning Curriculum. Every evening at 6.30 pm, girls sit in their four learning

groups, or in one large group with their teachers, on the central cemented surface that constitutes the hub of all activities in Udaan. They wait eagerly to engage in animated discussions, share experiences, listen to stories narrated by their teachers and participate in role plays and follow up discussions and debates that focus on themes related to self, family, the environment, civic amenities, rights and duties, personal hygiene and cleanliness, diseases and ways of dealing with them, societal practices of marriage and family life and gender roles and stereotypes. The basic idea underlying this curriculum is that the girls must build a critical perspective and understanding of the social, cultural and developmental features, practices and beliefs that characterise the context in which they live. The Social Learning Curriculum aims at giving them a larger world view, helps them to appreciate the need for and structures of governance, expands their sense of identity to include social and community parameters within it and builds in them the ability to analyse life in their village and community more critically. It also helps them to envision the possibilities for change, ways of negotiation, realize the importance of asserting one's voice, agency and expressing resistance to what seems unscientific or not legally appropriate, such as the age of marriage. In fact this curriculum is visualized as one of the most significant means to engender their psychosocial empowerment, for not only does it help girls to think critically, but also gives them the space and courage to share and express their ideas, views and experiences and in the process, expand and at times alter their own perceptions and attitudes. It serves as one of the main steps towards building the girls to eventually be change agents.

We observed the Social Learning sessions on three successive evenings. The theme being discussed was 'Family'. Girls were sitting in four small groups. Each group had a teacher facilitator who was narrating the importance of family life. The roles and responsibilities of every family member and the need for healthy and harmonious family relationships were being discussed. Each girl was asked to speak about her own family. Through this process, not only did the girls get to know about each others' families, they also began to appreciate their own family members, often learning vicariously from the experiences of others. We were told by the teachers that the activities that are part of this curriculum greatly help to enhance the verbal expression and articulation skills of many of the girls. They also help to posit favourable attitude change.

Gender equality is a cross cutting theme in the Social Learning Curriculum that has been developed by CARE. A direct representation of it, amounting to challenging of gender stereotypes can be seen in Udaan, in the games and sports activities that the girls engage in. Cycling, football and cricket are the most frequently played and enjoyed games, notwithstanding the traditional gender associations that they carry. Girls can be seen running, jumping, kicking, skipping and vigorously throwing the ball or hitting hard at the striker on the carrom board. There is a sense of mesmeric freedom that they seem to experience. In fact, the games hour is one of visible vibrance and high energy levels! As an extension to exploring their notions about gender, we asked them whether they would like to be boys in their next life. Most of them said 'no, they were happy and free at Udaan and would like to lead a life like this, always.' The few who answered in the affirmative, gave reasons of staying out late and wandering about freely and alone in defence. There is thus no perceptible anguish or feelings of unhappiness at being a girl.



The Bal Sabha

The Morning Assembly in most schools, conjures up images of a set of very predictable activities, ritualized to the extent, that they are almost mechanical in nature. These include a school prayer, the national anthem, some speeches, thought for the day and a moral lecture for inculcation of values. The Bal Sabha or the morning assembly at Udaan stands in sharp contrast to this! As we entered the campus at 8.30 am, we were greeted by a sight of 100 girls and their six teachers, in a neat circular formation, singing loudly in booming voices as they held hands and moved round and round. This was followed by some girls, coming into the centre of the circle and singing action songs which all the other girls joined in. Soon after this, the assembly became a story telling forum in which first one or two teachers, followed by individual girls, came up to narrate stories. After every story, teachers posed comprehension questions to the girls to ensure that the activities were meaningful and appropriate learning experiences.

On day two of our visit, the teachers and girls were seen playing an animal game and then a counting game which they were thoroughly enjoying. This was

followed by a number of poems with actions being recited and group songs being sung, which were lead by different girls. The assembly ended with vigorous arm and leg movements, bending, stretching and jumping, which we were told by the Camp Co-ordinator, was a slot consciously allocated to physical activity and exercise in the morning assembly.

What was very striking about the Bal Sabha in Udaan was the fact that it was not just a forum for prayers and announcements, but a participatory space for the development of language skills, promoting respect and understanding about local folklore and culture, developing confidence in the girls, giving them practice in communication, expression and leadership skills, serving as a place for recreation and enjoyment activities, in which are embedded many implicit ideas and concepts related to numbers, animals and human emotions, for the girls to learn. The selection of songs and poems is done very carefully, ensuring that they have potential for promoting language development, particularly building vocabulary in standard Odiya. This is a small but meaningful step to meet the challenges of the very complex multilingual context that prevails. Physical activities are woven in recognizing that they will generate energy and vigour in the girls as preparation for the study hours that follow. Religion and morality which dominate how most schools organize their assemblies to create a culture of obedience and compliance, are visible by their absence in Udaan. And yet, girls learn to respect each other, feel a sense of institutional belongingness, have a group identity and learn to observe order and discipline. The other unique feature about the assembly in Udaan is that it becomes a place for talent identification and its nurturance. Every girl does something and discovers herself- a small but significant step in the development of self esteem and a sense of identity.



The Teachers at Udaan

The team of six teachers and the Camp Coordinator at Udaan, if described in one sentence, are 'the heart, soul and backbone of the institution.' We observed that from 6am in the morning to 10pm at night, they work relentlessly, donning several roles that involve very dexterous multi tasking. They simultaneously play the role of surrogate mothers, administrators, subject experts, counselors, mentors,

organizers and trainers of art and cultural activities. Life at Udaan flows smoothly because of the intense passion, energy and high levels of commitment that they have. Early in the morning they can be seen writing up their diaries and lesson plans, then they are there to supervise the breakfast, following which they have a strong presence in conducting the Bal Sabha. This is followed by facilitation of a session of two hours duration in which they teach Language or Mathematics. Into each of these sessions/classes are interwoven at least four to five stimulating activities which they visualize and plan in advance. Not only do they conduct these activities with the girls, they also keep tabs on the responses that are evoked, surmise and make a mental note of the varying grasping levels that they show, keep organising and re-organising the class into small and large groups, spot the girls who can provide peer facilitation, place them in the sub-groups needing help and move around to check the nature of learning and progress being made, in the class. After every session, they then plan for the next one and document their reflective experience of the previous one. In their diaries, they make a list of names of those girls who are lagging in terms of the average class pace, so that suitable time and inputs can be given to them to catch up, in the next class. Teaching and process based evaluation thus become parallel responsibilities that they discharge, on a daily basis.

During the lunch hour, once again they can be seen helping in the distribution of food. They chat and make jokes with the girls to create a familial ambience during mealtime. In the evening during games time, they are seen happily playing badminton, ludo and carrom with the girls. What comes across is that they are not doing this as a part of their duty alone, they can actually be seen enjoying themselves. In the evening, each one of them are involved in transacting the Social Learning Curriculum, helping in the distribution of dinner, sitting with some girls who need extra academic help and finally sleeping with the girls in the dormitories, listening to their prattle and giving them advise, as any fond mother would do. A very interesting observation that we made was that for most girls studying in Udaan, their primary role models are their teachers! In listing what they admire about them, the girls responded by saying, 'their loving nature, their way of teaching, their behavior, their care and concern about us, their smartness and capability and the amount of time that



they devote to us.' Some of the younger teachers are admired for their physical appearance and ways of dressing, as well! By the end of the first month, the teachers know the names of all the 100 girls in Udaan and in the course of the year, they write up case information about all 100 of them, so not only is it the name of the girl, but her context and qualities, that they also know!

One of the invisible and yet most meaningful features about the teachers in Udaan is that they genuinely have an expansive conception of their role. Further, they also seem to have a strong sense of institutional belongingness and commitment not only to teaching, but being able to make a difference to several girls' lives. Their passion and energy appear to flow from this. Along with the sense of professional identity that they develop, the 'self or person' in them also emerges to be very strong and very much part of how they define and engage with their work. The leadership role of the Camp Coordinator was seen to be very democratic and benevolent and yet she was in control. There was thus a visible synthesis of her professional responsibilities on the one hand and her feelings as a person, on the other. It is this balance which makes all the difference. Another invisible but very potent factor was, that the teachers came across as a team who were emotionally bonded to each other. Their interpersonal relationships seemed more warm and familial than professional. All these undoubtedly help to build the facilitative socio-emotional climate and learning environment that characterizes Udaan!

A very touching scene was witnessed by us while we were there. As the girls who were the participants of our impact study came in, they rushed to meet their teachers, who embraced them with tears of joy. And then equally tearful was the time when they parted. The emotions that surfaced on both these occasions spoke volumes about the nature of the teacher-student relationship that exists in Udaan.

A group interaction with the teachers of Udaan revealed considerable professional growth having taken place in them. They had personal theories to offer about how they understood the processes of cognition and learning and they were well aware of the huge challenge that a multilingual context like Udaan poses. They had a few strategies to suggest based on their own experiences which they said worked in small ways. These will be elaborated in the

section that follows. Another expressed worry that they shared, focused on the interface between the Udaan curriculum particularly from Class 3 onwards and the Odisha State Curriculum. They were able to identify a number of mismatched expectations between the two. They were of the view that since the aim of formal education in Udaan was to get the girls to pass the Class 5 State Board Examination, this had to be given primacy over all other aspects in Classes 4 and 5. Drawing from the State prescribed text books, they had taken the initiative to make several adaptations and changes to the prescribed Udaan Curriculum. In fact when we asked them to indicate the curricular pointers in the unit cards that needed to be changed, they were able to do an elaborate analysis in each subject. The teachers have thus clearly developed a critical world view and do not limit their role to being mere deliverers of a pre- designed system. They have agency and an understanding about education, learning, the learner, curriculum development, methods of transaction and how to strike a balance between them. It was seen that all the teachers are graduates and have undergone various kinds and levels of training. However it was their classroom experiences that had actually enabled them to develop a critical analytical perspective.



Education in Udaan as a Journey for Life

The goals of Udaan encompass two main concerns: the formal education of the girls and their psychosocial empowerment. These are achieved through a carefully designed and transacted curriculum consisting of formal learning and social learning in a residential mode of one year. Undoubtedly these are very lofty goals which all stakeholders in Udaan work hard to meet. What remain unnoticed but are of crucial significance are the more esoteric goals and achievements of Udaan education. In defining psychosocial empowerment for instance, it is not just expanding social awareness and knowledge that is targeted. Girls are launched into a journey where society is perceived as dynamic, changeable and negotiable and where one's will and volition can find space and assertion, without having moral fears and dilemmas about doing something wrong. Life begins to be seen from a position of strength. This is called the process of attitudinal reconstruction which

once experienced, becomes a part of personality. The beginnings of this were visible in many girls. However the programme is still too young in Odisha to testify an impact of this kind. The point is that the possibility certainly exists.

Further, all girls in the age group of 10 to 14 years are developmentally in the life stage of adolescence. Being adolescent has its set of pleasures and pains. The environment in Udaan ensures continued peer support, sharing of experiences, modes for vicarious learning, opportunities for expressing one's fantasies and beauty and adornment needs. The social learning curriculum focuses on bodily changes, health and hygiene issues in relation to the body, menstruation and dispelling of social myths and fallacies that accompany it. All these are crucial aspects of any School Adolescence Education Programme. Thus without visibly showcasing it, Udaan is also providing Adolescence Education. The life skills component of it has already been highlighted, in an earlier section.

Another invisible aspect, but crucial for the development of self and identity, is the scope that exists in the Udaan experience for satisfaction of one's psychological needs. The dominant needs are the need for love, affection, belonging, affiliation, expression, security, recognition, prestige, esteem

and creativity. Life in Udaan has space and scope for the fulfillment of all of these.

The Udaan journey begins in the village community and through the process of education in the residential camp and subsequently in a high school and beyond, the idea is to create well educated, capable young women who can lead a life from a position of strength. The idea is thus to infuse a sense of identity in them which enables this. From identification of the girls, to networking with their parents and community, to putting them through Udaan and subsequently admitting them to secondary schools, the CARE team actually has a life transitional journey in mind in which the year spent in Udaan is seen as the fertile arena and the turning point. This is something that needs considerable highlighting, since very sincere and committed efforts are made to enable girls to make the transitions. Girls who have passed out of Udaan acknowledge it as a life changing experience and so do some of the parents, particularly the mothers.

While this section highlighted the visible and invisible dimensions of the best practices in Udaan, linking them with larger issues in education, the next section will focus on describing and analyzing the Udaan impact as visible in the girls and in terms of larger policy concerns.



LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT, DEVELOPMENT OF SELF AND IDENTITY, FUTURE ASPIRATIONS OF THE GIRLS AND POLICY ISSUES IN RELATION TO THE UDAAN IMPACT

Sub Section 3.1



Learning Achievement, Social Learning and Case Studies

As has already been indicated in Section 1, this section presents the performance of the girls on the learning achievement tests in Oriya, Mathematics and Science and on the Social Learning tasks. Five case studies that track the journey of the girls from their village habitation to Udaan, to where they would like to see themselves in the future have also been narrated. The art illustrations that depict their sense of identity and aspirations which were also a part of studying the Udaan impact have been presented in the Conclusive Epilogue.



