

Unnati

Engage

Empower

Sustain





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TOWARDS PROGRESS AND EQUALITY

The progress of a nation is indicated by the status of women in the country. Gender sensitization is one of the primary criteria to unlock the potential of women if women have to be empowered in its truest sense. Women empowerment has been a subject of interest amongst the Government and the civil society members where efforts to create equal opportunities and progress for the women folk have been made.

SHGs are the most powerful tool to adapt and adopt the participatory approach for women's economic and social empowerment. The most crucial change that SHGs have brought to the country is

- 1) Changing the gender dynamics where the participation of women is seen on the social and economic front,
- 2) and adding to the development of the community and nation.

Forming a women's collective not only raises issues of concern like equality and decision making but also, in the process, empowers women to become self-reliant and capable of undertaking tasks that can sustain families together, socially, emotionally, and financially.

While greater participation is a long road ahead, the journey of empowering women through SHG formation has begun. Project Unnati has aimed to create and has achieved the goal of creating a self-help women's group that sensitizes more and more women to form SHGs and makes them realize the importance of collective action toward change.

This has changed the gender dynamics regarding power and decision-making, which has increased in the communities. The SHG movement in India has gained momentum since its inception, through which the women have achieved equality of status, participation, and decision-making in the economic, social, and democratic domains of community life. The formation of SHGs has been a significant boost in the communities that have helped the women become self-reliant and gave them hope for a better tomorrow.



Ms. Taral Patel
Executive Director-CSR
Voltamp Transformers Pvt. Ltd.

Women empowerment is necessary to make them independent, whether on the economic, social, or democratic front. This can be done by increasing their workforce participation, giving them a sense of belongingness and worth.

As per Census 2011, the involvement of women in the country's workforce is a mere 25.5%. Usually, women's participation remains uncredited, ignored, and not brought to the common parlance of economic development. To address the problem of little or no involvement of women in the workforce, bring the participation

of women into the light of economic empowerment, and make women independent, Project Unnati was initiated with the support of the ARCH Development Foundation.

The word Unnati means progress, which helps in the identification of growth that is tangible and measurable. Forming a women's group does not only serve the objective of economic empowerment of the women but, in the process, ensures social development that helps get rid of the long-drawn taboos faced by the communities at large.

Project Unnati has helped in the women's education, empowerment, and decision-making capacities and brought about the collectivization of women for causes for the greater good of the community at large. We hope that this effort by Voltamp sustains and brings about the change that the country seeks for its women.





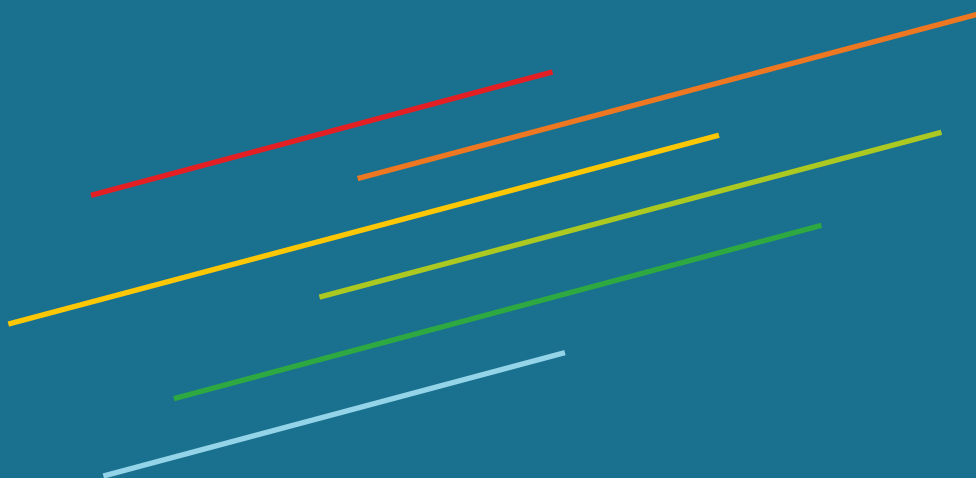
Ms. Sonkee Shah
CEO & Founder
ARCH Foundation

Collaboration has been the key to activities undertaken at ARCH Development Foundation. With active collaboration with Voltamp Transformers Ltd., ARCH Foundation, through project Unnati aims to build a cadre of women that is independent, sustainable, and contributive to the development of society.

