







#VOICE AND CHOICE  
FOR EVERY WOMAN

# Annual Report

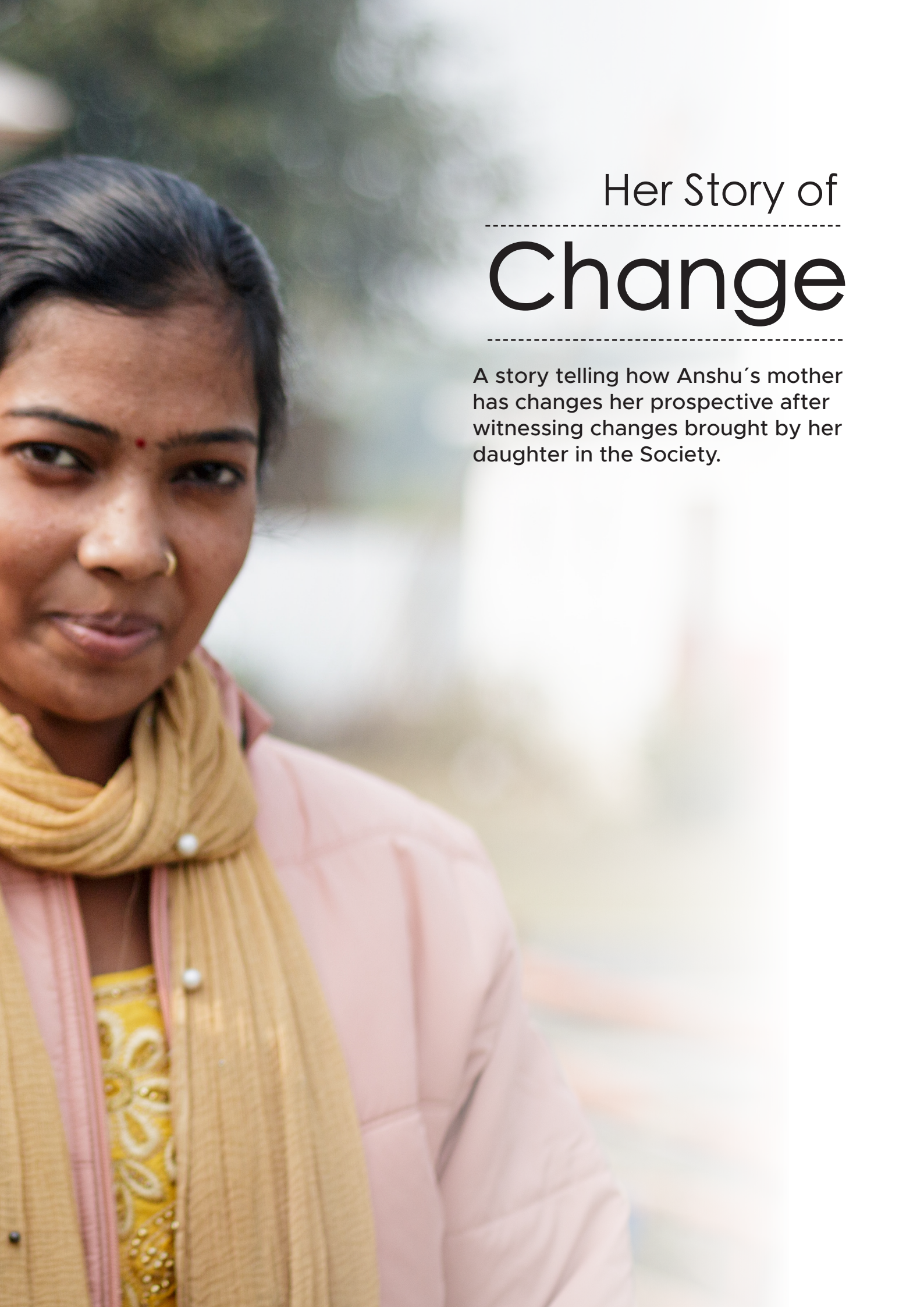
i-Saksham Education and Learning Foundation

| 2022-23



 Saksham  
सीखें | सिखारें ॥





Her Story of

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# Change

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A story telling how Anshu's mother has changes her prospective after witnessing changes brought by her daughter in the Society.

# CONTENTS

6	The Context
8	Our Belief
8	The i-Saksham Solution
9	Our Presence
11	Building a Better Future
13	Empowering disadvantaged women
15	The Year in a glance: 2022-23
16	Fellow-Led Solutions
18	The Fellowship Journey
19	Our Engagement
20	Edu-leaders at schools
21	Edu-leaders: Growth within Self
23	Maitri: Ensuring Every girl in school
24	Maitri: Bringing girls to School
26	Edu-leaders in community
27	WAYAM: Journey Post-Fellowship
28	Challenges and solutions
30	Post Fellowship Engagements
31	The Road Ahead
32	Funders' Testimonials
33	Gratitude
34	Our Partners
35	Our Team
36	Financial Review 2022-23



# From the CEO's Desk



Dear Well-wishers/Patrons of i-Saksham,

In the fiscal year 2022-23, i-Saksham continued to build upon the foundational ideas of building young women as change leaders and witnessed significant emerging ripples. Our dedicated edu-leaders exhibited leadership traits to embrace fresh challenges to live a life of their 'choice' and not fall prey to conventional paths marked by higher education dropouts, early marriages, and predetermined social norms.

- The impressive progress of our edu-leaders in their educational aspirations was evident as a majority of them successfully gained admission into graduation and postgraduation programs. Some of them achieved admission to esteemed institutions like Azim Premji University, Bengaluru, and Bhopal becoming the first young women from their villages to venture out of their home states.
- Demonstrating their commitment to social inclusion, our edu-leaders undertook a remarkable initiative. They surveyed over 1.5 lakh households across three districts to identify and enroll out-of-school children. Going beyond enrollment, they have taken on the responsibility of ensuring better retention by offering ongoing support and guidance.
- Demonstrating their commitment to social inclusion, our edu-leaders undertook a remarkable initiative. They surveyed over 1.5 lakh households across three districts to identify and enroll out-of-school children. Going beyond enrollment, they have taken on the responsibility of ensuring better retention by offering ongoing support and guidance.
- More than 50% of the graduated batch secured placements in Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and similar opportunities. This not only highlights their capabilities but also underscores the value of our program in fostering local grassroots talent.
- In an inspiring move towards building a life-long network, our edu-leaders decided to form their collective platform, WAYAM. Navigating the challenges of building an institution, they are earnestly learning and building upon their experiences.
- i-Saksham got selected for an Acumen Angel's grant which will help us strengthen our foundations for scale.
- The comprehensive third-party impact assessment report underscores the meaningful strides we have made, serving as an affirmation of our commitment and hard work.

As we look ahead to the forthcoming year, our focus remains steadfast. We aim to reinforce our existing processes, and concurrently, invest in enhancing our technological infrastructure and systems. This dual approach will enable us to amplify our scaling efforts, both organically and through strategic partnerships.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your continued support and invaluable contributions. We invite you to delve into the report, sharing our achievements, challenges, and aspirations.

**Ravi Dhanuka**

Founder & CEO, **i-Saksham**

# The Context

Bihar

According to the 2011 census, Bihar comprises 8% of India's population, making it the country's third most populous state. Notably, it has the highest percentage of youth below the age of 25, accounting for 58% of its population. Despite the tremendous potential of this young population, Bihar faces critical challenges across various socio-economic dimensions.



## KEY INSIGHTS: BIHAR'S YOUTH, POVERTY, AND CHALLENGES



**BOTTOM** ranked State in the Sustainable Development Goals composite score across India



**51.91%** live in the country's highest multidimensional poverty, highest in the country.



**<1%** of the National Corporate Social Responsibility spending is received



**88%** Dropout before completing higher education



**43%** are coerced into early marriages



**43%** endure domestic violence at some point

**Immediate intervention is necessary, especially for vulnerable young women in Bihar, who are at the juncture where certain critical decisions would shape their entire life trajectories. Alarming statistics from the National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-20) highlight this concern.**

Approximately 10 million young women in Bihar risk untapped potential due to a lack of role models and limited social networks. They encounter barriers that hinder their ability to break the existing status quo. Bihar is at a critical juncture, requiring comprehensive action to address these challenges. By empowering young women and investing in their education, employment, and gender equality, Bihar can unleash their potential and drive transformative change. It is time to empower young women in Bihar, enabling them to shape their destinies and contribute to the socio-economic growth of their communities.