Learning Achievement in Language

Language Achievement Test for Class 1

As was mentioned in the Section on methodology, the participant group for this test consisted of 25 girls, at the brink of completion of Class 1 and representing a continuum of learning abilities, ranging from average, to above and below average. The test was based on the parameters of the accelerated curriculum for language learning at Udaan. Specifically, the girls were tested for recognition of alphabets, verbal articulation and expression, comprehension, imagination and simple reading and writing skills.

To gauge their level of proficiency in standard Odiya, the following tasks were conducted:

Task 1: A descriptive account of a baby goat was narrated. It was followed by a set of comprehension questions. It was observed that each one of the girls were able to understand the narration and answer the questions posed, satisfactorily.

Task 2: This involved the narration of an Odiya folk tale aimed at gauging higher comprehension levels and critical abilities. It was observed that the entire group of girls was able to understand the tale. They were also able to indicate that they liked the story, but were unable to give reasons in support. Only one girl was able to suggest an alternative ending to the story. Thus critical thinking is yet to develop in them. Comprehension in contrast is quite well developed.

Task 3: A few situations and role play suggestions were given to know the level of expression and articulation skills that had developed in the girls. The responses that were obtained were varied. To situations which they were familiar with like a scene in the weekly haat, they were quite forthcoming with responses, but to imaginative situations like appearance of a snake in the room, many girls simply smiled or exclaimed.

Task 4: Colourful pictures were also shown to each girl. These pictures were not only from story texts that they were familiar with, but also from new books for children. With the exception of one girl who wanted a text that she was familiar with, all others

chose new texts to look at. By and large the girls were able to describe the pictures. There were variations in the time taken to respond, however. A lot of coaxing and cajoling had to be done before responses were evoked. Many answers given by the girls were in single words. One of the girls struggled and then eventually took the help of her peer to translate into Oriya, her response in the Ho language.

Task 5: To judge the reading skills of the girls, they were given colourful books with texts ranging from one liners to simple stories to read aloud. A choice of texts was given which included familiar and new texts. The respondents were also given the freedom of choice of texts in order to make them as comfortable as possible.

Reading levels were observed to be disparate. Seven girls were not able to read at all. Despite repeated encouragement, they sat silently just staring at the text. Nine respondents could recognize the text and read fluently. Few respondents were slow but read correctly and a few were slow and read with errors. The pattern seemed to validate their selection by ability.

The following reading strategies and patterns were evident from their responses:

All the girls consistently followed a left to right reading direction. There were no reversal errors.

In some responses there was jerkiness, hesitation and repetitions.

Few girls sounded out each alphabet, blended it into a word and then read the sentence. All those who read out were able to sound the complete words after repeated trial.

Some girls were able to read the unfamiliar texts by utilizing the context of the word and its accompanying visuals.

One girl traced the formation of each letter and matra of the text with her finger while reading. Few others pointed each word with their finger and read. This seemed to be an extension of the pedagogic approach that their teachers used with them.

Though a few girls were extremely soft in their pitch and tone, none stammered or stuttered.

Task 6: This consisted of a written task that required the girls to write the Oriya alphabets, complete simple fill in the blanks and attempt a dictation of five words

each, with and without matras. With the exception of a few girls, all of them were able to reproduce the Odiya alphabets sequentially. Most were able to write their own names and also that of their parents and village, as was directed. However it is evident that the girls need much more practice for improving the quality of their writing and spellings. Difficulties were evidenced in filling up the blanks since they required imagination and spontaneity. Most girls were unable to attempt them.

Inferences and Suggestions for Language improvement

Standard Oriya is a new language for the tribal communities represented in the group. Thus it is appreciable that the girls at the level of Class 1 have been able to pick it up to a level where they can at least comprehend, speak, read and write it at a basic level. However, the mainstream educational system which the girls will go to requires a degree of language proficiency that enables them to study different subjects in Oriya medium. Given the time constraints the challenge for the students and teachers at Udaan is quite formidable in this regard.

Further the achievement test responses reveal that the girls do not lack in imagination or interest. They were able to dramatise the haat scenes, thus making it clear that experiential contexts aid articulation of thought and response. However, whenever the response required a flight of imagination like mentioning colourful things, the responses were slow and limited. To match thought with articulation requires more engagement with the language in both oral and written forms.

Udaan already has a very interactive and innovative system in terms of the classroom teaching learning material and the oral work through poems, songs and action songs. However vocabulary building exercises require an enhanced focus.

The evident hesitation in writing suggests that more written work could help the girls to come comfortable in articulating their thoughts on paper. Walls demarcated for informal writing and drawing in leisure time would reinforce the idea of simply 'writing'.

An exposure to films and videos would enhance the contextual meaning of the language in addition to drawing the complete attention of a respondent.

Dramatization as a language learning strategy could be worked upon by weaving it into the social learning tasks as well.

Guided reading as well as group choral reading would aid verbal articulation of the language. It would also help the shy students to practice loud expressions of the language and get comfortable with it.

Enhancing of the visual exposure to written words for aiding sight memory would reinforce language development. Thus displays could be extended to all areas which the girls are exposed to.

Language Achievement Test for the Participant Group that had passed out of Udaan

The test was designed on the basis of the parameters and curricular points contained in the language curriculum followed in Udaan. As indicated in Section 1, the participants were tested for written language skills which subsumed personal narration, self analysis, experience sharing, freedom for ideational expression, imagination and wish fulfillment, ability to give directions/instructions, competence in writing formal and informal letters and grammar related skills. The idea was to see the interface between language and thought. The test also aimed to gauge the use of vocabulary, level of clarity and appropriateness of language expression, spellings and identify areas of confounding between the local language of the girls and the standard language that they were being taught. The test consisted of ten questions in all. A question wise analysis is presented, followed by a set of conclusive inferences.

1 Write a paragraph about yourself. Explain how you will introduce yourself.

All the girls gave basic socio demographic information about themselves and their life context which included their name, their parents' name and occupation, the name of their village, the tribe they belonged to and in some cases, a mention of their siblings. Then some of them moved on to describing experientially their life in Udaan, focusing mainly on their sources of happiness like good teachers, ability to pursue studies, having lots of friends, getting good food, etc. A high degree of correlation was seen between their lived realities and what they expressed in writing.

2 Imagine that a visitor from Delhi has come to your village. You have been asked to tell her about your village. What all will you tell her?

The responses to this question showed the predominant use of listing and description skills. The focus was on stating the availability/non availability of infrastructural facilities like '*kutcha* and *pucca*' roads, tube wells, open wells, panchayat ghar, schools as well natural resources like ponds, forests and different types of trees. There was also mention of the dominant village occupation by two girls. One girl wrote that she would tell the visitor about the extreme poverty in her village and also how people picked leaves to work on and craft into usable products, for a living. The celebration of different festivals was also highlighted. Somewhere the responses showed a deep sense of village belongingness, acceptance of the physical and economic conditions of the village and internalization of their indigenous culture. The responses were rooted in the present. The scope for using imagination, glorification of one's village or moving towards a utopian construction had not been tapped by the girls.

3 She wants to know how to reach Bhubaneswar from the village. What directions will you give her?

Most of the girls suggested that going by bus would be the most suitable mode of transport and one could go and enquire about this from the bus stand or from a bus driver, or someone going to Bhubaneswar. Train was also suggested as a possible mode of transport. A number of girls wrote that they were somewhat uncertain since they had never been to Bhubaneswar. Thus although they had understood the question, owing to lack of first hand travelling experience they were not able to say much. Their use of limited ideas and words seemed more a consequence of limited experience and exposure to real life situations.

4 Write a letter to your aunt (mother's sister) telling her why she should send her daughter (your cousin) to study in Udaan.

Most of the girls wrote the letter in the requisite informal letter format. They were able to put forth arguments in favour of studying in Udaan which were drawn largely from their own personal experiences and lived realities. The importance of studies was highlighted but was not linked to how it would

enable their life trajectories. The focus was on the here and now. The tone of the letters was friendly and suggestive, giving full respect to the Aunt.

5 Write a letter to the Sarpanch of your Village Panchayat, requesting that a high school for girls be opened in the village. Give at least five reasons in support of your request.

None of the girls could write a formal letter in the expected format. A set of five points in support of opening a school were listed out and were found to be copied from each other. Only two girls had attempted it on their own. Thus the ability to think in Utopian terms or imagine a brighter future were missing. Routine points emphasizing the need for a school were cited.

6 Make a list of things that you learnt in Udaan. Let the list be as long as possible.

Here there was evidence of self reflection and narration of personal experiences. Almost all the girls mentioned dancing, singing, cycling, rhymes, stories, cricket, football and carom. A few girls mentioned counting with sticks and stones, health and sanitation and giving respect to elders. The emphasis appeared to be on the new things they had learnt to do and were currently experiencing. Also what was enjoyed more, mainly activities which gave space and freedom for creative self expression were highlighted.

7 What do you want to be when you grow up? Where did you get the idea from?

The responses provided insights about the career aspirations of the girls. They voiced teacher, nurse, anganwadi worker, singer and 'do a job' as their preferred options. Two girls said that they got the idea from their head, others did not respond at all. They could not figure out the intent of the question. Since the answers were one liners, they gave no scope to assess any of the language skills.

8 If you were given Rs. 500 and the freedom to buy whatever you wanted, make a list of the things that you would buy.

9 If you were given a lakh of rupees to improve the conditions in your village, make a list in order of priority of all that you would do.

The answers to spending money on themselves focused on jewellery, cosmetics, toiletries, food and dresses. However, one girl prioritized books, pen and

copy and another added radio and mobile. The listed items show strong presence of adolescent leanings where dress, accessories and cosmetics to accentuate body image become important and food preferences get consolidated.

As regards money to be spent on their village improvement, the girls mentioned infrastructural needs like tube wells, open wells, ponds, roads, housing and schools. Here they were able to discern their needs and 'voice' their imagination. Some of them responded to this question by making budget heads and monetary allocations, but the idea was probably copied from each other. Creative thinking and utopian thought could have been expressed much more in this question.

10 Describe how the world would be if there were no men.

The responses showed that the girls could not imagine such a situation and most of them wrote about the world coming to an end. Fantasy and imagination that could have surfaced were completely missing.

Inferences and Suggestions for Language Improvement

There is no doubt that the language curriculum prepares students for mainstream secondary education and the process is worked upon very painstakingly by the teachers and students. However since the transition from the local language to the standard language is much more challenging here than in Udaan Hardoi, a more diagnostic approach which identifies foundational skill area to be worked upon and then seriated in a spiral must be done. The teachers' experiences in teaching the girls and the emerging difficulties and challenges that they face must be factored in. Seen as a stand alone Bridge Course, for the girls to start from a point where there is no written script to accomplish reading and writing skills in a new language is indeed commendable. However, the goals of Udaan don't end there. Girls have to move on in the mainstream system and thus language which is the base of all other subjects must be strengthened as much as it can, recognizing the time constraints. The KGBV teachers pointed out that the Udaan Educated girls face difficulties in language structure: basically grammar, sentence construction in appropriate standard language, vocabulary

and spelling. This has been corroborated by their performance in the present test as well. Errors in spelling, sentence construction and a jerky flow on account of inadequate vocabulary are visible in the writings of most girls. They do not lack in ideas. We also saw this but their ideas are expressed more in their verbal than their written skills. Although the written responses were very brief, they showed some evidence of self analysis, reflection and a developing world view, but the degree could certainly be greater given the connect between language and thought that develops at this time.

The expression of fantasy and imagination were conspicuous by their absence. They need attention since they are important components of language expression.

Vocabulary acquisition is the other area that could be addressed to support better comprehension and expression. Exposing learners to the written word through displays of various kinds not only in their classrooms but also in their living quarters and play areas would aid sight memory. More suggestions on this are given in the subsequent section dealing with Multilingualism.



Learning Achievement in Mathematics

Mathematics Achievement Test for Class 1

As indicated in the test description, the Mathematics test consisted of problems based on the curricular points included under Class 1 of the curriculum. The idea was to gauge how much and how well the girls had learnt Mathematics.

It was seen that the performance of the girls was consonant with their ability levels, as identified by their teachers. Of the 24 girls who appeared in the test, 10 showed above average performance, 8 showed average performance and 6 had below average performance. Among those who were in the above average category, four girls who were adjudged as very good in mathematics by their teachers, showed excellent performance on the test as well. They had no errors in their papers. Six others who had also been identified as good in Mathematics, had made some minor calculation errors, but were otherwise able to negotiate all the given problems. The eight girls who

were placed in the average performance category, faced difficulties in solving word problems, addition with carry over and subtraction. Those placed in the below average category faced difficulties in all the above listed mathematical functions and in number seriation and identification of geometrical figures as well. Mostly their difficulties were in reverse counting of numbers which was evident in their performance in the question “complete the series” and “what comes before”.

Inferences and Suggestions

An analysis of the errors made by the girls reveals that the concepts of zero and place value are not clear to them. This creates difficulties in solving sums involving carry over and borrowing, multiplication with zero and writing numbers in words. The poor foundation in these skills is likely to impact their learning of advanced concepts of decimals and fractions in later classes. Thus Class 1 Mathematics must be taken very seriously by the teachers and perceived as the basic foundational course where concepts have to be emphasised very strongly, rather than mechanical calculations and solving of sums. Basically, developing conceptual understanding in mathematics needs to be emphasised much more than merely training students to perform arithmetic tasks. Since the girls have native abilities to do mathematics, the goal should be to take them through the algorithmic process. Emphasis must shift from the product or right answer to the process. Error analysis is a good diagnostic means to identifying where students face difficulties and need more inputs.