People are the most critical human resources available to us. It is essential to recognize the tremendous potential hidden amongst our women so that enduring, positive change can be created.

Project Unnati is recognition of these efforts in a collaborative way. In implementing Project Unnati, many unprecedented challenges were faced; however, reflections upon the values of Voltamp Transformers and ARCH Development Foundation helped us find new opportunities to support the women and build an inclusive and sustainable working group.

We hope our efforts pay off and the women get ample opportunities to exercise their economic responsibilities and become independent.



CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

SDG 1

SDG 3

SDG 4

SDG 8

SDG 10

SDG 11

In such times of distress, self-reliant and sustainable women are more crucial than ever. With the pandemic throwing the families in the gloom, it has become an urgent requirement to change the status of women and their economic contribution. Sustainable Development Goals depict a human-centered, multi-dimensional vision for economic and social development. The concept of SHG in India is a well sought-out intervention that emphasizes theoretical ideas about evolution as a process of expansion of capabilities and which contributes to the policy priorities of gender empowerment as envisaged in SDG 5- Gender Equality.

While the over-arching goal is the reduction of poverty as per SDG 1 and contribution to National Income, the shadow achievements would be access to good health and well-being (SDG 3),

Quality education for their children (SDG 4),

Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8),

reduced inequalities (SDG 10), and of course

creating sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11).

The SDGs have a global target, to achieve a better future for all. To achieve this target, localization of these is very crucial. The efforts must be through the bottom-up affirmative actions that provide a roadmap for local policymaking. For a country like India, it is essential to build a mechanism for localizing the SDGs. This mechanism exists in the name of SHGs, for it leverages the human capital in women's collectives. While SHGs have been quite progressive in their outcomes, the actions must have not formed parallel tracks but have become a way of reinforcing the capacities of women individually and collectively.



ACHIEVEMENT AT A GLANCE

Increasing potentials,
one SHG at a time
(Women covered under SHG formation)

92 women in two villages

Mobilizing Savings
(Total saving mobilized through SHGs)

Total savings mobilised: ₹ 1,18,000/-

Internal lending: ₹ 63,000/-

Channelizing Women Leadership
(Women trained under leadership program)

46 members from SHGs
were introduced under the
leadership program

Moving ahead, Rupee by Rupee
(Additional income mobilized)

1,25,000 in 5 months

Making Sanitary napkins accessible to all
(Sanitary napkins sold by women leaders within the community)

109 packets of sanitary napkins
were sold by SHGs

Banking for a better tomorrow
(Total women linked with the bank)