# Our Belief

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i-Saksham holds the firm belief that empowering local young women to assume leadership roles in addressing grassroots challenges will catalyze profound transformations in their personal lives and foster a supportive environment wherein other girls and young women can unlock their inherent potential.



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## The i-Saksham Model

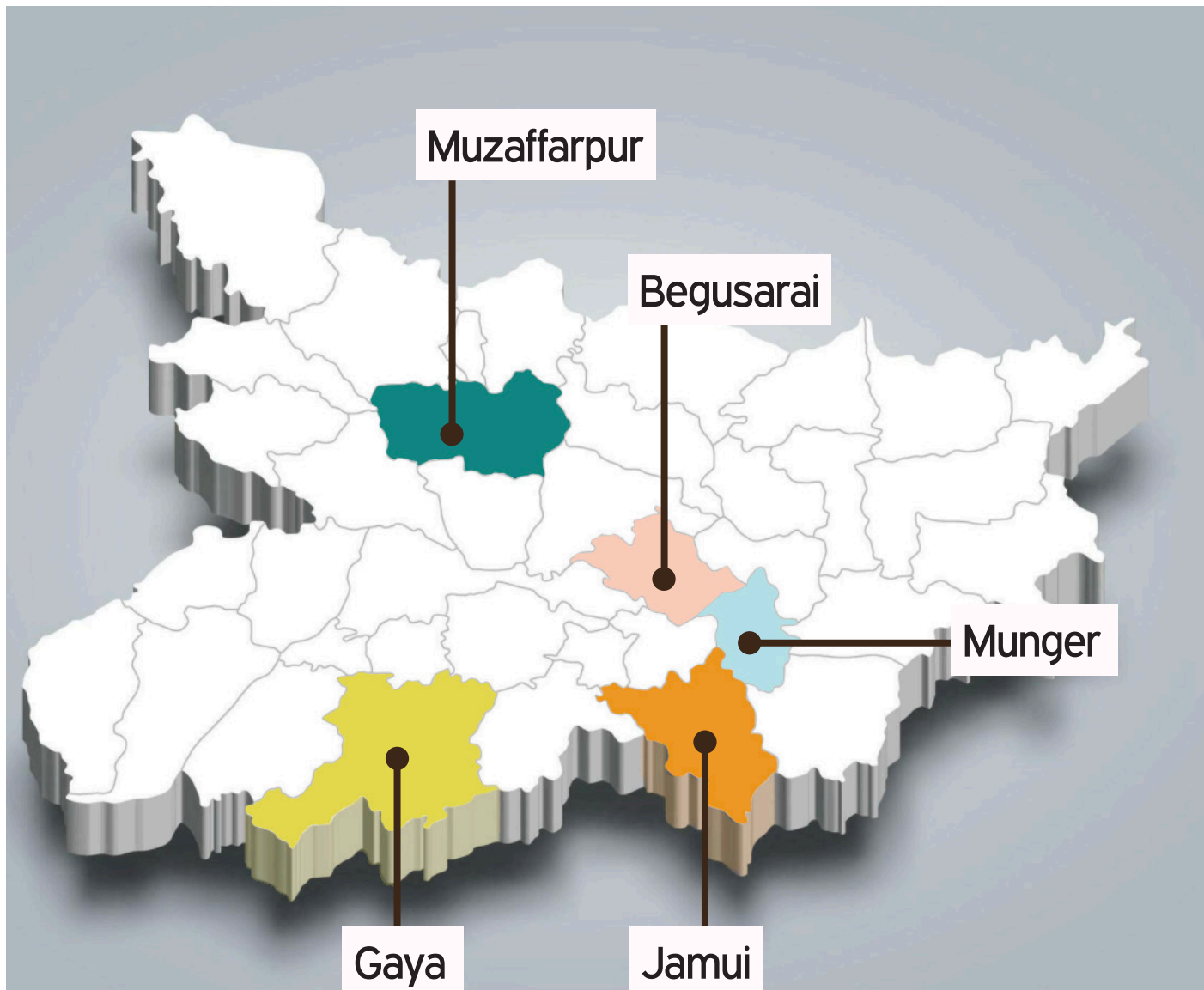


**Empowering Women through Leadership:** i-Saksham recognizes that empowering women as community leaders holds the key to driving transformative change in Bihar. With a vision to uplift young women in rural Bihar, i-Saksham has established a two-year fellowship program. Through our two-year fellowship program, we provide the skills, knowledge, and support needed for them to thrive as leaders.

By empowering with practical leadership skills, i-Saksham guides women shape their own destinies and positively impact the lives of others in their communities.

# Our Presence

Bihar



\* All working area falls under an Aspirational district

## Muzaffarpur

35.20	36.27	39.99

## Begusarai

35.20	36.27	39.99

## Munger

47.90	37.40	

## Jamui

26.92	33.30	39.99

## Gaya

37.40	35.14	34.73

Baseline score by Niti Aayog.

Literacy rate of the district.

Percent Married and their ages.

\* Child Rights and You (CRY), 2020, "Status and Decadal Trends of Child Marriage in India", October 2020; New Delhi

# Our Growth

In 2022-23, our i-Saksham community grew into

i-Saksham, with a strong commitment to transforming lives, has developed the innovative i-Saksham Edu-Leaders' Fellowship. This fellowship is tailored to empower young women with 21st-century skills, enabling them to have a voice and choice. It is designed in a continuous process to cater to local girls and young women in challenging geographies where we operate. 'Voice and choice for every woman in Bihar' serves as i-Saksham's motto, reflecting our dedication to building a better future.

 **5**  
Districts

 **50**  
Gram Panchayats

 **158**  
Government Schools

**364**   
Edu-leaders


**10K<sup>+</sup>**   
Parents


**10,700**   
Children

Development  
Blocks  **12**

Hrs of Classroom  
Training  **250<sup>+</sup>**

**686**   
Classroom observation

 **76**  
Parent-Teachers  
Meetings

**43**   
Working Post  
Fellowship

**741**   
Mentoring Calls

# BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE :

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## i-Saksham Mission to enable Voice and Choice for Every Woman in Bihar

### ■ **Transformative**

We've developed the innovative i-Saksham Edu-Leaders' Fellowship, tailored to build young women with 21st-century skills.

### ■ **Empowerment**

Through targeted engagement in key domains, change leaders acquire tools to create pathways of progress for themselves and their communities.

### ■ **Aspiration**

We emphasize goal setting and reflection, encouraging young women to set monthly goals aligned with three leadership pillars.

### ■ **Resilience**

Regular reflection sessions and peer buddy talks foster mentorship, support, and continuous growth.

### ■ **Collectivism**

Our program fosters community empowerment through peer networks, challenging norms, and inspiring societal change.

### ■ **Synergy**

We collaborate with diverse organizations and partners to amplify our impact and resources.

### ■ **Radiance**

i-Saksham empowers young women to become fearless agents of change, shaping a brighter future for girls in Bihar.



# Empowering Disadvantaged Young Women as Edu-Leaders

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The i-Saksham's Edu-Leaders  
Fellowship Program

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The fellowship aims to create empowered women leaders, reduce social inequality, and create role models for young girls within their communities. It primarily focuses on developing their personal leadership, educational leadership, and community leadership skills.

Since 2017, we have been experimenting with the fellowship design so we can build the girls with the best of content, tools and skills that can help them develop skills, character and personality to lead a dignified life. The i-Saksham Edu-leaders fellowship is a flagship program of i-Saksham committed to build the following among young female edu-leaders. It aims to build young women community change leaders in Bihar. The program entails 200 hours, placement of Edu-leaders in local underserved schools, engagement with parents and the community. Edu-leaders deliver essential education among children, nurture ambitions for higher learning and personal development in self, spearhead social transformation, and actively participate in community-driven initiatives.

i-Saksham's fellowship program, initiated by three Prime Minister Rural Development Fellows in 2015, believes in the potential of every individual as a change agent. Focusing on personal, educational, and community leadership, i-Saksham develops young women change leaders poised for lasting impact. With a core emphasis on self-awareness and skills development, the program empowers women to navigate challenges and seize opportunities.