Further, strengthening language skills will help students to deconstruct questions, particularly word problems. A better comprehension of the question helps in decoding the question and identifying the mathematical operations to be performed. It can also aid in simplifying complex mathematical tasks into simpler steps.

Mathematics Achievement Test for the Participant Group that had passed out of Udaan

The Mathematics test for girls who had completed Udaan Education was pitched at the Class 5 level of difficulty. The tasks that were included were

drawn from the curricular points listed in the Class 5 Curriculum of Udaan. Since the girls are presently in Class 6 and 7, it was felt that competence levels in mathematics expected at Class 5 would be a good base line to investigate. Instead of judging the overall performance of the girls, the ability to deal with different mathematical problems and computations was analysed.

More than 50% of the girls were seen to face difficulties with word problems. Questions involving longer instructions were also not understood correctly and in some cases not even attempted. Language thus proved to be a barrier in solving mathematical tasks. In fact the Arithmetic operations when presented numerically as sums without a word problem, were solved with much more ease.

Likewise although the girls were able to solve straightforward numerical problems involving addition, subtraction and multiplication with four digits, when the format of the sums was changed, they seem to face difficulties. When asked to identify where the error was in some solved sums that were given, most girls struggled, left the sum unanswered or plainly said that they did not comprehend the question. From this it was evident that the process of mathematics was not given importance. The focus was on the product and mechanical calculation of sums and problems. Given the time constraints that the Udaan teachers work with there is naturally less focus on teaching the nature of mathematics, but it must be understood that unless the nature of Mathematics is understood, subsequent learning at the middle school stage becomes difficult since abstractions and complexities set in with Algebra, Three Dimensional figures and Construction Geometry.

6 girls were seen to face difficulties with addition with carry over and subtraction with borrowing. Almost all girls struggled with division sums and their calculation process showed unease with the steps. Thus overall, the comfort level of many girls in arithmetic operations was seen to be low. Calculation of LCM and HCF was poor. The girls when asked were not able to explain either of the concepts.

Geometry was also seen to be a weak area. While most girls were able to draw acute angles, they were unable to construct and label obtuse angles. The angles were drawn crooked by some of them. In fact their work showed that the concept of angles, measuring angles,

use of geometrical tools and concept of line need strengthening.

None of the girls were able to work with fractions and decimals. Even while writing number in expanded form, a mechanical approach was followed. It appeared that girls could solve sums which they were in active practice of doing. Those functions and sums that had been learnt earlier but were not in current use seemed to have been forgotten. The essence of mathematics was understood for its functional utility at a given point of time. This serves the immediate goal of Udaan in preparing the girls to clear the Class 5 examination, but the larger goal of ensuring that girls continue in the system and complete their secondary schooling, requires conceptual engagement with mathematics, as well. This is an issue for contemplation.



Learning Achievement in Science

The girls' knowledge and understanding in Science was studied through an oral large group task. The participant group consisted of those girls who had completed their education in Udaan and were presently studying in KGBVs. The responses obtained to the questions that were posed, indicated good understanding of Science. Most girls were able to answer the questions, many of which required application skills. Their concepts in Science reflected that they were able to perceive and describe cause and effect patterns, draw inferences from scientific processes, relate their everyday experiences of nature and physical phenomena to concepts of science taught as part of the Science Curriculum and come up with examples to illustrate the different principles of science that they were studying. Some of the questions that were asked and the obtained responses are as follows:

Q. How are living and non living things different? List their characteristics.

A. *Living things breathe, work, walk and have babies. Non living things cannot do any of these.*

Q. How are plants different from animals?

A. *Plants are fixed, they cannot move about, they do not make sounds, they have leaves and they reproduce with seeds. Animals can move, make sounds, move about and reproduce through eggs.*

Q. What are the conditions that facilitate germination of seeds?

A. *Water, Sunlight, Fertilizer, Soil*

Q. What are the components of a balanced diet?

A. *Milk, Rice, Fish, Meat, Vegetables, Mango, Dal, Apple.*

Q. Mention the names of some communicable diseases that are common in your village.

A. *Scabies, Measles, Chicken pox*

Q. Which are the medicinal plants used in your village?

A. *Tulsi, Neem, Pijodi leaf*

Q. Why can't we see stars during the day?

A. *Because of sunlight*

Q. Why are shadows different at different times of the day?

A. *They are related to the direction of the sun*

Q. What are the names of the planets?

A. *The girls could name eight of them.*

Q. Where does the sun go at night?

A. *The earth revolves and so we can't see it. There is only one sun but different places see it at different times. So the sun does not go anywhere.*

Q. Why do our teeth break when we are young?

A. *Because they are milk teeth and only 20 in number. They become solid when we start eating a proper diet with protein and calcium.*

Q. What is the difference between a plastic and steel glass?

A. *They are two different substances whose shine, mass and weight are different. Steel is more sturdy.*

Q. What is the difference between a duck swimming and a fish swimming?

A. *One swims on the water and the other breathes through gills and so swims inside the water. They also dramatized how it happens.*

Q. Where does rain come from?

A. *They were able to explain the rain cycle*

Q. Name some districts in Odisha

A. *Bhubaneswar, Puri, Cuttack, Baleswar, Bhadrak*

Q. Name some leaders who participated in the national movement.

A. *Gandhi, Tilak, Nehru, Netaji Bose*

Apart from this we got into a conversation with them about ghosts, forest signals of weather change, the reproductive cycles of different animals, the food chain, use of forest products and different medicines that they make from the plants and trees around them. They had very good knowledge about all of these. They were also able to recount some simple classroom experiments that they had done to learn science. However, whether they are able to express their knowledge of Science in writing remains to be seen, since their language test shows limited vocabulary use and a number of spelling errors. Also, in their oral answers they did not have to construct full sentences and at times were seen to use colloquialisms. How this would translate into their written scripts will have to be studied.



Social Learning Tasks

What the Findings of the Social Learning Tasks Reveal

There were in all three tasks that were administered, as has already been described in Section 1, to obtain feedback about the impact that the social learning curriculum has on the girls. Basically, their attitudes, their societal outlook, their readiness for change, whether they are able to see their community practices from a changed lens and what they hold as their beliefs and worldview was gauged. The larger idea was to track how the process of their psychosocial empowerment unfolds.

Responses to the Gender Sorting Checklist

Each of the 18 adjectives/action words that constituted this checklist were read aloud to the group of 21 participants who then classified the adjective as more appropriate for males, females or both and gave reasons in support. The responses are presented below.

STRONG: The immediate response was **male**. The reasons given in support were that men had to labour hard in the forests and the fields and work outside the home. When asked about women's work and their need for strength, the first response was dismissive. However when the discussion was taken further, reminding the girls that women had to do strenuous tasks like filling water, all

the household chores and work on paddy fields, the girls began to re think their opinion and then moved on to stating that strength was required for **both**.

BEAUTIFUL: This was unanimously declared as distinctly applicable to **females**. The general view was that boys could not be beautiful. They could be heroes.

LONG HAIR: This was seen as applicable to **females** only. Most of the girls said they liked long hair for themselves. They could also style it the way they wished. It was considered inapplicable to boys since it was not usually seen and secondly, they felt that long hair did not generally suit boys.

THIN: This was attributed to **both** genders. It was linked to agility and energy to do work which the girls felt was applicable to men and women, alike. They could not however link thinness with good health, inspite of several cues being given.

JUMPING FREELY: This was announced as true for **both** genders. We learnt that in tribal culture this is not prohibited for both boys and girls.

ROAMING ABOUT: This was seen as possible for **both** genders, but was considered easier for boys to do. The girls shared that in the daytime they could go out freely and did not have to take permission. At night however, only boys could roam about.

SHYNESS: This was seen as applicable only to **females** since it was not seen in **boys**.

Anger: This was cited as characteristic common to **both** genders, but was seen much more in males and much less among women.

FIGHTING: This was seen as relevant to **both** genders. However, the girls differentiated the manifestations of fighting in boys and girls. In case it was a fist fight it was attributed to boys. If it were a verbal duel, it was attributed to girls.

LOVING: This was classified as an attribute of **girls**, but seen as more applicable to mothers.

SACRIFICING: As a quality, this was seen as more applicable to **girls** and to **mothers**, in particular. However, when we took the the argument ahead by asking that if a brother and sister were both hungry and there was only one biscuit left in the box, then who would have to make the sacrifice, the response was that they would share the single biscuit.

SOFT/TENDER HEARTED: This was considered important for **both** genders.

COURAGEOUS/BRAVE: This was seen as relevant to **both** girls and boys. Some girls substantiated that they considered themselves brave because they are not scared of going out at night, nor are they scared of ghosts.

HOMELY: This was seen as an epithet for a **mother**, especially since one of her primary tasks at home was to look after her children. They justified this role by saying that when very small children feel or experience their mother's presence, they stop crying. When asked whether fathers' could be homely, they responded saying that fathers could bathe children and look after them but only in the absence of the mother.

EARNING MONEY: Although this was associated with **both** genders, in the case of males it was cited as a compulsion. So the girls held that while the mother could also earn, her earning would be extra income. All the girls felt that both men and women should earn. In the future, they all envisaged that they would work to earn and then marry. On being given a choice between earning and marrying, they were clear that first they would get a job and then they would marry.

DECISION MAKING: Here while they felt it should be for **both**, in their lived realities they felt it was more their father's prerogative, although their mother also expressed her view.

MAINTAINING FAMILY HONOUR: This was seen as the duty of **girls**. In substantiation of their view, they told us that boys could drink or even run away- it didn't matter. But the actions and behavior of girls were always watched by society.

Inferences

From the responses given above it is evident that girls are beginning to see gender roles somewhat differently. At present, they are guided much more by what the societal practices in their communities condone and reinforce. However, if a rational line of reasoning is built up to make them think differently, then they are willing to re think their position. All of them are in search of an identity through education and obtaining a job. As mentioned earlier, gender inequalities and stereotypes are not so acute in their context and hence many responses attribute most of the adjectives/action words to both genders. Even if the girls don't see societal practices as changeable, what was very striking was that each one of them expressed a wish to lead a more worthwhile life.

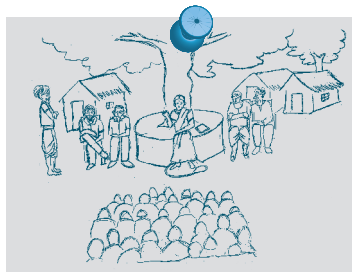




Responses to the Picture Description and Analysis Task

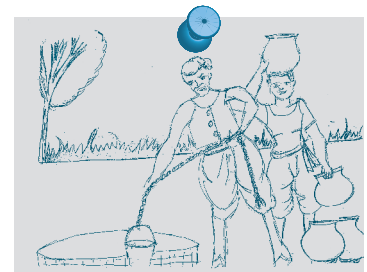
Here a set of 6 pictures with the female protagonist in an unconventional gender role was shown and girls were asked to express their views and comments about them.

In response to this picture, the girls said that they had seen such a scene before, where a woman sarpanch was addressing a meeting. However, they said it was usually where there was a reserved seat for women. Otherwise in the meetings of the Panchayat, the Sarpanch who sat in the middle was normally a male. The girls didn't want to be a Sarpanch because they wanted to do 'naukri (paid work)'. They said if being a Sarpanch was a naukri, then they would do it. They knew that the work of the Sarpanch involved the responsibility of getting civic amenities like a tubewell, *pucca* roads, school, aanganwadi etc. built, implementation of schemes for the rural poor and sorting out fights within a family, between families, etc.



Picture 1: A woman sarpanch addressing a panchayat meeting

The girls said that they had seen their father and/or brothers fetch water but only when their mother was unwell or away. Otherwise, they held that it was their mother's work. On further probing they held very firmly that when they themselves were married, they would automatically do this chore of bringing water themselves and not ask their husbands to do so. They saw this as a natural part of a woman's household work.



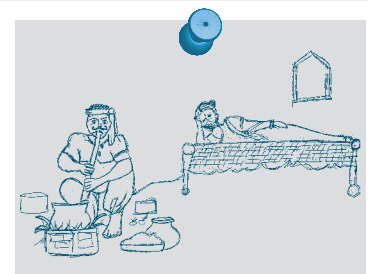
Picture 2: Men drawing and fetching water from a well

The girls responded by saying that they had not seen such a sight before. However, the consensus was that if they were taught, they too could drive a tractor. Husbands or the men could sit at the back. Like they had learnt cycling, this too could be learnt. They saw it as possible and not very radical, either.

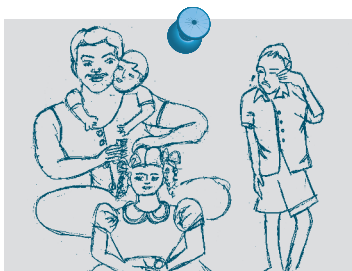


Picture 3: A woman driving a tractor

Once again the girls said that they had not seen such a scene. They speculated that maybe the lady, his wife, was not well and that is why he was cooking. We then asked them that when men can cook commercially in hotels and at Udaan, then why not at home? They responded saying that commercial cooking was a job but at home they firmly believed that women should cook. When asked if they would ask their husband to cook they clearly said 'no'.