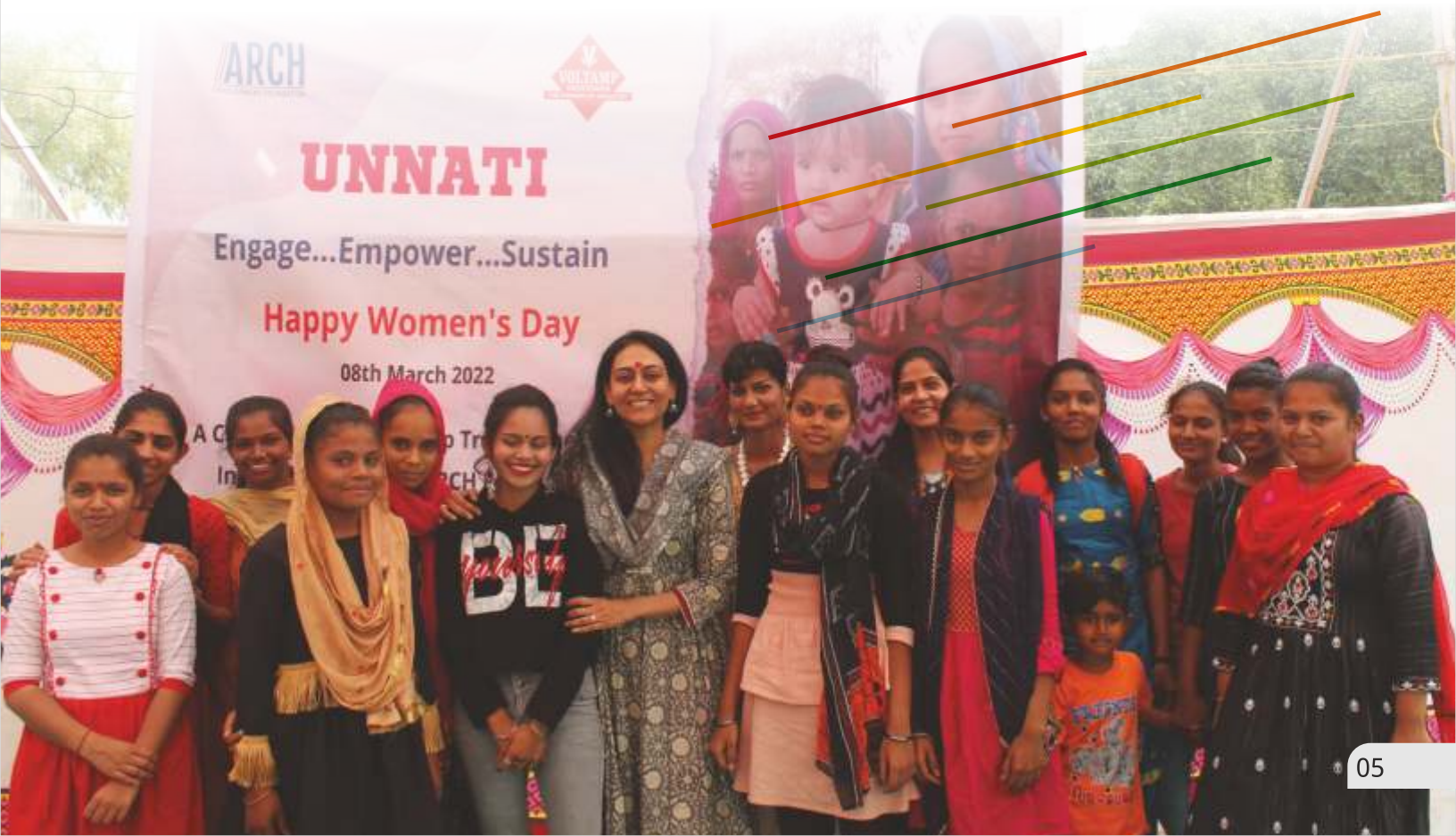
85% of women covered under
the project hold a bank account
and handle it independently

Threading together Joys and
Empowerment
(Women trained for making Rakhis)

65 women

Countering Taboos. Collectively
(Improved Menstrual practices)

58% of women from SHGs
know and follow the hygienic
practices during menstruation





INTRODUCTION OF

Unnati

ENGAGE | EMPOWER | SUSTAIN

Self-Help Groups in India play a pivotal role in helping women become empowered and fighting stigmas and taboos that have long subjected women to discrimination. For decades, SHGs have helped alleviate poverty by reaching out to women who cannot meet primary ends.

Considering that women form about half a percentage of the total population, their contribution to work is almost always undocumented or unaccounted for. Employability has not been directly proportional to the people of women in the country. The problems of cultural and social taboos only worsen the situation.

Moving forward from a small pilot project of forming a collective of women towards economic empowerment in 1992, Self-Help Groups have become one of the most sustainable ways of initiating microfinance at the local level.

Taking the concept forward and ensuring that maximum women benefit from these initiatives, Voltamp Transformers Pvt. Ltd., in collaboration with ARCH Development Foundation, conceived Project Unnati to empower and sustain the financial and social improvement of the women in and around Jarod.

CSR activities should be such that they improve the present situation without compromising the future needs of the population. The development of self-help groups is a way to make the women and their families economically independent and confident monetarily while making autonomous choices. While the over-arching aim is women empowerment, the supporting structures would be the following, which form the basic premise of women empowerment:



A

Financial Empowerment

Women's empowerment is possible when they are given access to saving and credit, which promotes women's more significant economic role in decision-making. The aim of financial empowerment further would help the women optimize their household welfare, help in improvisation of women's skills and knowledge and increase their mobility to build support networks.