**Personal  
Leadership**



**Educational  
Leadership**



**Community  
Leadership**



*Edu-leaders develop a sense of self-worth and believe in one's ability to secure desired changes.*



*Unlocking their own potential and create a movement to improve foundational literacy and numeracy for girls and other marginalized children in government schools of their villages.*



*They grow as a long-term change agent to shift the gender norms and become role models in their respective communities.*

*"The fellowship program has made a big difference in my village. Girls used to get married right after finishing class 10, but now they're inspired by girls like me who study and get involved in the community. Parents want their daughters to study more and reach 18 years before getting married. Boys also have more chances to study and work. Everyone in the community now understands the importance of education. The fellowship program has brought positive changes to our village."*

Monika Rani, Edu-leader

*"After months in the fellowship, I've transformed. I now prioritize learning, problem-solving, and inspiring others to pursue their dreams. Working in local schools, I've witnessed the impact of discrimination and poor education, motivating me to create positive change. The practical fellowship modules excite me, and I eagerly look forward to applying my learning in the schools I'm assigned. These 8 months have truly been transformative."*

Ritu, Edu-leader, Muzaffarpur





*I raise up my voice—not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.... We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.*

*Malala Yousafzai*

# The Year in a glance 2022-23



1st meeting of i-Saksham alumni held at Jamui. Idea of a collective mooted. 12 volunteered to give shape to the collective and named it **WAYAM**.

To meet the needs of wider community, more digitized content on pedagogy and leadership.

**April  
2022**

**Dec  
2022**

i-Saksham begins operations in Begusarai, partnering with **PRADAN**. Branch offices in Teghra and Begusarai block opened in Jan '23.

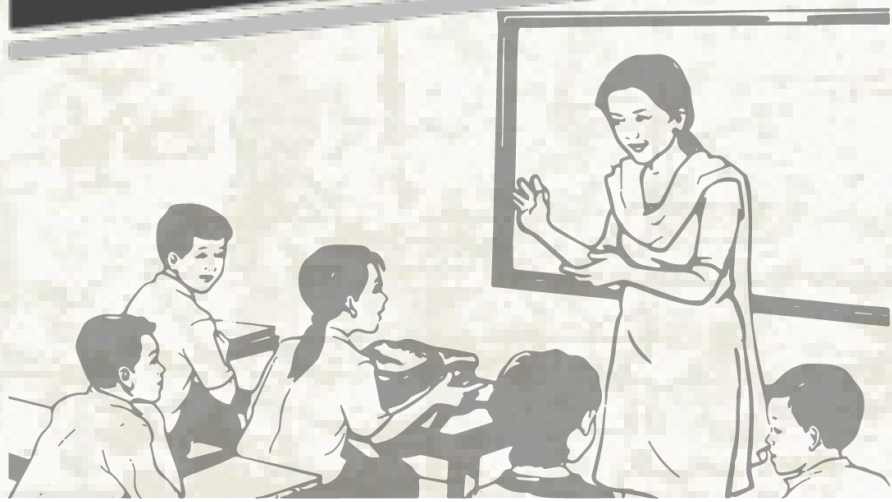
Over 80% of fellowship graduates interested in employment are successfully placed in diverse roles and organizations.

**July  
-Sept.  
2022**

**July  
2022**

100 edu-leaders selected for cohort 2022-24

New Partnerships with **PRADAN**, **BCG**, **Educate Girls**, **Leap For word**, **YP Foundation** took place in 2022-23



Shravan Jha, our co-founder, receives the 2022 Acumen Angel Award. This enables us to develop more rural women as change leaders, aligning with our mission to empower 10,000 young women by 2030.

Feb  
2023

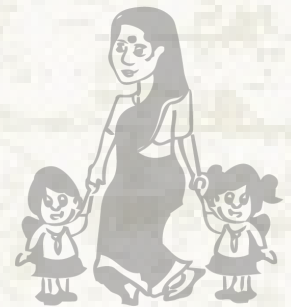
6 i-Saksham youths receive final call from Azim Premji University to pursue Masters degree.

March  
2023

Nov  
2022

i-Saksham celebrated the graduation of the 2020-2022 cohort, overcoming lockdown challenges to complete online training and actively contributing to the community. They emerge as resilient change-makers, ready to make a lasting impact in the society.

Sept.  
2022



Maitri Program in partnership with Educate Girls launched, with 50 edu-leaders selected, including 29 from previous i-Saksham cohorts. These fellows, based in four districts for reintegrating out-of-school girls.



# Fellow-Led Solutions: Tackling Challenges Together

## ■ *Building Trust with the Community (Establishing trust and support in new areas)*

Engaging Community Leaders and Representatives

### CHALLENGES

- Reluctance to share information during home visits

### SOULTIONS

- Meeting with local leaders and representatives to build trust
- Involving local Panchayat members to introduce the project to villagers

## ■ *Improving Fieldwork Efficiency and Addressing Challenges (Overcoming logistical hurdles and ensuring safety)*

Strengthening Relationships and Hygiene

### CHALLENGES

- Difficult geography and lack of clean facilities for women fellows

### SOULTIONS

- Building strong relationships with community members and schools for access to clean facilities in private homes
- Fellow pairs for support and efficiency during fieldwork even do long hours, late evening and visit secluded areas/villages

Addressing Daily Challenges

### CHALLENGES

- Limited access to food and

### SOULTIONS

- Providing daily allowances to ensure energy for work
- Granting travel allowances for difficult-to-reach villages

Establishing Credibility and Addressing

### CHALLENGES

- Overcoming obstacles from government school faculties and others

### SOULTIONS

- Equipping fellows with identification and permission letters from block and district departments
- Using documentation to negotiate and address concerns regarding enrollment, registration and readmission of girls back to

## Leveraging Technology for Surveys

### CHALLENGES

- Manual data entry of handwritten notes from the field into the office

### SOULTIONS

- Equipping fellows with tablets and mobile phones for efficient surveying, eliminating the need for data operators to re-enter handwritten notes.

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## Gathering and Verifying information

### CHALLENGES

- Limited information from stay-at-home mothers

### SOULTIONS

- Collecting secondary information and verifying it through calls or revisits
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# The Fellowship Journey

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## 2017-19

### CONCEPTUALIZED AND PILOT

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#### MILESTONES

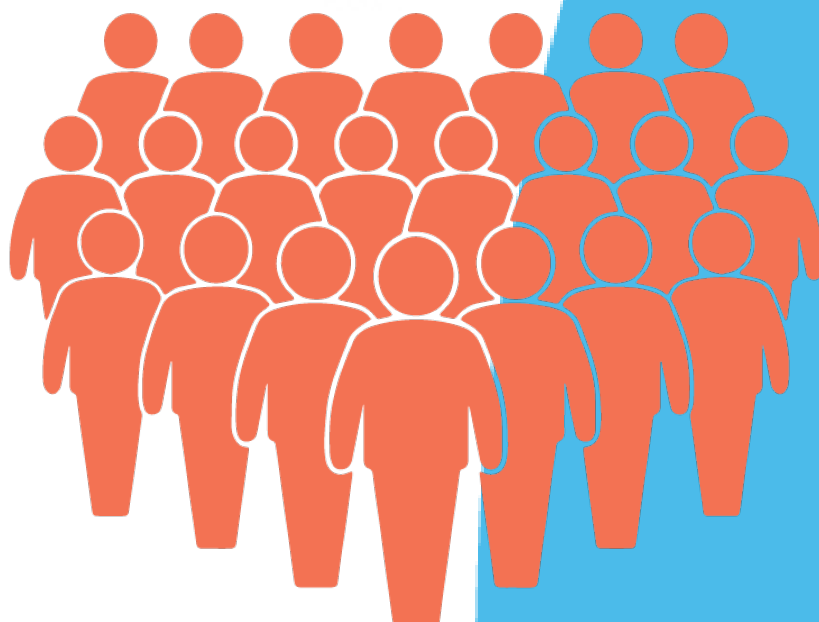
- Innovation partner of NSDC
- Incubation support- IIMB, Unltd. India, TFIX, Edu-mentum
- Top 50 Innovations under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, Govt. of India