Picture 4: A man cooking while the lady of the house is resting



Picture 5: A man tending to his children

The girls found this picture unusual since none of them had seen a father combing his daughter's hair. When asked where the mother could be, they speculated that in all probability she was dead! When asked whether she could be sleeping inside the house, they negated the possibility. They felt that women looked after children well and so it was naturally their role. They also said that when they were in such a situation, they would look after their children themselves.



Picture 6: Two women enjoying their leisure time, smoking and playing cards

Some girls said that they had seen women like this, but the consensus was that this kind of behavior is much more visible in men. They however felt that playing cards was not gender specific. When asked if they would do it themselves they said that they didn't know how to play. However, if taught they, too, would play.

A short discussion on what girls could and should do which ensued was interesting and helped to define their notions of femininity. In their view, girls should have long hair, wear earrings, necklace, nose pin and lipstick, shape their eyebrows, and adorn themselves with anklets, nail polish, mehndi, aalta. After marriage sindoor and powder was the least that was essential.

They were then asked their notions about what constitutes a handsome man. To this the response was that boys needed to substitute their dhoti and lungi, with jeans, watch, t shirt and goggles - an urbanized construction. Their favourite heroes were Sabyasachi, Babushan and Ajay Devgun. Favourite heroines included Kareena, Kajol and Rani Mukherjee showing conversance with Bollywood. According to them heroines had to be fair, beautiful and thin. Heroes had to be handsome, young and with good hair. There were thus visible tones of adolescent body image constructions and a permissiveness for women to indulge themselves that could be seen in them. There were also utopian fantasies about femininity and beauty.

Inferences

The responses made by the girls showed minimal evidence of gender conflict since in their own lived context, they do not appear to feel oppressed or suppressed on account of gender, as is the case in many other patriarchal belts. Thus, the role reversals depicted in the pictures were not analysed by the girls in terms of their gender appropriateness. Neither was the sharing of roles and responsibilities inspired by gender equity

and equality considerations. It was more that the girls had a sense of historical conviction that there are some things that men do better and some others that women are good at. They did not see this as a form of gender contestation. They seem to unknowingly be more in the realm of cultural feminism in which support and recognition is given to certain tasks and functions that women can do well.

Responses to Situational Analysis Problems

As part of this task, six problem situations were presented to the girls relating to different societal practices and the girls were expected to describe how they would deal with them.

Situation 1

Malati's grandmother has told her that during her menstrual periods, she must not go to the kitchen or touch the food that is being cooked for the family, since she is impure. It so happens that while her grandmother and mother are both away in the paddy fields, her younger brother comes to her and says that he is feeling very hungry and asks her to make him some food. If you were Malati, how would you handle the situation?

Response

Initially the girls were clear that they would not touch the food during their menstrual cycle and instead call another person for help. On telling them that suppose no other help was at hand, they agreed that they would violate the code and give their brother food. It would be so only if they were not able to arrange for someone else to help them. When asked to imagine that if they themselves were hungry, what they would do, they said that no matter how famished they were, they would never take food for themselves. When asked what was wrong in doing so, they could not identify any scientific reason. Many said that their mothers stopped them and they would be punished if they violated the code of the menstrual cycle. When asked if they would stop following this practice when they were independent, they said that they would continue to abide by it

since it was an age old practice in their society and they were accustomed to it.

Situation 2

The Odisha government has started a residential school for girls which is 150 kms away from your village. It is meant for girls from 6 to 14 years of age. Your younger sister is 8 and you are keen that your parents should apply for admission for her in the school. The school provides all facilities and sees the girls through their education upto Class 10. You talk to your parents about it but they express some reluctance. Explain how you will convince them. What arguments will you give in favour of sending her?

Response

All the girls were in favour of educating the younger sibling. The arguments in favour focused mainly on the chances of getting a good job. They felt that in any case studies were required for a sane and sensible understanding of things. It was also required for a good future. An educated mother could educate her children and support them emotionally (mother will not remain like what our parents are!). Also they felt that education enabled them to mix with other Oriya people. They said that they would also argue that when the educated girl grew up she would bring name and fame to her parents.

Situation 3

Your friend Deepa is 14 years old. She is studying with you in class 6 in the KGBV. You are both very happy about pursuing higher education. Deepa is very good at studies and a very serious student. One day, suddenly her parents land up in the school to take her back to the village since they have received a marriage offer for her. Deepa does not want to marry so early. She really wants to study. She comes to you for help. Discuss all the arguments that you will make to help her.

Response

The girls came up with many arguments to support their friend. They included the following:

- If she was married off young she would not be able to work
- If she studied she would bring name and fame to her family
- The appropriate age of marriage was 18 years

- If she becomes a young mother she will become weak and may die
- In case of a complaint the police could arrest them too

However, for their friend they said that they would not go to the police to complain against her family. Some said that they would cry and forcibly get their way if there was pressure on them to get married.

Situation 4

Your neighbor is very worried because her 3 year old son is down with high fever and diarrhea. She requests you to call the local shaman. What advise will you give her? What immediate first aid will you suggest to her?

Response

The first response to this was to take the child to a medical doctor and not a witch doctor. As first aid, they would give lemon water with salt and sugar or ORS. This they said would cool the stomach. They would also give a ripe banana. However, they would not give fried stuff like pakodas or even laddu as it would have an adverse effect on the condition of diarrhoea.

Situation 5

Your mother is very worried since your father has started drinking everyday and spends a lot of household money on buying alcohol. She shares her worries with you. How would you be able to help?

Response

All the girls were against their fathers drinking habit even if it was in moderation. Most said that they would help their mother by talking about the ill effects of alcohol to their father. Their arguments would focus on wastage of money, financial problems for the family, wasted hard work and labour and financial problems during marriage of their children, especially daughters. They also mentioned that they would highlight that their father could fall ill and get cancer.

Situation 6

Here girls were asked to do two role plays, showing a husband and wife in dialogue on how many children they should have and then on the husband's drinking problem. Half the group played the wife and the other half, the husband.

ENACTMENT 1

Husband: "I want 4 children."

Wife: "I will get weak."

Husband: "So what if you are weak."

Wife: "Go get another wife if you want more children."

Husband: "I will get another wife."

Wife: "If you do get one, I will take my children and leave you."

The husband group had no answer to this threat!!!

Wife: "If you love me, keep me but if you love someone else get her."

Husband: "You stay, I won't get another one. I don't want more children."

ENACTMENT 2

The group was divided into a drunken husband and a wife.

Husband: (Drunken, swaying and walking with difficulty but demanding) – "Give me something to eat!"

Wife: (Decides not to give anything) "Go drink more and come then I will give."

Husband: (angry) "If you have cooked then give me quickly. But if you have not cooked then I will thrash you so much that even the children will run away."

Wife: "When you have got drunk yourself and come then do the cooking yourself."

Husband: "This is your job. I married you and brought you."

Wife: "When you are drinking do you remember this?"

Husband: "When I am hungry I don't recognize my wife or children!"

Wife: "Are you not ashamed? There is a blot on our family in the village. They can even throw us out!"

Husband: "Everybody drinks! So what? If you don't like it, you can go, leave the house!"

Wife: "Even if you throw me out I will not go as you married me and brought me. If all the elders say so, then I will go. I did not come here on my own."

The husband had no answer!!!

Inferences

The responses to four problem situations which include, supporting girls' education, opposing early age marriages, whom to access for medical treatment and dealing with alcoholism, reflect that what has been learnt at Udaan both in terms of knowledge and attitudes, have got internalized. A very logical and scientific approach is visible in all the obtained responses which in the role play enactments is visible in a dialogical form as well. It is only on the issue of myths and beliefs associated with menstruation that there was some resistance to change. This may be on account of less open discussion on this, or family compulsions to conform which girls find difficult to challenge.



What the Case Studies Reveal

As was indicated in Section 1, case studies of five girls were done with a view to gauging how their sense of self and identity was influenced by the Udaan experience and also trace the process of transformation in their lives from their village origins to what they aspired for in the future.

Suggi Mankhadia, 14 years, an ex Udaan student is a Mankhadia tribal girl. Mankhadias are considered as one of the most primitive communities of Odisha. Her father, Sitaram Mankhadia is a daily wage earner. Her mother looks after the house. Suggi has an elder sister who is married and an elder brother who is a

daily wage earner. Two younger siblings go to school and two attend the anganwadi. In all they are four sisters and three brothers. As a young child, Suggi was sent to a school initially by her father but since she didn't like it there she dropped out. When the Community mobilizer on behalf of Udaan came to their village, she was convinced to give it a try and that is how she landed in Udaan.

Her parents encourage her to study. They felt that they had remained 'foolish' without education. But they wanted Suggi and her siblings to make a future for themselves. Her parents are convinced of the benefits of education and hope that their children will earn for themselves and stand on their own feet.

Initially Suggi didn't like it at Udaan but gradually as her experiences there unfolded, she took to it and grew to love it. She claims that she learnt cycling, carrom, cricket, songs, stories and games at Udaan. But most fondly she referred to the affection given by the teachers. Udaan showed her the way to study and move forward. She recalled that she had always wanted to study but over the years, had become over age and hence was hesitant. There was no appropriate system of education for her until she got to know of

Udaan. In her view, there is no match or alternative to Udaan. At the KGBV where she is currently studying, there is no facility for songs and dance or action songs. The dormitories too are not very big and there are only three toilets for 25 girls. She feels that the facilities at Udaan are better.

As part of her own self analysis, she recognizes her strengths and states emphatically that she is a good leader. She thinks so because she can influence her classmates and leads by example. In fact she shared that she managed the entire Ganesha Puja celebrations in her present school. She is often given organisational tasks by her teachers. Suggi also highlights that she has a strong determination. She makes it a point to try things that she is not good at and learn the. She gave the example of drawing to illustrate this.

She expressed with definitiveness that she wanted to break free of the daily wage labourer life of her family and community. She drew herself as a well turned out, nicely decorated girl, clearly with higher aspirations. She chose bold colours for her dress and completed her picture with boots and the trappings of femininity- cosmetics and jewellery.



She further explained that in the picture she has shown herself, walking in leisure in the afternoon. Her figure with one hand and finger raised, surrounded with ornate flowers, completes a picture of authority and freedom. Her voice and aspirations to have a better and improved existence are clear.

If given a chance, Suggi says that she would like to become the Sarpanch of her village and professionally, she would like to become an engineer who makes houses. She dreams about building her own house and those of others.

Suggi also drew the home and village of her dreams (Refer to the figure below). She says that her house would be pucca with an asbestos roof. It would be brightly painted and decorated. She completed it with a gate and a pucca bathing pool, flowers and other foliage. She drew a hand pump right next to her house which would have a pucca road leading to it.

When asked about her feelings on being a girl, Suggi clearly stated that she would like to be a boy. She gave varied reasons in support. In her view, boys can roam around freely. Girls cannot roam around so freely or go to the haat. Also boys can migrate to other states in search of employment and earn but not girls. Her parents do not encourage haat visits as people get drunk there on local liquor.

Her role model is Mahatma Gandhi. She is struck by the magnitude of his service to the nation and says she is inspired by his life to serve the nation. She knows about the process of constitutional elections.

As part of her quest to serve the nation, Suggi wants to educate all uneducated children. She wants to teach them to live together as a unified community with no fighting, no alcohol and maintenance of cleanliness and hygiene of themselves and their surroundings.



She has begun the lessons in her own home where she tells her mother to take care of her personal hygiene, especially to wear slippers while going out and also keep their home and its surroundings clean. She inspires her younger siblings to study, freely ask their doubts from their teachers and to study regularly. She sees education as the means to change inspired by her own experience at Udaan and her subsequent educational pursuit.

Malti Mankhadia, a girl of one of the most primitive tribes of Odisha, successfully completed the Udaan tenure and went on to study in Radha KGVB, Mayurbhanj district, Odisha. Daughter of Babu and Mati Mankhadia, she belongs to Uthansahi village. Her village is quite backward and has no tubewell, pond or school. Malti's parents are daily wage labourers. She has one elder brother who also works as a daily wage labourer and six younger siblings. Two younger brothers and three younger sisters go to school. The youngest is too small to attend school yet.

Malti studied till class 2 under a tree in her village. Since her mother was opposed to it considering it valueless, she had to drop out. In keeping with her family tradition, she went on to become a daily wage labourer, stitching leaves picked from the forest into plates for sale and commercial use. Her out of school friends in the village still engage in this task. She shared that some girls are also engaged in loading and unloading of sand and chips of stone, etc. In addition they do all the house work. The economic value of the girl is extremely significant in her village. Housework is taken for granted and none of the girls seem to question it either. However it is not perceived as a source of gender inequality. She recalls that her mother was angry when, at the behest of the CARE community mobilizer who visited their village, Malti volunteered to join Udaan. However, since her father agreed and encouraged her, she could continue her studies.