B

Social Empowerment

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process. The formation of SHGs uses a participatory approach, which helps provide opportunities for women. These opportunities of socializing help the women in sharing of knowledge, experiences which are common, and moreover sharing of problems that bring about solutions through collective thinking. One such thing that helps transform women's lives includes breaking taboos that subjugate women to discrimination.



C

Psychological Empowerment

Women's mobility in and around their villages can help improve their mental processes, which inhibit them from developing their capabilities.



PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

Spadework ///

Before introducing the project aspect and goals to the community members, spade work in the form of rapport building was undertaken to build a relationship with the community members, including the formal and the informal leaders, women, already existing groups, and children. Specific activities were undertaken during this phase to generate the members' interest.



RAPPORT BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Vaccination drive for Covid-19 Vaccine

Vaccination drives were undertaken in the community using the national drive for Covid19 vaccination as a primary base to build rapport with the people. Awareness generation, facilitation of information, and distribution of medicines were forms of activities undertaken under this drive.

It was found that resistance was relatively high amongst the community members concerning vaccinations. Taboos related to vaccination were quite prominent, and it was necessary to break the taboos through awareness generation drives.

Once awareness was generated, and correct information was disseminated amongst the community members, collaboration with the Primary Health Centre conducted the vaccination camps.

Door-to-door awareness generation drives helped mobilize the people towards the vaccination camps, which resulted in a hundred percent vaccination in the community.

The activity helped establish trust with the community members, the first step towards taking the project vision forward.



Creating a Palette of Colours, a Palette of Stakeholders

While the connection with the adult community members was established, it was also necessary to build a relationship with the children to identify future work prospects in the community. A coloring and handwriting competition was organized for the children of primary schools in the villages.

The objective to engage with the children was two-folded, where the lockdown confinement could be gotten rid of, and the community could become participative and engaging in the activities conducted in the villages. The mothers of the children were also involved in the competition to increase their engagement.

An overwhelming response was received from the community members. Young girls also came forward to volunteer for the project activities. Prizes for winners were announced, and the community members were invited to the felicitation ceremony of the prize winners.



Co-creating Self-Worth

Once the essential trust with the community members was established, it was necessary to start collecting women in the groups to move forth with the project objectives.

In a significant step towards taking the initiative forward, women were collected in groups to conduct workshops on self-awareness. Most women, even today, have a fear of self-doubt, constantly doubting their abilities. The cultural norms and taboos worsen the situation that inhibits women from participating in the more fantastic realm of society.

The self-awareness workshops focused on exploring the self, inculcating feelings of self-worth, and understanding women's strengths. This activity helped the women in getting rid of the norms that bound them from not participating in the social and economic activities of the community.

The platform was also used to introduce the women to Project Unnati and how it can be beneficial in increasing the status of the women in the villages, socially and economically.



Stepping up towards Collectivization for Change //

The official program launch was organized at Maninagar where the community members from Maninagar and Vadadla came together to show their acceptance of the project. This was done with the help of the organization of a Rangoli competition amongst the women. The winners of the competition were felicitated with prizes.

The collective helped the women discuss their expectations from the project in detail, which they discussed openly in the forum. This laid the project's foundation stone with the help of discussions and deliberations amongst the women. It also helped lay out the roadmap of the project activities vis-à-vis the development of the women in the process.

The girls who volunteered for various activities conducted in the villages also came forward to share their experiences of working. They highlighted the change they felt within themselves and the things they still need to work upon to become independent. This helped the women to understand the objectives of Project Unnati being established and to further deliberate their expectations from the project.





EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

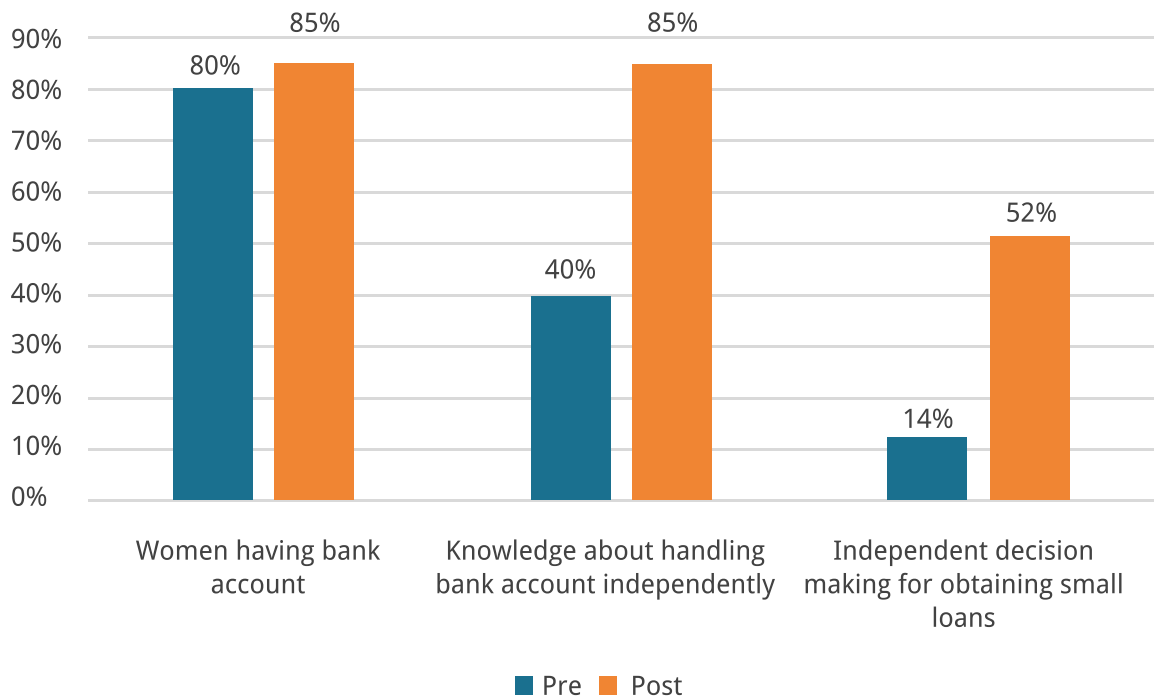
Economic empowerment of women does not necessarily mean improving their financial status alone. Along with financial improvement, it is vital to change their decision-making capacities to make equal decisions regarding matters that concern themselves and their families. While the social stigma and norms inhibit women from exercising their economic rights and responsibilities, it is important to uplift the status of women through collectivization efforts.

Often, forming a peer group is beneficial in improving the status of the women as together they can influence and encourage each other in bringing each other up. This has a positive impact on the lives of women. Through Project Unnati, women were organized into collectives and encouraged to discuss affairs concerning themselves and their families.

The project's primary objective was to unite women and engage them in self-employment activities to encourage financial independence.