#### COVERAGE

- 3 blocks
- 2 districts

#### OUTREACH

- 50 Edu-leaders
- 



# 2019-21

## ESTABLISHED PROOF AND CONCEPT

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### MILESTONES

- State-level partnership with JEEVIKA, GOB
- Rapid Third Party Assessment shows significant gains

### COVERAGE

- 8 Blocks,
- 4 Extremism affected districts (Gaya, Munger, Muzaffarpur, Jamui)

### OUTREACH

- 200 Edu-leaders
- 7,500 children

# 2019-21

## GROWTH AND BUILD FOUNDATIONS FOR TAKE-OFF

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### MILESTONES

- Set up tech enabled alumni network
- A Knowledge and Research center to prepare for horizontal scale

### COVERAGE

- 40 blocks,
- 6 Districts (10% of Bihar)

### OUTREACH

- 1,000 Edu-leaders
- 25,000 Children & 25,000 Women (Peers and Mothers)



# Our Engagement

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## Creating a network of skilled girls and young women in Bihar as Edu-leaders

In 2022-23, we introduced Socio-emotional learning (SEL) to our curriculum, equipping students with crucial life skills for success in school, work, and beyond. SEL programs develop self-regulation, empathy, communication, problem-solving, & conflict resolution, leading to improved academic performance, positive behavior, enhanced mental health, increased resilience, & stronger relationships.

We adjusted student sessions from weekly to fortnightly, providing more time for independent learning, action-taking, & reflection on their experiences and learning outcomes. We also initiated monthly cluster meetings to foster a collaborative learning environment, facilitating reflection, knowledge sharing, mutual support, and a sense of community among students. Engaging in these meetings enables students to develop collective action skills, build valuable networks, and contribute to their growth within & beyond the i-Saksham fellowship.





## Activities



- Edu-leaders provided training on teaching & leadership
- Edu-Leaders teach in govt schools for 2 years
- Edu-Leaders conduct PTM/SMC meetings and engage with parents
- Edu-Leaders conduct community action project
- Buddy support provided fo every Edu-Leader
- Alumni engagement / career pathways linkage parierships established

## Outputs



- Edu-leaders attend > 200 hours of yearly training
- Edu-Leaders meet with buddies and each other regularly
- Children receive foundational learning support from Edu-Leaders
- Parents attend PTM meetings regularly

## Outcomes



- Edu-leaders become proficient in teaching & pedagogy
- Edu-Leaders experience enhanced leadership skills and increased self-esteem and confidence
- Parents and Peers of Edu-Leaders begin fo support and promote Edu-Leaders' aspirations
- Children gain learning competencies and increased retention in schools
- Parents become more acive in engaging with schools and their child's learning
- Edu-leaders begin to feel part of a larger network of leaders

## Intermediate Impact



- Edu-leaders become role models, pursue higher education / other professions, collectivize as change-agents
- Edu leaders engage in income generation activities
- Edu-leaders experience increased support from family and peers in pursuing their aspirations.
- Children experience enriching learning environment and show improved Fansition rate
- Parents and community prioritize and celebrate children's education
- Edu-Leaders build a network of leaders to action change in the communities

## Long Term Impact



- Empowered female edu-leaders influence their marginalized communities as involved, and inspirational role models trough direct and collective action;
- Reduction in early marriage, domestic violence in action areas
- All girls and vulnerable children complete quality primary and secondary education and are empowered fo pursue their life goals

# Edu-leaders at schools

Edu-leaders in schools engage in various activities to create a child-centric learning environment & address the learning gap post-pandemic. Some of their key engagements were :

## 1. Child-Centered Classroom

Edu-Leaders prioritize child' needs and abilities, using interactive and engaging methods to promote active learning and participation.

## 2. Activity-based learning

Edu-leaders use a hands-on approach where children engage in activities, projects, and group work. This helps develop critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and encourages students to apply their knowledge in real-life situations.

## 3. SEL integration

Edu-leaders integrate social and emotional learning (SEL) into their classroom practices. They create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that fosters children' social-emotional development, self-regulation, empathy, and positive relationships.

## 4. Addressing the learning gap

Edu-leaders identify and bridge gaps in child learning post-pandemic. They offer targeted support, adapt instruction to individual needs, and provide resources for catching up and remedial assistance as needed.

## 5. Increased Parental Engagement

Edu-leaders' response to the pandemic has boosted parental involvement in post-pandemic parent-teacher meetings. By addressing needs and providing support, edu-leaders have strengthened bonds and trust with parents, leading to heightened interest in their child's education and performance



Number of children an edu-leader works with

30



Number of schools supported

150



Number of classroom Visits

1392



*“As Nirmala’s mother, I didn’t have enough time to see if they’ve taken a bath or brushed their teeth. However, when edu-leader Reshma started discussing the importance of health and hygiene in every parent-teacher meeting, I saw her encouraging children to wash their hands before meals and follow hygiene rules. It made me realize that even though I am busy, I can’t afford to risk Nirmala’s health. Taking care of basic hygiene practices ensures our children will be healthy.”*

# Edu-leaders Growth within Self

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Edu-leaders affirm the fellowship program's effectiveness in nurturing their leadership skills, per an independent survey. They gain confidence, aspire for higher education, and positively impact their families and communities, confirming the program's success in creating empowered women leaders.

- Enhanced Self-efficacy and Daily Routines:
  - 100% of Edu-leaders interviewed reported a strong sense of self-efficacy.
  - All Edu-leaders mentioned improved daily routines.
- Improved Decision-Making and Financial Trust:
  - 92.3% of family members included Edu-leaders in big financial decisions.
  - Stipends received by Edu-leaders contributed to increased financial trust.
- Economic Freedom and Employment Support:
  - 100% of Edu-leaders can spend small amounts of money freely.
  - Peers expressed a desire for employment support from i-Saksham.
- Increased Trust, Mobility, and Community Impact:
  - Edu-leaders' increased trust and mobility positively affected community members.
  - Peers also experienced spill-over effects from increased mobility.
- Increased Respect and Program Recommendation:
  - 100% of family members received increased respect in the village.
  - All family members would recommend i-Saksham to other parents.
- Sense of Belonging and Network:
  - 100% of Edu-leaders felt part of a larger network of Edu-leaders.
  - They had the opportunity to meet others in the network.
- Learning Improvement and Enjoyment in Education:
  - Despite the pandemic, there was learning improvement in children across all three subjects.
  - The fellowship created a sense of enjoyment in education for children.



# Edu-leaders Growth within **Self** (conti.)

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The fellowship experience has empowered young women with crucial leadership skills. According to the third-part assessment, they have notably improved in areas such as self-understanding, goal-setting, and self-image.



**75%** of them feel clearly and



**81%** of them feel change in



**33%** are sure about change



**Ranju DEVI**

“I stepped out of my comfort zone to meet and interact with people around my village which I never did before. I speak confidently now to discuss any issue related to children and other important issues in the village. I have an identity more than someone’s daughter-in-law. People in my village now know me by my name.”

*they can express themselves  
others listen to them well*

*that they have brought some  
their community*

*working towards larger social*



\* Graph on a scale 1 to 5



# Maitri : Ensuring every girl in school

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The Maitri edu-leaders at i-Saksham have demonstrated immense commitment, resolve and problem solving acumen in bringing girls to school. This has helped them grow in skills, mindsets and beliefs.

i-Saksham partnered with Maitri girls, initiated by Educate Girls, with the objective of ensuring access to education for every girl in Bihar. In September 2022, a group of 50 Maitri fellows were selected and deployed in three districts of Bihar, namely Jamui, Munger and Gaya as part of the project. As of March, 2023, the dedicated Maitri fellows and the i-Saksham team actively conducted surveys of 135,000 households across these three districts. Through these surveys, a significant number of around 4547 Out-of-school girls were identified and the process is still ongoing. Around 899 Out-of-school girls have been enrolled in school, many of these girls have never been to school.

Post enrollment of the child, the Maitri edu-leaders would continue to follow-up and support the child to ensure retention in the school. Identifying out-of-school-girls is a field intensive process and requires lots of effort involving door to door surveys, convincing parents/family, working out relevant documents, coordinating with local schools for enrollment. The Maitri edu-leaders at i-Saksham have demonstrated immense commitment, resolve and problem solving acumen in bringing girls to school. This has helped them grow in skills, mindsets and beliefs.