About Udaan she feels everything about it as an institution is good and she acknowledges that it has been the turning point of her life. When she came to it initially, she could not even understand Oriya, let alone speak the language. But now she can speak and understand it. Her original dialect is 'Mankedin' which is a mixture of Santal and Munda languages. She has learnt drawing, reading books, games, singing and dancing at Udaan. She fondly recollects that at

Udaan, the atmosphere is so friendly and encouraging and the teachers so nurturant and giving, that one learns a lot. Her experience in the KGBV in contrast is quite the opposite.

When asked to talk about her strengths and weaknesses and likes and dislikes, Malti listed her ability to draw as her biggest strength. She is not good at cycling and wants to learn it well. She does not like it when people get drunk and get violent. She gets scared when her father gets drunk and beats up her mother and others in the family. She also feels very bad that her brother's wife does not do any work in the house. She only goes to the haat and gets drunk. She works neither at home nor outside. Her brother does all the work. Her bhabhi claims that since she is fair and beautiful she will not do any work. Malti's parents and her brother have no say in the matter as the bhabhi's family is richer than theirs. Her bhabhi's family has also warned Malti's family not to beat their daughter. She has begun to understand how societal systems get perpetuated, how they often generate inequalities, vitiate family environments and is visibly troubled about them. This is the first perceptible step in social change.

As a career pursuit, Malti wants to become a teacher in her own village. Her role models are Rita didi of Udaan and Nirupma didi of KGVB. She has many dreams and among those are to become an anganwadi worker in her village. She feels anganwadi work can be combined with teaching! In drawing herself, she depicted herself as an anganwadi worker, a friendly figure with a flower in her hand. She also drew the anganwadi. This building maintains a strong presence for her as she has reinforced it with base pillars for strength and decorated its walls with designs. The drawing is replete with feminine adornment also emphasized in her oral narration of it. She feels very strongly about improving the facilities in her village, particularly the houses, roads and school.

At present, her mother is very happy that she is studying. Her parents want her to study especially because they feel that she will get a job. Her brother too always asks about her studies. Thus family resistance to her education after the year in Udaan, has been broken down.

With pride she shared that she carries her knowledge, acquired through education to her family and friends.



She shows them the dances and the songs that she has learnt. She also tells them how to observe better sanitation and hygiene. Further, when anyone falls ill, she advises them to go to a medical doctor, spelling out the limitations of witchcraft and indigenous healing practices. Thus she has in her own small way, become an agent of change.

Sebuti Murmu, 11 yrs, is a Santal girl from the village of Solagadia, Mayurbhanj district, Odisha. Her father Jadu Murmu is a skilled house construction worker, but his work is seasonal and so also his income. Her mother, Dhanimani Murmu is an 'Asha' worker.

Sebuti identifies with pride with her village. She drew her village Solagadia which has thatched houses, kutcha roads, an open well, agricultural land between the trees in the forest and by the side of the road and a pond. She filled details like fruits on the tree, lotus in the pond, growing crops, a bucket in the well and slippers outside the entrance of a house. She indicated that she would like to have a tube well for her village.

Most girls in Sebuti's village, Solagadiya, stitch leaf plates and do household chores like preparing food, filling water, sweeping, washing clothes in the village pond, wash vessels, look after their younger siblings, dry paddy on the road or ground, etc. Before joining Udaan Sebuti, too, used to stitch leaves to make plates. She could make 50 plates a day and earn Rs. 05.

At Udaan, Sebuti recalls learning songs and dances, rhymes, jokes, and speaking in Odiya. She has also started reading books, skipping, playing ring ball and riding a cycle, all of which were initiated in Udaan. She has also learnt to value cleanliness and give respect to elders. She feels that the nicest aspect of Udaan is that the teachers give time to the girls, and weave studies with play, thereby providing a stress free environment.

She has clearly defined likes and dislikes. Football, especially, is her favourite game. She also feels very happy to hear her friends thank her after she has explained a problem to them. She likes the peer bonding.



She wants to be a teacher because she likes teaching children. Sebuti's role model is her Udaan teacher, Sulagna didi. This is so because she teaches well, loves Sebuti and plays with her and her friends. She also inspires her to study to move forward in life.

Sebuti sees herself as a teacher of Oriya, in the future. This is what she has depicted in the drawing illustrating her dream. The image shows that her vision of her class is clear in her mind. Oriya alphabets are written on the blackboard, a text book is open on her table, students are sitting in place and teaching is in progress (Refer to picture overleaf).

Her sense of comfort with her gender and visualized professional identity is clear from the stylised dress and the manner in which she has represented herself.

When asked to draw herself, Sebuti depicted herself as a stress free happy individual waiting in a grassy patch to go and play with her friend. Her ensemble shows her creative side. Not only does her dress have

different designs but also her jewellery and make up is complete.

One of her brothers works in the field while the other one goes to school. She does not want to change places with them. She likes the work that she does being a girl. She justifies her stand by pointing out that girls earn more for the home than themselves, they do housekeeping better and can also have varied hairstyles. Boys on the other hand drink and create problems, do the outside work and also do hard labour. So there is no gender contestation. The division of work is also not perceived as infusing the girl with feelings of inferiority.

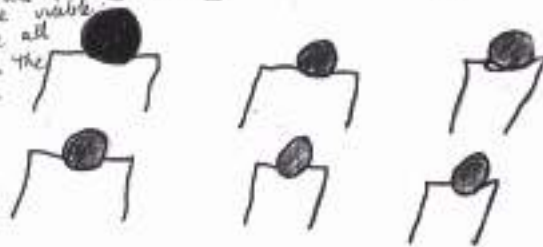
In describing what she carried back to her village from her Udaan learning, she recalled teaching her friends and family the songs and dances that she learnt. She also tells them the stories that she had heard. Sebuti also speaks to her family and friends about hygiene especially the washing of hands before meals. She appreciates and prefers the facility of

କୃମିକାନ୍ତ ଯେବଟୀ ଶୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ (ଶାନ୍ତଳ) ୧୨.୧୧.୧୯.୧୨
 ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୁରୁମା - ଉତ୍କଳପାଠକ

Kumari Sebati Mucous (Santul)
 Village - Solagadia



- I want to be an Deyya Teacher
- I will do my hair in a plait, I wear saice, bindi, lipstick, saree and bangles.
- I am reading out from an Deyya book.
- My students are boys and girls. Only the boys are visible. They are all sitting on the ground.



Sebati's Dream

Village - Solagadia



- I am wearing a skirt and blouse
- Wearing anklets, bangles, bindi and lipstick
- She is waiting for her friend to arrive and then they will both go to play.

proper toilets as it is safe from animals, infection and bacteria compared to the system of going out in the open. This fact she says she conveys to her family and friends on each of her visits home. Once again, there is some evidence of her role as a change agent.

Mita Singh, 13 yrs, is a Kolho tribal girl from village Kanheibandh, of Mayurbhanj district, Orissa. Presently she is studying in Class 6 of KGVB, Gayalmar. Mita's village is reasonably well developed. It has two open wells and two tubewells for water supply. It also has thatched and asbestos roofed houses and there are pucca roads inside the village. Most villagers including the young girls in her village are daily wage labourers. They work either on the fields or construction sites or on road building sites.

Mita's father, Chandra Singh passed away when she was very small. Her mother, Sebuti Singh, is a daily wage labourer. Her elder sister is studying in Class 10 and her younger sister is in the hostel at Tudiapushi Upper Primary School, in Class 4. Prior to joining Udaan, Mita did household chores and helped her mother. She also worked on the family's own piece of land transplanting paddy and cutting the crop. As a younger child she went for a month to school but had to drop out as her mother fell ill and she was required

at home. When Mita's mother came to know of the Udaan 'school', she admitted her there. Her elder sister takes keen interest in her studies and always enquires about what she is learning. Her mother very clearly supports the education of her daughters above their economic utility.

The experience at Udaan for her has been invaluable for it was there that she learnt to study, sing, dance, speak Oriya and express her ideas. She also learnt how to maintain cleanliness for a healthier life. She recalls with fondness, her Udaan teachers who were affectionate and explained different subjects of the curriculum very well. Good food was also part of her memorable Udaan experiences.

Mita identifies studies as her first and foremost strength which she feels she is good at. She likes English and Maths, especially. She also feels that she can sing well. She is very impressed by an Oriya singer whose name she doesn't know. She drew a picture of herself sitting at a table and singing confidently. Somewhere it is her dream to be acknowledged as a good singer. The professional touch is evident in the posture, mike and confident demeanour that is illustrated. The female adornments-hairdo, ribbons, bindi, lipstick and bangles complete the image



showing a strong leaning towards a feminine gender identity (Refer to picture below).

Mita is also good at playing ring ball and skipping. In the future she aspires to speak English. She can read a little English but cannot speak the language at all. She has seen the Intel training team and told us that she was very inspired by the foreigners who were engineers. She knows who engineers are, adding that they make aeroplanes and computers.

Mita likes being a girl because she likes to do her own work herself and also help her mother. She also likes to dress up and adorn herself which in her view a boy is unable to do. On the contrary she feels that many things that boys do, can be done by girls. She gives the example of driving and adds that in the future she would like to ride a scooter herself. She feels that it is the families which do not allow girls to do what the boys can. According to her a distinct difference between the two genders is that girls, after their marriage, have to leave their home and go whereas the boys bring the bride home. Girls have to be properly dressed even though the boys can roam around bare bodied. Thus she has thought up issues of gender and the stereotypes and codes of conduct that are spelt out for boys and girls.

Many new ideas that Mita had learnt at Udaan, she has carried to the KGVB and to her family in the village. She mentions cleanliness in particular. She proudly adds that she educates her mother on cleanliness and proper diet for a healthier life. Since her sisters are studying too, she gets a lot of support. Mita has strong and clear views in favour of education. She feels it is better to study than to be a daily wage labourer. She is convinced that as one's knowledge increases, one can discern what is right and what is wrong. At the weekly haat, now, the Oriyas can no longer cheat her. Earning of wages, according to her, can be done at a later stage in one's life. Thus the transformation in Mita's life is partly self determined but closely scaffolded by a supportive family and a will to make something of herself. Education is valued as the means to mobility and realization of one's aspirations.

Zeera Mohali, 13 yrs, an ex Udaan girl is a Kolho tribal, studying in Class 6 at KGBV Khunta, Mayurbhanj district, Orissa. She belongs to village Noto which boasts of a school, a panchayat ghar, a tube well and also electricity. The residents of

Noto celebrate a number of festivals together like Makarsankranti, Raja Sankranti, Xmas, Ganesh puja and Diwali. Most of the villagers of Noto are daily wage earners. Most girls in her village make plates out of leaves and earn upto Rs. 20 to Rs. 30/- a day. The leaves are collected from the forest either by the girls themselves or by their family members. The girls also contribute substantially to the household chores.

Her parents, Laxman Mahali and Poko Mahali are daily wage labourers and subsist through crafting bamboo into mats, brooms, etc. Zeera too was engaged in bamboo crafting before coming to Udaan. She dropped out of school as a very young girl because she fell ill with fever and had to be hospitalized. Her parents attributed the illness to the long foot journey to school and so did not encourage her to return to school or studies. But when a residential school option like Udaan came up, they sent her to study.

Zeera's family encourages her to study. Her elder brother who studies in Class 9 asks her to sit near him and read out aloud. Though her father is illiterate, he also inquires about her studies regularly. Thus there is plenty of family support.

'Udaan', recalls Zeera, has given her 'studies'. She has got education. As part of her learning she includes songs, dance, rhymes, stories, drawing, counting with the help of stones & sticks and cycle riding. Living in Udaan has taught her how to speak Oriya and how to become bold. She has learnt how to help her peers and others who are in need. She herself was nursed during her bouts of illnesses. At Udaan, the teachers explain everything well and with affection and so she loves the life here. She would like to return to Udaan as much as she would like all other girls of her village to study there.

She has tremendous self confidence and states with conviction that she is intelligent. On being questioned about how she reached this conclusion she stated that it was because she understands Maths well. She lists singing as her first and foremost strength. In her own words her weakness is her inability to dance. She wants to learn dance and overcome the inhibition. She also feels that she can't remember all her lessons very well and tends to forget easily what she has learnt. She is conscious that she has to improve upon this.



With reference to her gender identity, she is comfortable and likes being a girl. Had she been born a boy, by her age now, she says she would have been drinking, abusing and fighting. These are abhorable behaviours according to her. The only difference, according to Zeera, between her and a boy is that a boy can roam around freely and even go out at night. She doesn't aspire for either.

Her role model is her senior in KGBV, Vishnupriya, a Santal girl. Vishnupriya secured the highest marks in the Class 10 board examination and now studying in Class 12 at Bhubaneswar. Zeera wants to get marks like her. Her career goal is clearly laid out. She dreams to be a nurse. The inspiration came to her from a real experience in her life. Once when she had high fever she had to be admitted in hospital. She saw a nurse at work and that inspired her to make nursing her goal. She also wants to do seva(service). When asked if she was doing anything to realize her dream, she said that she helped her parents with the household chores when they fell ill. She adds that when anyone gets hurt she doesn't hesitate to tie a bandage for them. Her family members are appreciative of her helping nature and feel she can become a good nurse.

The lessons of life imbibed at Udaan have been carried forward by Zeera. She is consciously bringing changes to her home and village environment. She is teaching her mother to sign her name. Her mother has developed interest in learning this skill. Zeera proudly states that she has been able to convince her family and a few members of the larger community to visit a doctor in case of illness and not the 'shaman'. She understands that by going to the witch doctor illnesses cannot be cured. She has also been able to convince her father about the ill-effects of alcohol! She feels that her father's alcohol intake has reduced. Another positive change is her insistence on drinking the water only of a tube well. Her family and few friends have begun to follow this as a habit. Thus Zeera shows the potential to be a significant agent of change in her village.

Inferences

All the above case studies testify the fact that the year spent in Udaan has been a landmark in the girls' life journeys. Their lives prior to coming to Udaan typified fitting into the mould of the preceding generations of women in their villages. They were

also part of large families, struggling for survival. Udaan helped them to focus attention on themselves, realize that they were individuals with talents, abilities and the freedom to harbour dreams. Apart from acquiring skills, education and knowledge about society, every girl moved from an ascribed social, family and village identity to a self constructed personal identity. A sense of self had also built up in each one of them manifested as confidence, freedom to speak and express oneself, daring to dream and aspire and contributing in small but significant ways to progressive changes in their families. Every one of them had thought up a career pursuit with reasons in support of their choice. The community response to their girls could be seen as having moved from indifference to girls' education to supporting it. Post Udaan, all the girls were admitted to KGBVs without any family resistance. This was all the more noteworthy since the community was yet to tangibly realize the benefits of girls' education.

Sub Section: 3.2

Studying the Udaan Impact from the Lens of Policy Related Issues and Future Strategies

While the previous sub section focused extensively on analyzing the impact of Udaan Education on the learning achievement and development of self and identity in the girls, the present sub section will focus on the larger issues that emerge from the Udaan experience, which are of significance in suggesting future strategies for Udaan and some significant issues for policy considerations and academic discussion in the education of tribal girls. Some of the issues had already been mentioned in Section 1. Here, a more detailed discussion of each of them is attempted. The efforts that have been made in Udaan to address each of the identified issues and the questions, debates and challenges that still remain, will also be discussed. Suggestions on ways ahead will also be concomitantly highlighted. Data and insights for this section, were obtained through our observations and discussions with the teachers at Udaan, teachers and headmaster/headmistress in the two KGBVs that we visited and insights drawn from the rich experience of the CARE team.



Ways in which Contextualisation has been Addressed

In any educational endeavour for a specialized group, the challenge of creating a curriculum, environment and learning experiences that provide continuity with the socio cultural world of the target group and yet enable them to expand their identity, their understanding of the world and adjust to the system of mainstream education, is a very daunting task. Udaan is no exception to this. What needs to be highlighted are the ways in which Udaan, has meaningfully used some dimensions of tribal culture to provide contextual space and continuity to the girls. For instance, all tribal communities have their own specific dance forms and native songs. In Udaan, an effort is made to preserve and respect these. The girls are given a formal period in their schedule every Wednesday evening, to share their own songs and dances. Many girls from other tribal communities get interested in learning them and so there is a cultural exchange. Apart from music and dance, girls often recite poems or narrate folk stories from their own context and then discuss them.

We saw one such evening in which girls from three different tribal communities (presently in Udaan there are girls from three tribal communities: Santals, Kolhos and Bhumijas) in full dress and splendour, put up a cultural programme in which they displayed their songs and dances. We also went on to the stage to learn the dance steps from them, while they explained the words of the songs. Likewise, initially when they join Udaan and then on some discrete days, girls are given the space to share stories, songs and parables from their community and explain the meaning to others.

The teachers at Udaan shared that they try very hard to contextualize their teaching wherever possible, keeping in mind the background of the girls. In Science for instance they exemplified that the relationship that the girls have with the forest and their indigenous knowledge about plants, animals, crops, trees, forest products etc, is tapped and used to build up concepts. In Social Science too, they said that the village and community constituted the base from which they always began to teach larger concepts. They also draw from the girls' lived realities like the village haat, the way in which festivals are celebrated, the pujas, rituals, fasts, the panchayat

meetings, etc to build up ideas. In language, they incorporate some folk songs and also use some Oriya folk tales. We saw some evidence of this in the bal sabha and also from our theme analysis of the collection of poems, songs and stories that Udaan has built up. We could not however observe any efforts at contextualization in the formal teaching learning processes while we were there and have relied mainly on what the teachers told us. Probably our visit was done at a time when the learners were at a very initial stage of learning.

A glance through the lesson plans of teachers and their diary reflections however did not reveal visible concerns about contextualization. Neither do the unit cards. The cards are used as they are and tend to be seen as prescriptive and given. Maybe this needs much more formal attention and review, especially given the fact that the girls have rich indigenous tools, sources and ways of knowing the world. We also observed in their drawings and paintings that they have very stylized ways of art representation and illustration. There is a lot of colour and an eye for detail and their art mirrors the folk tradition in how it is done (See Back Cover). This is displayed on the walls of the classrooms, but maybe it can be nurtured and honed into designs, ultimately for the handicraft and handloom industry. Sari borders, fabric block prints, cards, linen, etc. are potential areas where later in their lives, girls can contribute designs. Likewise the girls have a number of weaving and stitching skills, drawn from their life contexts. The girls may be given training to improve and enrich it through a workshop or on some Sundays, by calling a resource person. When we visited the KGBVs, especially Khunta, we found that a lot of emphasis was given to vocational arts and craft and there were products on display to testify this. It may be argued that the focus in Udaan is different. Formal education takes precedence over all other activities. While this is true, the idea is that something rich and indigenous that the girls bring with them should not get lost. Some efforts to preserve it can be made. This would also serve as a small means to contextualization. Further, their skills in art and craft can be put to constructive use in making teaching learning material, as well.

As part of the concern that life at school for the girls should be continuous with the home and make the transition from home to school for them, more smooth, parents are allowed to visit their daughters every Sunday. In addition, quarterly community



seminars are held at Udaan to keep formal contact between the teachers and the girls' parents. The teachers also shared that time and again, parents seek their advice on different matters concerning their daughters and other family issues. Such is the nature of the home – school continuity.

Further, the school menu is also seen to factor in the food that girls like from their homes - a small yet significant attempt at contextualization. As an example, some girls very excitedly told us that water rice with fried potatoes is their favourite food, which they often ate at home. And sure enough, it is part of the school menu.

A very significant space for contextualization is the Social Learning Curriculum. Since it aims at expanding the sensitivity, awareness and understanding of the girls and ultimately developing them as leaders, it needs to be adapted in a manner that takes cognizance of the issues that arise from the beliefs, practices and attitudes that constitute the real context of the area. At present, there are a set of given topics and ways of transacting them which are followed as they are. These topics and in fact the entire curriculum were developed in Uttar Pradesh where many of the societal realities are very different from the tribal context of Odisha. For instance, as has already been mentioned, gender inequalities are not so relevant as they are in UP where they merit centre stage attention. Likewise dowry is not relevant to the tribal context of Odisha. Further, the health and nutrition issues are also different since the food patterns are different. The issue of land rights is also not that relevant in Odisha. Keeping the tribal context in mind, the topics that need to be included in this curriculum are the problems related to early age marriages, knowledge about birth control measures especially since there are different dormitory systems in tribal societies, alcoholism which is a rampant problem, the need for scientific treatment of illness over the practice of going to witch doctors and detailed understanding of the common diseases of the area which include malaria, chicken pox and dysentery. Knowledge about medicinal plants can also be included. This would add considerable value to the girls' knowledge and understanding.

Apart from exploring the possible spaces and ways of achieving contextualization, there is another side to it that also needs to be highlighted and dealt with. Often the community conflicts and prejudices that one grows up with are seen to influence one's adjustment

to new environments in a negative way. In the Udaan context this is experienced to some extent in the beginning. It is seen that girls from different tribes tend to stick to each other and fail to mingle with the other girls. There is also an implicit power and domination structure that they bring with them on account of their background, especially the Santals who are the most dominant tribe. Since school is a more homogeneous space where all girls are valued equally, simple but very effective strategies are used by the teachers to break these parochial barriers and get all the girls to relate to each other. What is done is that girls from different tribes are consciously mixed in the dormitories, so that they begin to interact. Then, the sleeping mats which are double mats, are also allocated on the basis of the same principle of mixing the tribes. All girls are provided a school uniform and their hair is cut short as measures of homogenization and equalization. Further, in the case of those girls, who take longer to transit to standard Odiya from their own tribal language, for a few days the Bal Sabha is conducted separately to help them to catch up without having feelings of inferiority. We were told that by the end of the first month through these small steps, all the girls are well integrated into the system and become cohesive with each other.

Challenges of Multilingualism

One of the biggest challenges that the tribal belt in Odisha faces, is the multiplicity of tribal languages that co exist. Every tribe has its own oral language which is usually a dialect of Odiya. It is only the Santals who have a written script, Alchiki which bears constitutional status. Since Udaan admits girls from different tribal groups, the multilingual context that automatically emerges is a huge challenge that has to be dealt with. Since the duration of the programme is only for a year and Class 1 competencies have to be achieved in six weeks, the challenge is even more acute. The teachers told us that initially it is very difficult for them to even communicate with the girls. They have picked up some tribal vocabulary and by using some discrete words, sign language and body actions, they somehow communicate with them. The goal in Udaan is to use language learning strategies that will enable the girls to learn the standard language, at least by the end of class 1. When we went for our field work, the girls were nearing completion of class 1 and we were informed that 70% of them had been able to

make the transition to standard Odiya. However with the remaining 30%, the challenge still persisted.

On probing about the strategies that are used, we were told that at the very beginning, the ground rules are set and the girls are told that they have to speak only standard Odiya. This applies to both inside and outside the classroom. To help them to pick up the language, the Bal Sabha and classroom space are used constructively. During the Bal Sabha for instance, the teachers introduce them to a variety of poems and songs, which as they recite and sing on a regular basis, enable them to pick up significant words and gradually build their vocabulary in the standard language. At the age at which the girls are, the developmental readiness for language acquisition is anyways very high. The teachers also narrate stories with actions in the standard language to promote associative learning. To complement this, the pedagogic approach that is followed in the language class, focuses majorly on language acquisition. One problem that we observed and the teachers endorsed was that the unit cards are tuned to learning of Hindi drawn from the Udaan, Hardoi context, which is a much less complex scenario than that in Odisha. Thus a lot of the activities drawn from the Hardoi experience are set to objectives and time schedules which in Odisha, are unachievable. For example, without basic language competence, the goals in the unit cards for class 1 requiring the girls to enact or write a story are unrealistic. Many girls are still struggling to learn the standard language. Instead it is recommended that the language learning activities veer around oral language practice before moving on to the writing skills. Some teachers suggested that the apportioning of time for the different language skills in Class 1 can also be examined and re-allocated. In fact the teachers have very good suggestions to make and it is important that their views which are based on practical experience, find articulation in how the language activities are re structured.

One effective strategy that is followed in Udaan is to have a separate Bal Sabha for those who need language support. Through this, they are brought to the standard language without feeling threatened or inferior to their peers. The teachers in Udaan have also obtained the material that the Odisha government has developed in the form of Language Cards for Multilingual contexts which they try to adapt and use in the Udaan classrooms. In addition, CARE has taken

the initiative to translate some simple picture books into Odiya and print the written text in large bold letters in these books, to enhance visual cues for language learning. What is also seen is that a number of story books with illustrative pictures are used as multiple readers to familiarize the girls with reading Odiya. They learn to associate words with the pictures and build their vocabulary. While noteworthy efforts are being made in Udaan, it is recommended that a few additional simple strategies may also be adopted. These have been drawn from the experiences as lessons learnt from other interventions and contexts.

There is potential in language learning to use the emergent literacy approach. For this the use of continuous visuals in the form of charts, posters and colourful slogans, etc if displayed in the spaces where girls live and study, are likely to incite girls' curiosity to make sense of what they are seeing and promote sight reading. At the elementary language learning stage, the visual mode is seen to be effective.

Further, in the Social Learning Curriculum, the first major activity is 'Abhivyakti' which is aimed at building up the self confidence of girls through language expression tasks and opportunities for developing articulation skills. Certain prescribed activities have been given in the manual which are followed. Rather than following these, the teachers at Udaan who are aware of the language related problems of the girls should be asked to develop language activities which are more relevant and suited to the language learning needs of the girls whom they teach. The point to be understood is that one approach does not work in all settings and adaptations have to be made. Thus while the aim is usually the same, the means to it can vary and so this forum has to be used to meet the challenges in Udaan in language learning that prevail.

It may also be worthwhile to develop a word list (shabda kosha) of those words that girls need to use in their everyday interactions and communication. These words will have to be listed in each of the tribal languages required in Udaan and with them, the standard Odiya word equivalent will have to be provided. These lists may be hung up for girls to see and use. It is seen in several literacy programmes, that when the words are those that relate to target group's everyday needs, they are grasped and learnt much faster. The language cards developed by the Odiya Government we found were consonant with the formal dictionary approach to language learning. We



found that this often becomes intimidating because of the size and non relevance of the task.