## The warriors on the ground

Their knowledge and determination drive positive impact



### Versatile and seasoned group

- ⦿ 44 dedicated fellows
- ⦿ 15 males, 29 females, avg age 25
- ⦿ 13 married, 31 single

### Education

- ⦿ 10 intermediate qualified
- ⦿ 16 pursuing graduation
- ⦿ 17 undergraduates
- ⦿ 1 postgraduate



## Impact

March 23 update



**155,433**  
households surveyed

**4,547**  
out-of-school  
children identified



**899**  
girls admitted to school,  
showcasing positive impact  
achieved



# Maitri : Bringing girls to School

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## The journey of bringing a 9-year old girl child back to school...

When our team members Aman Pratap visited Mahamada School, he encountered a nervous little girl staring at her blank paper during an assessment test, intrigued he asked if she understood what is to be written. The girl remained silent. Curious, Aman asked again but the girl didn't respond. Nikhat, the edu-leader in whose class the girl has been placed share that the girl has been out of school for all these years and it was her first time in school and hence she knows nothing. It was surprising for Aman to see a girl this old coming to school for the first time, as he assumed the girl must have been anywhere between 9-12 years old. It has been a collective effort of the team members in Maitri like Kajal who visit each household to ensure Every Girl is back to School and the edu-leaders like Nikhat, who deal with compassion and empathy to ensure these left out girls continue to come to school without any pressure despite the age and the learning gaps within their peer groups.

Kajal, our integral team member for the Maitri project that is working to ensure Every Girl in School, adds that bringing a child back to school isn't just about enrolling them to school. For when she discovered the little girl Anam is left behind and that there was hardly any hope as her own parents were adamant about sending her to school. Despite their family's financial struggles, Anam's sister-in-law, the only educated member in the family of thirteen expressed a profound aspiration to provide Anam with an education. " Didi, I want to study in school like my friends do" expressed Anam enthusiastically. That was the only fuel that kept Kajal persistent in her determination to bring Anam back to school. Kajal kept trying to convince them by visiting the family multiple times, nothing worked. Finally when she could at least convinced them, delays from the school's side due to documentation and other reasons further deter the plan. Kajal utilized all the resources, including taking help from other peer and team members and finally got the girl admitted to school after multiple attempts. Due to her age and the learning gap, it was important that Anam is treated with care. Fortunately for Anam, i-Saksham fellow Nikhat placed in the school could give her personal attention like she does for all the students in her class. Anam is now a regular school goer and the teachers are happy. She also now proudly announces Kajal didi as someone who brought her to school each time Kajal visits the school. It further motivates Kajal to bring more girls like Anam who wants to study back to school.







Since the mid of 2022 till date, i-Saksham has surveyed 1,55,433 household in three districts of Bihar and identified 4,745 young girls who are Out of school and have been able to successfully enrolled 899 girls back to school.



### ***My experiences in a campaign to reintegrate girls into schools in Bihar's Gaya District***

*Today, I visited Tola Dhup Nagar in Majholiya Village, Aamas Block, Gaya district. The place was beautiful, but the village itself looked sad. It was far away and getting there was tough – we walked 13 kilometers through hills and forests on foot.*

*When we reached the village, we were tired, but our determination to find every girl who is not in school pushed us to talk to the parents there immediately. We found out that there's a school in the village only up to fifth grade. After that, girls drop out because it's not safe for them to travel far for higher classes. Some parents said the best solution is to send girls to Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, where they can stay and study but admission are competitive and their girls cannot crack them.*

*Deciding what to do next is hard, given the situation. Education is important for every child, so we need to figure out how to help these girls. With a heavy heart and a strong determination, I left, knowing I need to do something about this situation and return with a plan.*

# Edu-leaders in community : Building Platforms for youths

Cluster meetings, guided by Edu-leaders, serve as forums that encourage the sharing of ideas, the exchange of knowledge, and the provision of peer support within local communities.

In the 2022–23 period, over 50 active cluster meetings spurred positive change and community empowerment.

## Impact in Community



cluster meetings attended by existing batches as well as alumni



people per cluster meeting on an average



Meeting PRI, Ending early marriages, empowering mothers, SMC meetings, carrying out Action research, shifting mindsets through conversations





### **Empowering Communities**

*In our village, we come together every month to make a difference. We decided to help women in our group by teaching them how to sign their names. Now, during meetings, they can sign their names with confidence. We taught around 15-20 women, and it had a big impact on their lives. It's not just about knowing how to sign their names, but also about feeling more confident and believing in themselves. We feel so happy and satisfied to see their progress.*

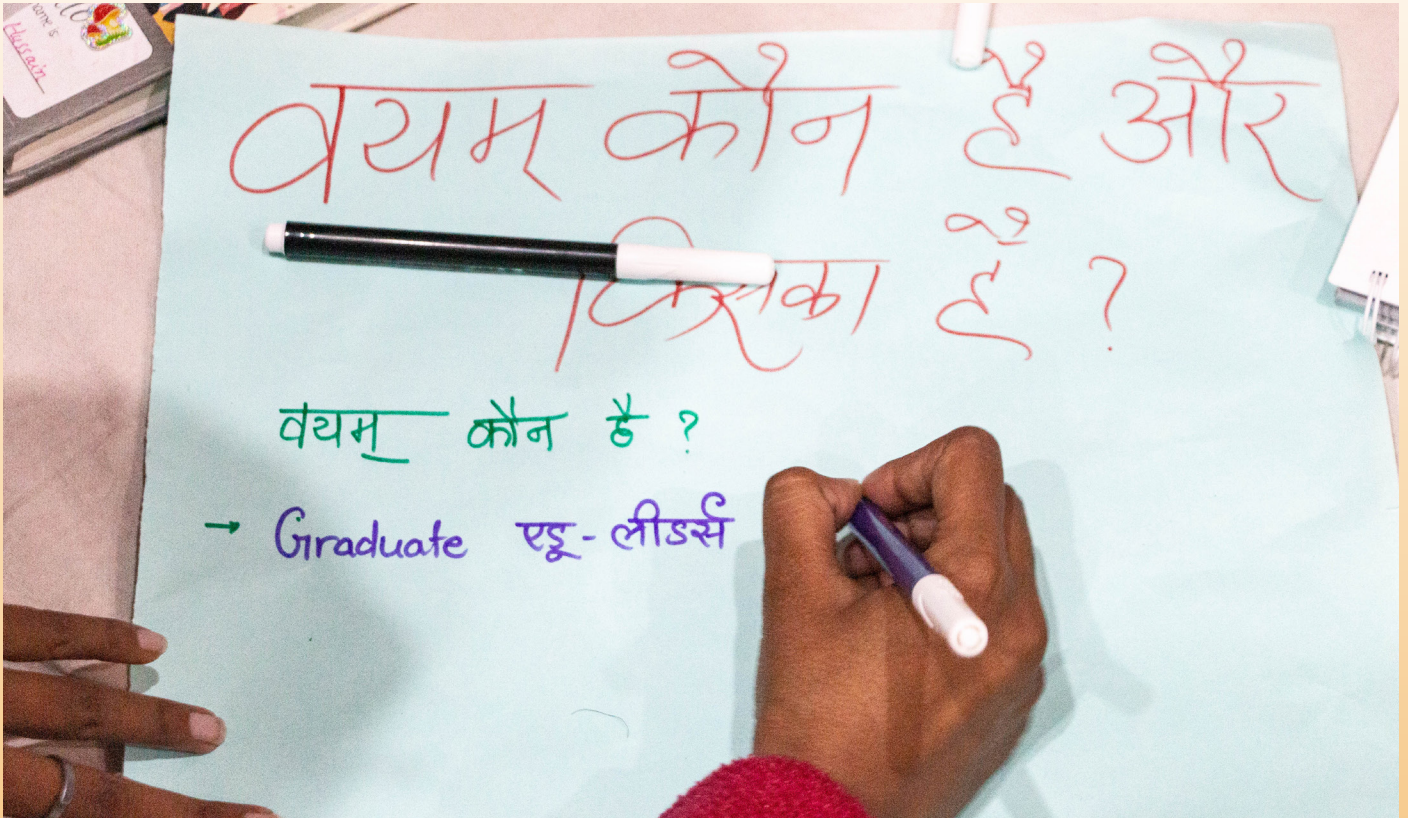


### **Shifting Mindsets**

*Asmita was the first woman of our village to walk out of home every day for work. I didn't know how the community would perceive it. But I didn't have the courage to stop her as she had already compromised on her studies due to early marriage. This fellowship was a chance for her.*



# WAYAM : Journey Post-Fellowship



**WAYAM**, short for **Women Achieving and Yearning to Achieve More** (also meaning 'Hum' in Hindi, 'We' in English), was formed by 60 alumni of the fellowship program in April 2022. The alumni met in Jamui to discuss post-fellowship options and decided to create a collective of edu-leaders. A group of 12 alumni volunteered as coordinators to develop the vision, mission, objectives, governance structures, and other relevant details of the edu-leaders' collective.