Lessons and cross learnings may also be drawn from the efforts that are being made by the Odisha Government in the Tribal Welfare Schools and Ashram Schools that they run. To get a diagnostic view and nuanced suggestions for Udaan however, a serious research study that focuses on meeting the challenges of a multilingual context and enables an effective transitional shift from the local to the standard language, must be commissioned to experts in socio and psycho linguistics. They must be asked to focus explicitly on practical strategies that the teachers can use and facilitate the development of resource material for the same. The outcomes of such a study may make Udaan a model case to emulate.

were tapped. To begin with, the data available with the CARE Office in Odisha regarding the performance of the previous batches of Udaan in the Class 5 State Board Examination was obtained to study the achievement trends. Data about where the girls sought admission after passing out from Udaan was also collected. In addition, a visit was made to two KGBVs to obtain qualitative feedback from the teachers about the girls' current performance. The views of Udaan teachers with regard to how the curriculum followed in Udaan, connects with the state curriculum were also sought. They were also asked as a group, to look critically at the unit cards which guide the direction and flow of the curriculum in Udaan vis a vis what is followed at the same level, in the state curriculum. They were asked specifically to identify the curricular points that merit change in the Language, Mathematics and Science Curriculum and give reasons in support.

Interface between the Udaan Curriculum and the State Curriculum

Since Udaan follows a compressed accelerated curriculum, two issues of serious concern that arise are: how the Udaan curriculum compares with the State board curriculum and how well it prepares the girls for mainstream secondary education. To find answers to these questions, several sources of data and information

What the Data on Board Exam Performance Reveals

The table presented below summarises the performance of the girls in the Class 5 Examination across the three batches that have passed out. At a glance, the overall statistical trend shows a normal distribution of scores especially with reference to performance in Mathematics, Oriya, Science and Social Science.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE						
Batch-2009-10						
No. of students placed in different range in different subjects						
Subjects	Math	Odiya	Eng	Science	Social Studies	Art
A-(80% Above)	3	13	0	7	21	15
B-(65%-79%)	47	44	0	48	48	56
C-(50%-64%)	27	24	4	26	12	13
D-(35%-39%)	5	2	41	5	3	2
E-(Below 35%)	4	3	41	0	2	0
Total	86	86	86	86	86	86

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE						
Batch-2010-11						
No. of students placed in different range in different subjects						
Subjects	Math	Odiya	Eng	Science	Social Studies	Art
A-(80% Above)	31	59	22	12	21	0
B-(65%-79%)	20	13	41	28	32	2
C-(50%-64%)	23	20	26	36	24	9
D-(35%-39%)	17	6	12	15	20	34
E-(Below 35%)	12	5	2	12	6	58
Total	103	103	103	103	103	103

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE						
Batch-2011-12						
No. of students placed in different range in different subjects						
Subjects	Math	Odiya	Eng	Science	Social Studies	Art
A-(80% Above)	26	42	53	26	26	6
B-(65%-79%)	31	29	11	13	13	18
C-(50%-64%)	21	7	14	17	17	12
D-(35%-39%)	17	16	12	28	28	52
E-(Below 35%)	7	8	12	18	18	14
Total	102	102	102	102	102	102

Majority of the girls are placed in at in the Grade categories of A, B and C, with the number in Grade A being fairly large in the last two batches, particularly in Maths and Oriya and noticeably in the last batch in English. This shows that the curriculum and pedagogy followed in Udaan and the adaptations made by the teachers in the Class 5 preparation segment, as reported by them(not officially documented) have worked towards enabling the girls to perform well in the Board Examination. Performance in English also shows improvement from the first and second batches to the third batch. At the same time, there are still a significant number of girls who figure in the Grade D and E categories across subjects. This requires a diagnostic analysis, particularly an investigation of whether language impedes learning of different subjects and for curricular implications.

Feedback from the KGBVs

The two KGBVs that we visited were Khunta and Badsahi. There were approximately 40 girls from the second and third batch of Udaan in KGBV Khunta, who were studying in class 6 and 7. We interacted with their headmaster and with two of their teachers. The general view that was expressed was that while the Udaan girls are very well mannered, talented and participate extensively in co curricular activities, in academics, they are at a slight disadvantage when compared to those who have studied in the mainstream system. What was highlighted was that though they work hard, they struggle with some concepts in Maths, particularly where abstraction is required. They find word problems difficult and sometimes face difficulties with sums based on different aspects of the number system. One of the teachers who taught them Maths and Science, appreciated their positive attitude and persistence, but she strongly felt that bridge courses cannot create the same learning foundation that regular primary schooling can, because the same sequence, rigour and depth cannot be maintained. She also felt that in Bridge Courses, many concepts get skipped or are rushed through, putting the girls at a disadvantage. She felt that the middle school curriculum was more subject centred and already a leap from the primary school curriculum and so it was not so easy for the Udaan Girls to negotiate. However, the consensus was that they are able to cope and manage to move from grade to grade. The view in Badsahi where five girls have recently been admitted was very favourable,

once again with reference to their behavior, hygiene, mannerisms etc. It was too early for a comparison to be made with those who have studied through the five years graded system. But what emerged was that if the Udaan girls were compared to those who came directly to the KGBV, they stood out in terms of their academic base and preparation. In fact many of the girls in both the KGBVs told us that they are used by their teachers as peer tutors for the other girls in the KGBV who are doing the bridge course. What needs to be highlighted here is that the curriculum at Udaan is in the mode of a Bridge course and hence has no claims to being an alternative to five years of graded primary education. Comparing it to regular mainstream primary education is thus not intended or even desirable, However the fact that it launches girls into secondary education in the state system, which most of them are able to negotiate, suggests that the interface between Udaan and the State system is reasonably good.

Efforts of Udaan Teachers

The sense that we got from the teachers at Udaan was that use the phases of class 4 and 5 to enable girls to make the connect with the State Board. They draw the contents to be taught from the State text books, prepare girls for the examination and rely on the knowledge of the text books for the depth and width of coverage of differet topics. Often there is a mismatch with the unit cards that they are expected to follow which they resolve in favour of the State prescribed curriculum. What must be understood here is that the unit cards in their present form, which have largely been drawn from the Hardoi experience and are veered to the UP State Curriculum, cannot become the guiding principles of the curriculum in Odisha since the topics are different and the course expectations between the two Boards are not completely compatible. Udaan, Odisha will have to have its own adapted version of the unit cards particularly for classes 4 and 5, which is based on the curriculum followed by the Odisha government. At present teachers do this preparation on their own. A better idea would however be to legitimately through a workshop, adapt the unit cards for Odisha. The teachers were able to point out all the incompatibilities and incongruences in the existing unit cards and the Odisha state courses in Language, Mathematics and Science. They have also prepared a list of curricular points in each of these subjects that need to be followed. Their main challenge is how to



compress the course into the tight time slot that is allocated to class 5 in the Udaan Curriculum. It is this compression and time allocation that they are unable to figure out without expert help. The CARE team also supported their view. Given this scenario, it is recommended that the GPE Unit give this high priority. It will smoothen considerably the process of transition for the girls to the mainstream system and help the teachers greatly in organizing and planning their lessons.

In fact in Maths and Science we ourselves studied the syllabi and the text books that are followed by the state schools and found that many topics are different. The Maths course in UP has many more concepts to be learnt by Class 5 than is the expectation in Odisha. The structure of the Social Science and Science courses also differs greatly not only in terms of topics, but the ways in which the topics are covered. The general view among the Udaan teachers about the unit cards was that up to class 3 they were very purposeful excepting for some alteration required in language learning in Class 1 and 2. However, for classes 4 and 5, they would greatly appreciate adaptations and modifications.



Initiatives Taken by the Care Team for the Onward Education of Girls

One of the most appreciable aspects of the Udaan initiative is that the programme does not restrict itself to merely enrolling the girls and seeing them through one year of Bridge Course education that enables them to complete their primary education. It is a much larger commitment to girls' education and empowerment. Thus, just as very concerted mobilization efforts are made to draw the girls from very marginalized and backward regions to come forward and enroll in Udaan, the same efforts and concerns are visible in enabling them to pursue secondary education. The CARE team has, over the last three years built networks with the Tribal Welfare and Education Departments of the State Government to advocate and promote the cause of girls' education. They have also showcased the Udaan programme for its innovativeness and quality. In addition, through strong liaison activities, linkages have also been built with the District Officials in Mayurbhanj, beginning with the District Collector and all other significant persons who deal with education. Most persons in the field of education in Odisha know about Udaan.

Three batches of girls have passed out of Udaan till date. The data about their onward education reveals a very interesting pattern. From among the first batch of 86 girls who passed out from Udaan in 2010, 57 girls enrolled in The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS). CARE had made very serious efforts to build linkages with KISS and scaffold this process. KISS as is known, is basically a very large institution for tribals that offers courses from the kindergarten level to the post graduation level. It is a unique initiative and probably one of its kind in India. It enjoys considerable patronage from the Odisha government and from other private patrons and donors. At the time when 57 girls from Udaan went from their remote contexts all the way to Bhubaneswar to obtain admission in KISS, it was considered an outstanding achievement. CARE was very proud of its achievement only to realise that after one year of being in KISS, 20 girls dropped out and many others who continued there, expressed unhappiness in their experience of being there. An analysis of the situation revealed that for the girls, the psychological transition from the warmth, care and protective environment of Udaan to the very large and culturally different environment at KISS was very difficult to make. The student body at KISS consists of about 16000 persons and so the sheer largeness of it is very frightening for those girls who hail from small close knit communities and habitations and have only experienced school life in Udaan, where also the experience is like being in one large family. We were told that the girls found the environment very impersonal as the teacher student ratio did not permit a personalized or bonded relationship with the teachers. Moreover, Bhubaneswar was also seen as being situated too far from Mayurbhanj and the expenses and inconvenience of travelling up and down during the vacations for the girls and their parents. These were some of the key factors that had led to the girls dropping out. We realized as has already been stated, that for the community from which the Udaan girls come, the instrumental value of educating girls has still not been understood and so the importance of studying in KISS would naturally not be realized. Further, for adolescent girls, making transitions from one environment to another is a source of challenge, especially if the two environments are culturally different. A basic discontinuity between Udaan and KISS was experienced by many of them. It must be mentioned, that the girls who did continue in KISS are presently in class 8 and are continuing their

education. In the subsequent batch too, 13 girls went to KISS and are continuing there. We were told that from among those girls who are studying in KISS, some have excelled in sports and won state level awards.

Taking stock of the scenario and experience with the first batch, the CARE Team felt that if the Udaan girls were admitted to KGBVs, their adjustment and continuity with what they were used to in Udaan, would be better. To obtain permission for the same and make it an operational reality, the CARE State Office wrote to the Collector of Mayurbhanj and liaised with the DPC in SSA and the Tribal Welfare Officer of the district. The basic argument given was that the Udaan girls were tribal girls from marginalized communities and needed to complete their education upto class 8 in a residential school. The girls fitted into the specifications that guide the eligibility for admission to KGBV and so the doors opened up for them. There are five blocks in the district where KGBVs have been instituted. Depending on the availability of seats, an attempt is made by the CARE team to obtain admission for the girls in the KGBV that falls within their residential block. Otherwise, proximity to their home is kept in mind even if they have to go to another block. More than 90% of the girls from the second and third batches of Udaan got admission to KGBVs and are at present studying in class 6 and 7, respectively. Adjustment to the KGBV has been much easier since new hostels have been constructed where the girls are accommodated. The hostels are well equipped with beds, cupboards, fans, tiled flooring etc. Further, in the process of living together, the girls build up a comfortable familial environment. Notwithstanding this, our feedback from the Udaan passouts who are now in KGBVs was that “there is no place like Udaan.” The reasons for this have already been discussed in the two earlier sections.

It must be pointed out here that while KGBV appears to be a safe, secure and comfortable environment that the girls can be in till class 8, after that the issue of concern is what next? When this question was put to the State Team in CARE, they had no clear policy vision to offer. They do realize that their commitment is to scaffold girls’ education until they complete their matriculation and also create a new generation of tribal girls who can be leaders, but after KGBV education, how girls will be helped to move on was not clearly strategised. Whether CARE considers this its responsibility at all was also not

clear. It is thus suggested that CARE evolve a well thought out strategy on this issue with a feasible operational plan as well, that clearly defines their role in the post Udaan Phase. A very vital reflective analytical question that the team must ask itself is: If the long term goal of Udaan is to create a community of educated girls in the tribal society of Odisha, who are also envisaged as potential leaders and agents of social change, then what should be the nature, form and duration of its role and intervention?

Impelled by our fears that after KGBV education ends with class 8, what will become of the girls, we explored other schooling alternatives for the girls which could see them through till class 10 at least. We were told by the CARE team, that there were co-educational high schools that fed every large village which could be accessed. However since they were non residential, the daily commute and ensuring girls’ regularity, given the pressures of household and work based responsibilities, were likely to become major obstacles. Since the area is developmentally very backward and there is no public transport, cycling and walking are the only means of commuting. The other options were the Kanya Ashram Schools and the Tribal Welfare Residential Schools. They provided education upto class 10. However, the quality of teaching in these schools was reported to be very poor and so the CARE team and Udaan teachers felt that after the rigour and seriousness of education at Udaan, adjustment to these schools would be difficult. A larger question to be asked here is, why does CARE not intervene in these schools, especially since their linkages with the Odisha Government are so strong? At present they are providing support to the KGBVs which already have so many resources and endowments, so why not try to intervene where the need is greater? This will serve the dual goal of improving the schools and also admitting the girls who pass out from Udaan, ensuring that they will complete their schooling upto class 10 at least. This is a policy matter and an issue which merits serious attention as one of the ways ahead.