**WAYAM**

Women Achieving & Yearning to Achieve More

Sh. Soumen Biswas and Sh. Dipankar Roy, experts in building community institutions, are facilitating the coordinators' deliberations at WAYAM. In FY 22-23, the coordinators group conducted 22 meetings, including a plenary meeting. WAYAM has established its vision, mission, and objectives, aiming to enhance participation in the education of marginalized children and youth while developing the capacity of edu-leaders for a self-reliant and dignified life.





All i-Saksham edu-leaders' fellowship alumni are members of WAYAM, with a membership contribution of INR 100. The organization is working on setting up a governance structure and plans to elect/select a CEO. In the upcoming financial year, WAYAM aims to achieve the following objectives:

- ⦿ Establish the governance structure
- ⦿ Forge partnerships with other organizations
- ⦿ Undertake community initiatives to further the objectives of WAYAM.



# Challenges and solutions

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## ■ **Maitri Project Surveys to Bring Back Girls to School (Sept-Dec 22):**

Facing harsh winters, the Maitri project team embarked on a door-to-door survey, conducted by dedicated women team members, to identify out-of-school girls in selected regions. Despite the adverse weather conditions, the team successfully surveyed over a lakh households. This effort marked the first quarter's focus on recovering the learning process for girls who were not attending school.

## ■ **New Geography Operation Initiation (Dec 22):**

When i-Saksham expanded to a new district, Begusarai, challenges emerged. The expected ratio of applicants was adverse compared to other locations, resulting in delayed project initiation. Despite the limited timeframe, the team rallied together, with team members from different locations volunteering to help set up the team, mobilize new edu-leaders, and spread awareness about the fellowship. Their cooperation and teamwork were instrumental in overcoming this hurdle and successfully onboarding a new cohort of edu-leaders.

## ■ **Recovery of Learning Process (April-June 22):**

Post-pandemic, bringing children back to school became a significant challenge. The team organized village-level awareness programs, rallies, and home visits to encourage parents to send their children back to school. These efforts focused on the second quarter, aiming to re-engage girls in their education.

## ■ **Team Level Challenges:**

Recruiting new buddies posed challenges as internal edu-leaders were the primary source, facing fit and dropout issues with external recruits. Some team members struggled with English and Math, making content knowledge building a challenge. Transferring female team members between locations was also difficult, leading to short-term volunteering and limited long-term commitment.

## ■ **Building High-Performing Teams (Jan 23 - Ongoing):**

With the program's size doubling, investing in team capacity building became essential. To achieve this, i-Saksham sought the expertise of an external agency to create high-performing teams. Team culture and work processes were introduced to ensure smooth functioning as the team expanded.

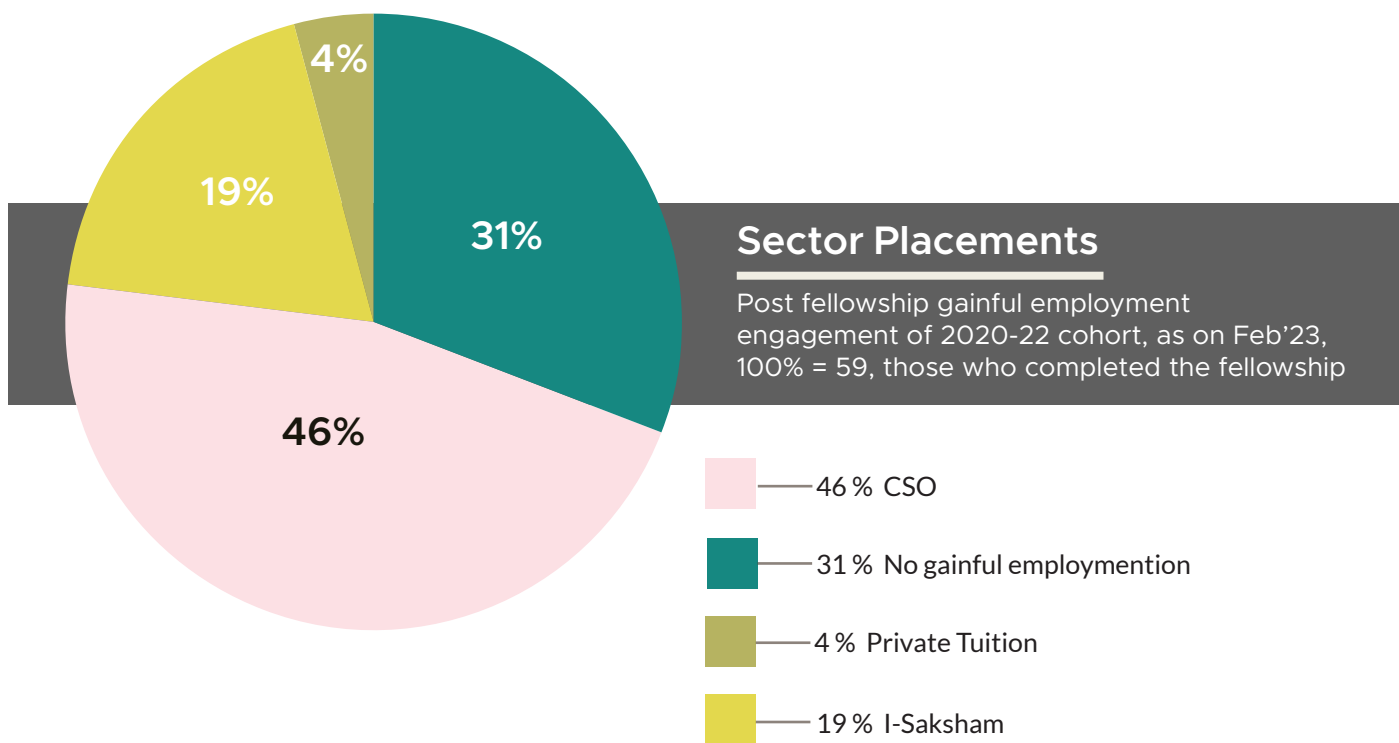
## ■ **Initiatives and Community Leadership (Ongoing):**

The fellowship program introduced new initiatives like Badhte Kadam and Cluster meetings in 2022. Although the edu-leaders' immediate peer circles were influenced positively, there was a need to strengthen their community leadership to have a more extensive impact beyond their peers. The goal with these new initiatives were to empower edu-leaders to play influential roles independently in various spheres of social and economic spaces.





# Post Fellowship Engagements



## LeapForWord

Enlisted 11 i-Saksham Edu-leaders alumni to support teachers in partner schools across India, addressing English illiteracy.



## Azim Premji University

Six i-Saksham alumni, buddies, and Edu-leaders secured seats at Azim Premji University, becoming role models in their communities.



## Educate Girls - Maitri

40 i-Saksham fellows and buddies recruited as community-level mobilizers, effectively persuading individuals to prioritize girl child education across three districts of Bihar.