The other question is that if KISS provides life opportunities and visibility to the tribals in a manner that changes their lives, the girls in Udaan can be counseled and prepared for the transitional shift that is involved in going there. This is worth contemplating, given the lofty goals that CARE has envisaged for them. In other words, why should KISS cease to be an option? At times, convenience,



short time comfort and ensuring a smooth immediate transitional flow may actually work against the long term goals of an organisation. Institutions have to be looked at from this perspective as well. It is somewhat disconcerting to see that all the girls of the third batch were admitted to KGBVs suggesting a unilateral decision being taken by CARE. Whether this should be done needs to be thought about. In plain terms, what has to be discussed and analysed is whether it is the KGBVS, or KISS, or the Kanya Ashram Schools, or maybe all the three institutions, that would best serve the long term goals of Udaan. Further should the choice of institution be left to the girls and their families, or should it be the prerogative of CARE to decide? This is an important question since it will determine how to move ahead.



How Education in Udaan Connects with Contemporary Developments in the Field of Education

With the Right to Education Act

The last five years have seen very significant new thrusts in the field of school education. The Right to Education Act has come into force. Although the Udaan approach pre dates this act, there are some issues which are part of Udaan that relate directly to this act. The importance of placing children in grades equivalent to their age is recommended by the act. They have thus to be put through a leveling course which enables them to make up for the missed period of schooling in their lives. The success of the Udaan Curriculum may serve as a model in this regard. Although there are many Bridge Courses, the Udaan Curriculum is different from them, since not only does it aim to bridge, it induces a love for learning which motivates children to study ahead. Thus it levels and motivates simultaneously using a pedagogic approach which is appropriate for over age children.

The RTE act also recommends that schools create a stress and anxiety free environment in the school which Udaan testifies. The system of evaluation recommended by the act is also already in place in Udaan. Learner profiles drawn from continuous and comprehensive evaluation which are being developed is one of the ways in which CCE can be done.

With Life Skills Education and Adolescence Education

Since school education is viewed holistically and targets the overall development of children, recent additions to the school curriculum have been Life Skills Education and Adolescence Education. In Udaan, these are already covered as part of the Social Learning Curriculum. Life skills are built up by giving the girls institutionalised responsibilities while living in the residential camp. The life skills that get built up through this process are decision making, effective communication and interpersonal relationships, negotiation, empathy and co operative living. The Social learning curriculum builds up understanding and preparedness for the changes that take place during adolescence like body contours, menstruation etc. Of course there is always scope to expand these, but the significant point to be noted is that they were already part of the Udaan Curriculum more than a decade ago, when the debates about their inclusion in the formal school curriculum were still at a discussion stage.

With the Teaching Learning Approach in NCF 2005

The National Curriculum Framework (2005) emphasizes the Constructivist Approach to education which focuses on experiential learning and the use of participatory pedagogies. Udaan is already using these. Further, NCF does not bifurcate curricular and co curricular activities. Everything is curricular. This is the approach followed in Udaan too, where sports, art, literary activities, music, dance etc. are all part of the curriculum with legitimate time and space allocations given to them.

With Teacher Development

The National Council for Teacher Education has emphasized the importance of building up teacher agency as part of its in service and pre service training strategy. In Udaan this is already being done through what is called the capacity building of teachers.

Thus Udaan has many aspects which it can showcase and disseminate. However, along with this the larger questions that have already been raised also need considerable thought and attention. The answers when obtained will provide the future directions and ways ahead.

CONCLUSIVE EPILOGUE



The **Conclusive Epilogue** consolidates the sense of self, identity and future aspirations of the girls. The pictorial illustrations and the narrations by the girls about what their pictures represent speak for themselves.

REPRESENTATION OF SELF



Shobhagya
I am wearing suit, ~~short~~ belt,
scarf on the dress which
has buttons.



REPRESENTATION OF SELF

Kanak Mahali

I am wearing a
colourful lehenga
and boots with
a dupatta.



Kumari Nagini Singh
Village - Bahadga.

I am Nagini
I like wearing
skirt and blouse,
shoes, bangles,
and necklace.
I am waiting
for my friend.



Kumari Bibirani Menkidi
Tribes - Mankdia
Village - Uthansahi

I am Bibirani
I am wearing
a Patiala sabbu
I like dressing
up!



I am walking home.
Wearing a new dress
clip on hair, bangles,
necklace.
The road to my
home is kuccha.



MY ASPIRATION

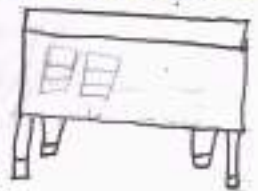
ଜ୍ଞାନୀନୀ ଚୋରାପାଟଣା ଗୁରୁ (ଭାଦ୍ରା) ୧୨.୧୨.୧୨
 ଶ୍ରୀ ୧୨୩୪ - ପାଠ୍ୟପୁସ୍ତକ

ଅଥା ବୁକ୍ସ

- I want to be an
 Orya Teacher
 - I will do my best
 in a plain, Orya,
 saree, bindi, lipstick,
 sandals and bangles.
 - I am reading out from
 an Orya book
 - My students are boys
 and girls. Only the
 boys are sitting
 on the
 ground.



20.11.22
 I am learning Engl.
 I want to become a teacher!



Teacher: English (English)
 Village: ...

I would like to be a Maths Teacher!



I would like to be a Sports teacher or player.



Teacher: English
 Mahuli



I would like to be an English teacher!



I would like to be a Computer Teacher



MY ASPIRATION



MY ASPIRATION

PAKU MURMU
I AM WEARING
A TOP AND
SKIRT, ANKLETS,
BINDI AND
NECKLACE +
BANGLES!

I AM STANDING
IN THE
PLAYGROUND



Name - Keemani Budhini Hansdah
Village - Sokagadi
Tribe - Santal
D - 22-9-12

Budini Hansdah .
Wearing frock,
bindi, lipstick,
bangles, waiting
for friends to
go to the
playground!



I would like to
be a hostel
warden in K&V!

GIRLS' INDIGENOUS ART



ANNEX

PICTORIAL PROLOGUE



This is our home for a year!

The Udaan Campus has a beautiful layout. There is a central open courtyard which is the hub of all activity, whenever weather conditions are benevolent. Below the name board is a beautiful pictorial depiction in folk art which marks the mission of Udaan. The goals of Udaan and the envisioned change process in girls' lives are very meaningfully illustrated.



Every building carries motifs of folk art, giving it a very aesthetic and distinctive character.

This is the central courtyard. It is a raised concrete platform where as can be seen in the picture in view, we are having our Bal Sabha or morning assembly. This is a large group activity in which our teachers participate fully with us. We sing, recite poems and action songs, play group games, exhibit our folk traditions and also do exercises. Without knowing, in the span of a year through this forum we become bold, expressive, confident and proficient in speaking Odiya





You can see in the picture above that for those of us who need more time and stimulation to learn Odiya, our teachers conduct a separate Bal Sabha for us, to give us practice and opportunities. Very soon we become like all the other girls and join the general Bal Sabha. So the teachers hold our hands, literally and psychologically!



At Udaan we learn how to work in groups. Sometimes we have teacher lead groups and sometimes we engage in group work on our own. In the picture above, we are having a group discussion on our own. We use this method for our studies and for social learning. It helps us to know each others' views, share our experiences and expand our understanding.



In the picture on the right, we are moving around in a large group, singing an action song and getting exercise. Through this we learn the language, overcome our shyness and hesitation and feel a great sense of belonging.



Our teachers are patiently teaching us some dance actions. However long we take and whatever be our mistakes, they are always with us!



Boundless Enthusiasm is what life at Udaan infuses in us! There is so much to learn! Studies, games, sports, art, craft, music, dance..... the list is endless!

Volunteers
and Singers

The Pride of our Handiwork!

We feel a great sense of achievement since we learn to craft objects and animal figures from mud. Then we paint them and decorate them. Some of them are used as teaching aids in our classes. So our education extends far beyond the classroom.



We are given many creative spaces. During festivals we decorate our hands with henna, making whatever art patterns we wish. On our feet we use alta (vermilion). It is great fun.



We don't miss home because at Udaan we celebrate all festivals as a community. We have special food, we decorate the campus as per the occasion and we dress up, sing, dance and have a good time.



Cleanliness, tidiness and order are important practices and values that we learn. You can see our slippers neatly laid outside the classrooms in the picture on the right. This becomes part of our life.



Our habits of cleanliness are reflected in our physical appearance as well. We take pride in being neat and well groomed. Every morning, we take a bath, wash our clothes, comb our hair and then go to the bal sabha and classrooms to study. Don't you see us nattily turned out?



Perfect line dressing.... The dormitory!

You can see how neatness and order extends to our living spaces too. The same room where we live becomes a multi purpose hall during the day. We keep our belongings in trunks along the wall and stack our sleeping mats and blankets neatly in the corner. This is our home, our assembly hall, our classroom and our eating venue. We always want it to be neat and orderly.



We wash our own vessels and in the process learn to be self reliant and responsible. Cleanliness and hygiene become important values for us.

Proud parents with a confident daughter!

When we go home, our parents are very happy to see us in our new avatar! We teach our brothers and sisters the value of personal hygiene and cleanliness and also tell our parents about it. We also try to make the housekeeping practices in our homes, better.



We have given our best: Parents and guardian with their daughter! Our parents do not fully understand what we study and learn, but they feel happy to see our transformed personalities!



Good and nutritious fooda wholesome meal! Food is amazing. All the dishes we love are served to us. Everyday the menu changes. On festivals we get special food. Many of us have put on weight after coming to Udaan. All that we study about health, nutrition and a balanced diet in our Science and Social learning classes becomes a reality in the food we eat. We sit together as a community for all our meals.

We could never imagine that learning could be so much fun. Our teachers make us do what they expect us to learn. Everyday and in each class there is a new activity to learn from. Stones, pebbles, pictures, leaves and many such things are used as teaching aids. Our classes are never dull because there is so much to do. We are fully involved in the learning process. The classroom environment is free. The physical set up is attractive. Lots of our art work adorns the walls.



Often we play physical games in the class and learn through them!



Sometimes we write and learn.
Here we are writing a letter home

Scaffolding learning in the class



Learning Hands On

Here we are doing some sorting and matching task so that our learning becomes a more concrete experience for us.





Don't miss this! We are reading the Newspaper together. Its great working in a group and doing something challenging.

Dramatization

A Haat scene...

Many topics are covered through such mock activities where we learn through simulating real life experiences! It is great fun. We never knew that there were so many ways to study and learn.

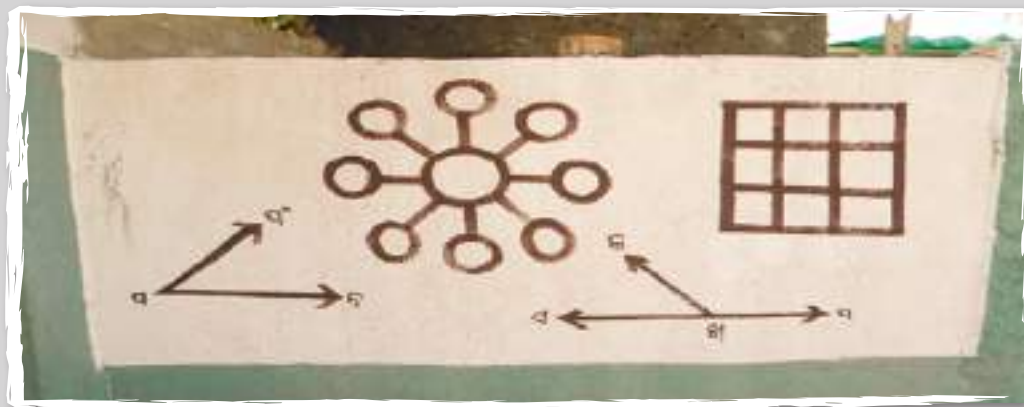


See us in the middle of a role play...

It is one of the many methods of learning that we are exposed to!

Teaching Learning Material

Colourful sticks, pebbles, puzzles, inset boxes, cards, pictures, geometrical shapes and clay toys..... Yes this is what we learn from!



The building wall works as a learning resource



So that we learn Odiya faster, special books like this one have been developed for us. The print is large and bold so that the impressions are better recognised by us.

Every evening we have almost two hours for games. We play badminton, foot ball, ring, cricket, skipping, carom, ludo whatever we wish to. Our teachers also play with us.



Who says girls can't skip, hop, jump , run and play football?

We do it all!





A feeling of real liberty and freedom as we learn to cycle!



And then, here we go.....
Confident to face the world!





In the evening... It is social learning. We sit in groups and have sharing sessions and discussions. Our teachers sit with us. We learn about ourselves, our family, our rights, our health, our nutrition, how to fight disease, our role in village life..... something invaluable about Udaan.



Explanations, discussions, questions and clarifications.....

Showcasing Talent : An Evening of Celebration...

Every Wednesday evening we are encouraged to display our talent. We sing, dance, perform action songs and small plays





A peek into my world!
This is how we draw
and paint!



And this is how our lives
unfold..... full of richness
and joy!!