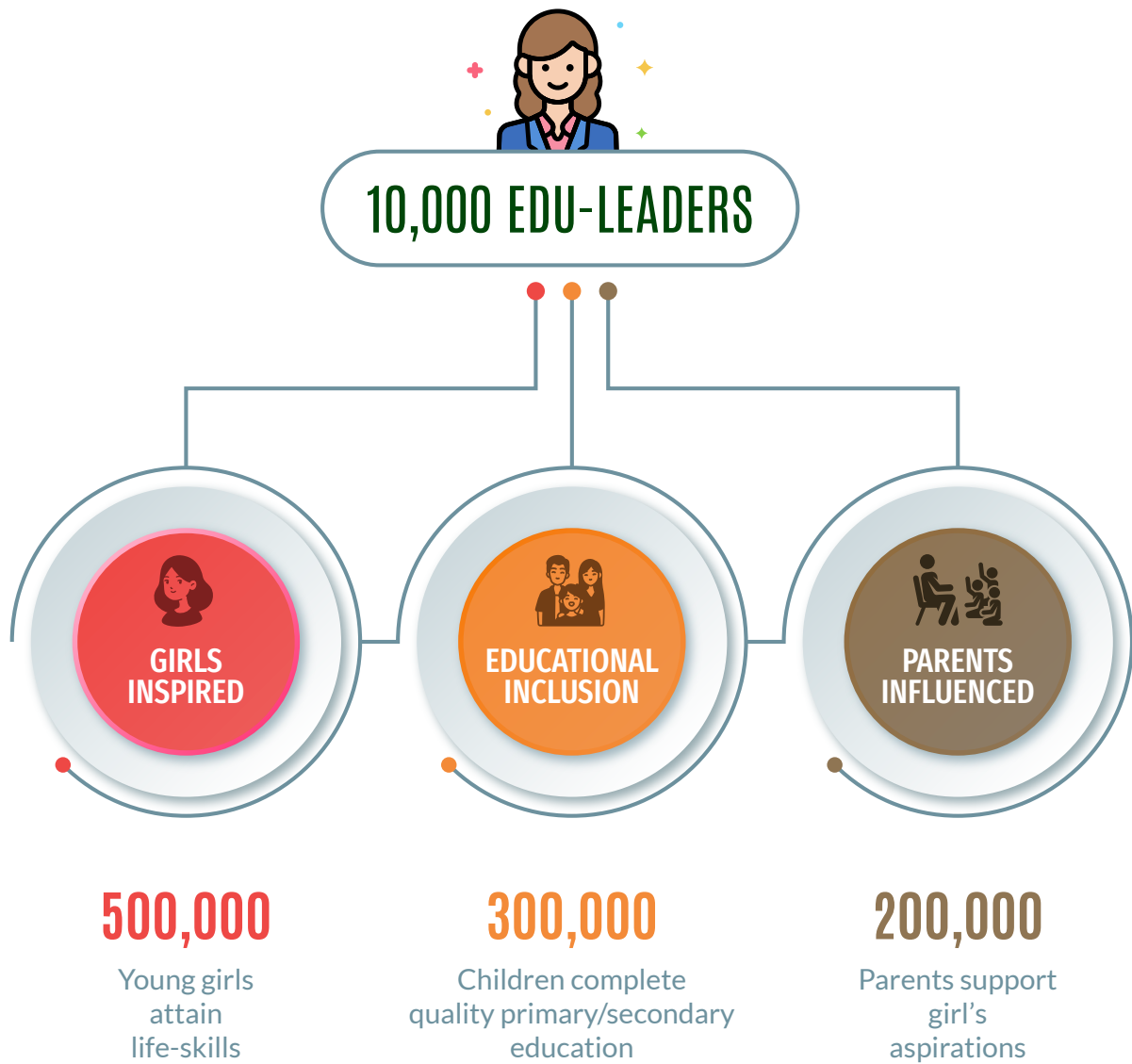


## YP Foundation

Three dedicated alumni led a project to enhance access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (AY-SRHR), empowering over 150 girls aged 13-15 years in Jamui.



# The Road Ahead: Network of 10,000 Edu-Leaders Influencing 1 million girls & women in Bihar by 2030



Strong alumni community provides high touch-mentorship



Local network of parents, teachers and community bodies



Digitized training content. Tech platforms for collective action



Partnerships with other development organizations (backward and forward linkages)



Knowledge and research building

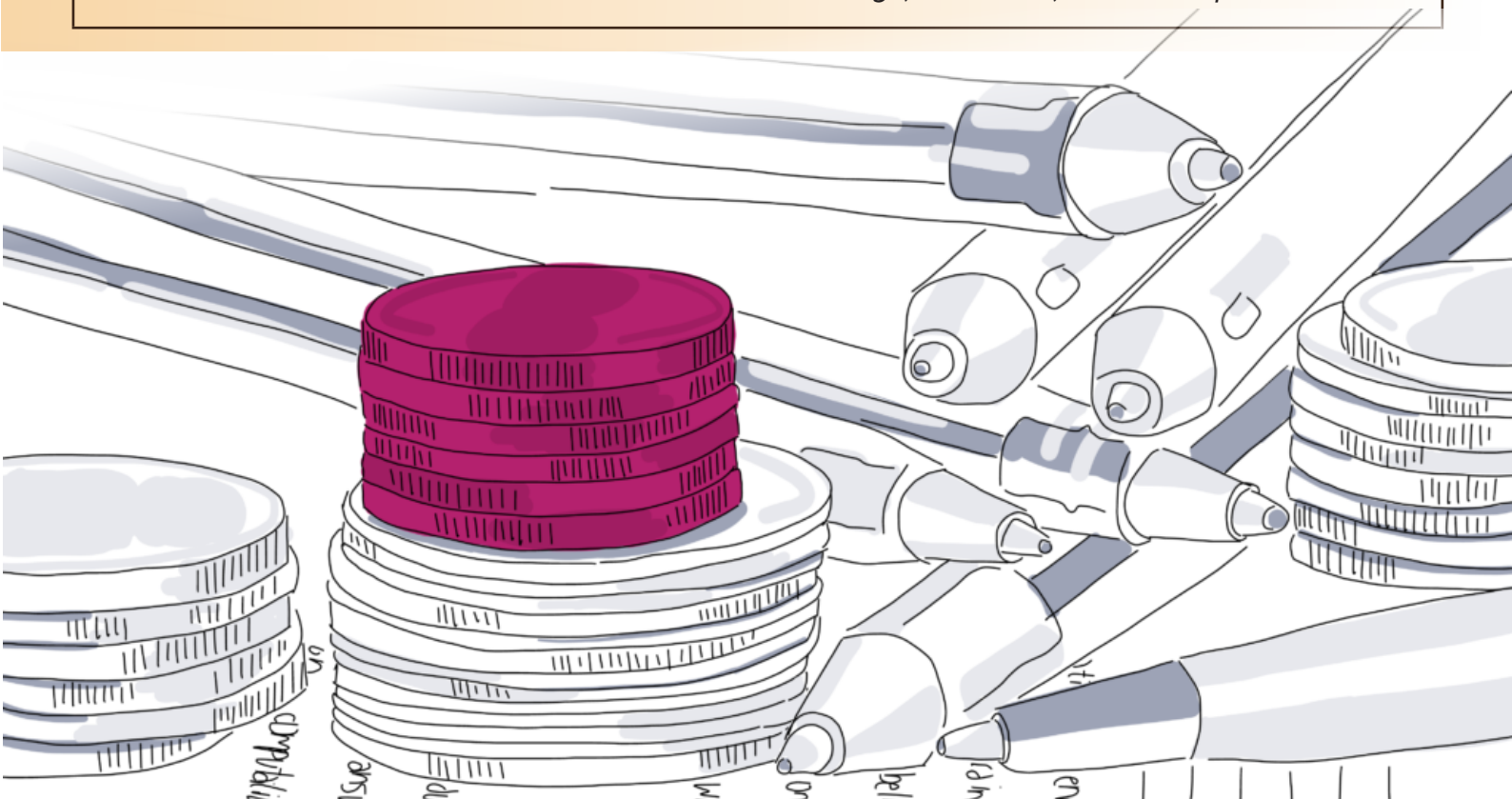
# Funders' Testimonials

*Wipro Foundation has been associated with I-Saksham since 2018. They are a reflective group of young people, who are committed to improving the lives of the youth and children in rural Bihar through education. Their work with different stakeholders - community, children, youth (with a focus on women), govt. officials - has taken on a more structured approach over the last few years, and the outcomes in terms of increased confidence among youth, ownership within the community, and increased buy-in from the govt. system have been quite remarkable. What also stands out is the group's grounded approach and openness to learn. We wish them the very best in continuing their endeavors in this space.*

*Supriya Menon, Program Manager, Wipro*

*I-Saksham is deeply focused on developing a cadre of local aspiring women leaders through a 2-year fellowship program. These leaders receive multiple learning opportunities during their fellowship to develop personal and professional competencies, as well as articulate their life aspirations. After completing the fellowship, they are determined to take charge of their careers and choose their own path in their journey. This empowering journey enhances their confidence, abilities, and prospects for engaging with the local community. My interactions with these leaders over the past few years have not only instilled my confidence in them but also demonstrated the highly effective nature of this program for women. By creating a platform, I-Saksham brings forth opportunities and cultivates a thriving environment where these fellows grow, feel dignified and respected, learn to tackle tough social problems, and find a supportive peer group to embark on their transformative journey of change.*

*Alok Singh, Bihar Lead, Nalanda Capital Foundation*



# Gratitude

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This saying holds true for the establishment of an organization as well. Creating and nurturing an organization requires the collective efforts, guidance, and unwavering support of many individuals.

i-Saksham, with heartfelt appreciation, would like to express gratitude to our esteemed mentors, namely Ujwal Thakar, Paresh Parasnis, Geeta Goel, Shridhar Sethuram, Pradeep Mukherjee, and Tejas Mehr, for their invaluable guidance in building i-Saksham.

We extend our sincere thanks to Sandeep Uppal and Shweta Anand Arora, our esteemed board members, for their continuous guidance and unwavering support. Their insights and expertise have been instrumental in shaping i-Saksham's journey.

Furthermore, we would like to express our deep gratitude to J. P. Morgan for their generous support of i-Saksham through their Force for Good program. Their contribution has enabled us to develop our Management Information System (MIS), which plays a crucial role in our operations.

We are immensely grateful to Acumen Angels for their support in establishing robust systems and processes that have facilitated the expansion of i-Saksham's impactful work. Their partnership has been invaluable in strengthening our organization.

We would also like to acknowledge and appreciate the support and contributions of Nalanda Capital Foundation, RBL Bank, Blackrock, SAVE Solutions, Lal Family Foundation, and Wipro Foundation in our journey to empower edu-leaders. Their belief in our mission has been pivotal in driving our efforts forward.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed partners, Educate Girls, Leap Forward, YP Foundation, and UnInhibited, for their invaluable contributions to the edu-leaders' journey following the fellowship. Their collaboration has been instrumental in achieving meaningful impact and empowering education leaders.

Lastly, we would like to thank the Bihar Development Collective for providing us with a platform to drive comprehensive statewide transformation in Bihar.



# Our Partners



**NALANDA**  
Charitable Trust

LAL FAMILY  
FOUNDATION



**BCG**



# OUR TEAM

## 24 full-time Team Members

Supported primarily by 18 Edu-leaders alumni working along with the team as peer mentors.



**16** male members



**8** female members



*Learning group facilitation techniques was a valuable experience, making this endeavor even more rewarding. I am truly grateful for this opportunity in the team to lead this process and contribute to our shared vision.*

**Ekta Kumari, Buddy Mentor**



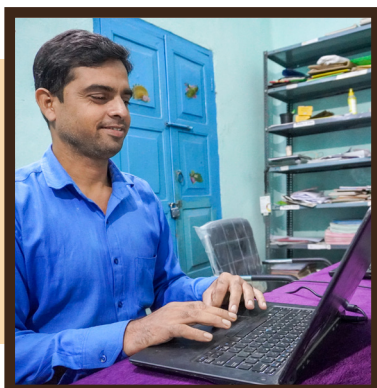
*For others, i-Saksham might be an organization, but for me, it's my home. Our team is always working to make i-Saksham better, just like how we decorate our homes.*

**Shravan Kumar, Team Jamui**



*i-Saksham encourages us in every task, which is crucial for boosting our confidence and personal development. If we ever get stuck in any work, i-Saksham supports us like a family to overcome it. Thanks for being there.*

**Paramjeet, PEER MENTOR**



*Change starts from our home and then extends to society. Joining i-Saksham allowed me to connect with people and work towards bringing positive change to every corner of my village. It teaches us to initiate change within ourselves.*

**Bipin, Team Jamui**

# Financial statement

for the year ended 31 March, 2023

## Consolidated statement of Balance Sheet

Amount in thousands

Balance Sheet as at	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-22
<b>(I) EQUITY &amp; LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Shareholders' Funds</b>		
a. Share Capital	100.00	100.00
b. Reserves and Surplus	22,506.01	13,357.33
c. Corpus Fund	4,925.82	4,341.74
	<b>27,531.83</b>	<b>17,799.07</b>
<b>Current Liabilities (Others)</b>		
a. Other Current Liabilities	4,185.32	49.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,717.15</b>	<b>17,848.17</b>
<b>(II) Assets</b>		
<b>Non Current Assets</b>		
a. Property Plant and Equipment	1,098.98	598.27
b. Property Plant and Equipment – Donated	7.00	1.50
<b>Current Assets</b>		
a. Grant Receivables	1,001.31	–
b. Cash and Cash Equivalents	28,690.11	16,385.52
c. Other Current Assets	919.75	862.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,717.15</b>	<b>17,848.17</b>
<b>Profit and Loss Statement as of</b>		
	<b>31-Mar-23</b>	<b>31-Mar-22</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Grants and Contributions	35,615.97	20,764.53
Other Income	894.64	759.62
<b>Total Income (A)</b>	<b>36,510.61</b>	<b>21,524.15</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Employee Benefit Expenses	7,142.77	5,209.21
Other Expenses	19,212.24	8,544.77
<b>Total Expenses (B)</b>	<b>26,355.01</b>	<b>13,753.97</b>
<b>Non-Cash Charges</b>		
Depreciation for the year	422.84	449.55
Less: Met Out of Capital Assets Fund	–	–
	<b>27,777.85</b>	<b>14,203.52</b>
<b>Excess of Income over Expenditure (A-B)</b>	<b>9,732.76</b>	<b>7,320.63</b>
<b>Appropriation to/(from) of Fund</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>Profit/Loss for the year ended (XII + XV)</b>	<b>9,732.76</b>	<b>7,320.63</b>

for the year ended 31 March, 2023

## Foreign Contribution Account

Balance Sheet as at	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-22
<b>Shareholders' Funds</b>		
a. Share Capital		-
b. Reserves and Surplus	4,590.71	-
<b>Corpus Fund</b>	-	-
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
a. Other Current Liabilities	2,241.53	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,832.24</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>(II) Assets</b>		
<b>Non Current Assets</b>		
a. Property Plant and Equipment	150.72	-
<b>Current Assets</b>		
b. Cash and Cash Equivalents	6,681.52	-
c. Other Current Assets	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,832.24</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Profit and Loss Statement as of</b>		
	<b>31-Mar-23</b>	<b>31-Mar-22</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Grants and Contributions	8,807.25	-
Other Income	38.11	-
<b>Total Income (A)</b>	<b>8,845.36</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Employee Benefit Expenses	960.41	-
Other Expenses	3,264.96	-
<b>Total Expenses (B)</b>	<b>4,225.37</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Non-Cash Charges</b>		
Depreciation for the year	29.28	-
	<b>4,254.65</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Excess of Income over Expenditure (A-B)</b>	<b>4,590.71</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Appropriation to/(from) of Fund</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Profit/Loss for the year ended (XII + XV)</b>	<b>4,590.71</b>	<b>-</b>

# POSH

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## PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE :

Our Company has always believed in providing a safe and harassment free workplace for every individual working in the Company premises. Company always endeavors to create and provide an environment that is free from any discrimination and harassment.

The policy on prevention of sexual harassment at workplace aims at prevention of harassment of employees {whether permanent, temporary, ad-hoc, consultants, interns or contract workers irrespective of gender} and lays down the guidelines for identification, reporting and prevention of undesired behaviour. The Company has duly constituted internal complaints committee as per the said Act and organized regular training for the team.

During the year ended March 31, 2023, there was nil complaints recorded pertaining to sexual harassment.