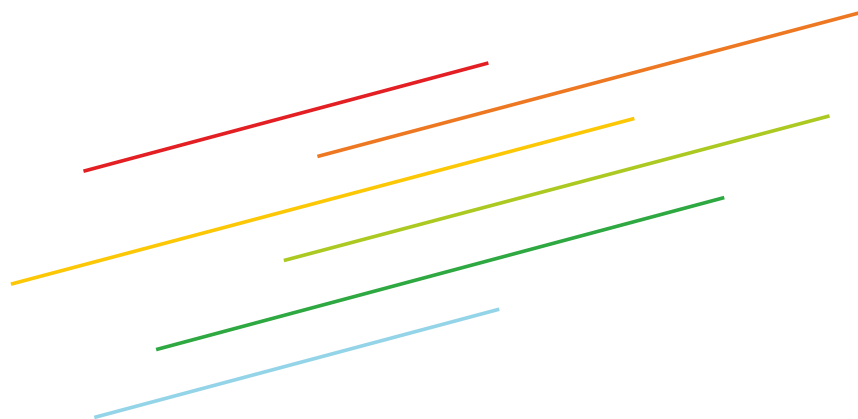


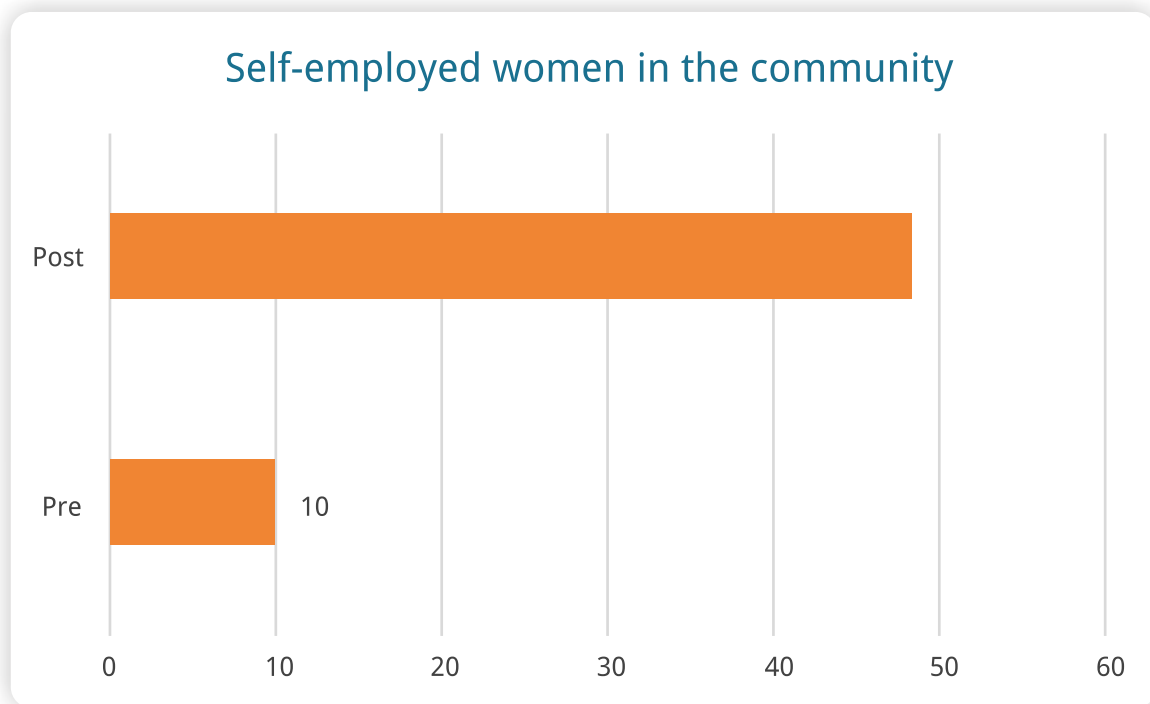
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As a result of creating economic independence amongst the women, about 85% of the women in the villages could open bank accounts in the local banks around the villages. This encouraged small-scale savings and women to systematically manage their finances at the household level. At the same time, 85% of the women could handle their bank accounts independently, held by their male counterparts only. This indicated an increase in the knowledge level of women concerning financial management literacy.

Since the women became independent in making their decisions and got ample knowledge about loans and finance management, more than half the percentage of the women in the villages took decisions about procuring small loans from the bank for starting their own ventures.





The most significant impact created was that 48 women could start their own ventures through engagement in making rakhis and selling sanitary napkins. A positive sign as against only 10 self-employed women. This created self-confidence amongst the women and allowed them to become independent in their decision-making capacities. A wave of change was built on the economic front. The women started coming out of their shells which inhibited them from participating in the economic front to develop their families.



PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES UNDER ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Forming Women Collectives to Garner Change ! ///

Formation of SHG molds women to be responsible citizens of the nation, having the financial and social status of their own. It does not only mean creating women collectives that help them to earn money but, in the process, also helps in developing a sense of belongingness, increases the habit of savings, and raises loans. The SHG women also participate in social welfare programs that empower and uplift other women.

Under project Unnati, 7 SHGs were formed, which covered 82 women. Before the formation of the groups, several activities were undertaken as follows:

Pre-Group Formation Meetings:

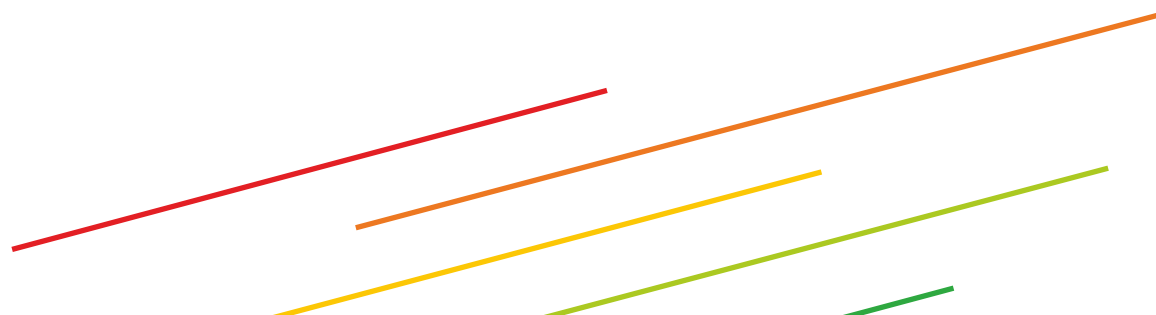
The pre-group formation meetings were organized to encourage the women to discuss the prospects of joining a self-help group. Women leaders from existing SHGs were invited to talk to the women to discuss the benefits of SHG and how the activities can benefit the women in the long run. These cleared many misconceptions in the minds of the women, like working in an SHG would take up all the time the women, and they wouldn't be able to pay attention to their family affairs. The interactions helped motivate the women to engage in SHG activities for the immense benefit of their families and communities.

Bank Linkage:

Participation of women in SHG and its activities improves their credit and loan repayment prospects. The women were encouraged to open bank accounts to mobilize their savings and access loans for self-employment. Overall, bank loans help decrease the dependence of women on private money lenders who charge a hefty interest on the money borrowed. Through the bank linkage, where the interest rates are affordable, the women can save a good income that otherwise could have been spent on repaying the private money lenders.

Registration of groups under NRLM

The National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), launched by the Ministry of Rural Development, aims to create opportunities for women engaged in SHGs. The primary objective is to enhance their autonomy and the ability to access opportunities that can lead to the development of themselves and their families. The NRLM was sought as an opportunity to engage the SHG women to do things that interest them and mobilize government funding. The NRLM has multiple goals like reduction of poverty, linkages with banks, credit capitalization, education, health, and access to welfare services. To ensure access and availability to resources are granted, SHGs were registered under NRLM.



Training and capacity building are essential components of SHGs to improvise planned activities and actions. Constant inputs of training and capacity building are required to sustain the SHGs. The entire training activities undertaken were divided into two categories-

- Where general training was imparted inclusive of leadership training, Group dynamics and conflict management, and
- Record/bookkeeping, public accounting, and internal lending training were provided.

While the first type of training was general training, it geared the women towards group management which can impact the economic and social variables intended to be changed. This kind of training was primarily homogenized.

The second type of training was skill formation training to help improve the income-generating activities undertaken by the SHGs.

The training process was continuous and comprehensive, which helped the women SHGs to function and independently adapt to the working environment.



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In collaboration with

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A CSR initiative

REVITALIZING ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

REVITALIZING ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Income Generation activities undertaken as a part of SHG work serve as an essential vehicle for the growth and sustainability of women. In the longer run, women not only earn the economic return but also generate savings and distribute the profits amongst the groups. Diversified income generation activities were undertaken under the Unnati umbrella, where income generation was the objective and spread social messages related to menstrual health and hygiene. The women SHG under Project Unnati were trained in two aspects of income generation activities- one that was seasonal and the second which had a social impact on the income generated. The following activities were undertaken as a part of the income generation activity:

Threading Colors of Joy ///

The festival of Raksha Bandhan demands a variety of Rakhi's every year. This demand spikes the production of various designs of Rakhis throughout the year. This was used as an opportunity to train and engage in bulk Rakhi making throughout the year. While training for Rakhi making was not a one-time aspect, the long-term part was to prepare the women in trades that could last and provide long-term commitment towards the skills built.

The women were collectively trained to prepare different types of rakhi designs. To manage the supply of the production, an integrated existing supply chain collaborated. This boosted the women's confidence and gave them a horizon to take up more significant projects in the near future.

A total of 48 women were trained, and a whopping order of 1,82,000 rakhis was completed collectively by the women. It created a total additional income of INR 92,000/- for the women. Over and above that, the women also have learned to deal with customers without the help of intermediaries. The women are now trained to deal with the vendors independently and manage the work and household chores. The women have become good at multi-tasking and handling several things at once.

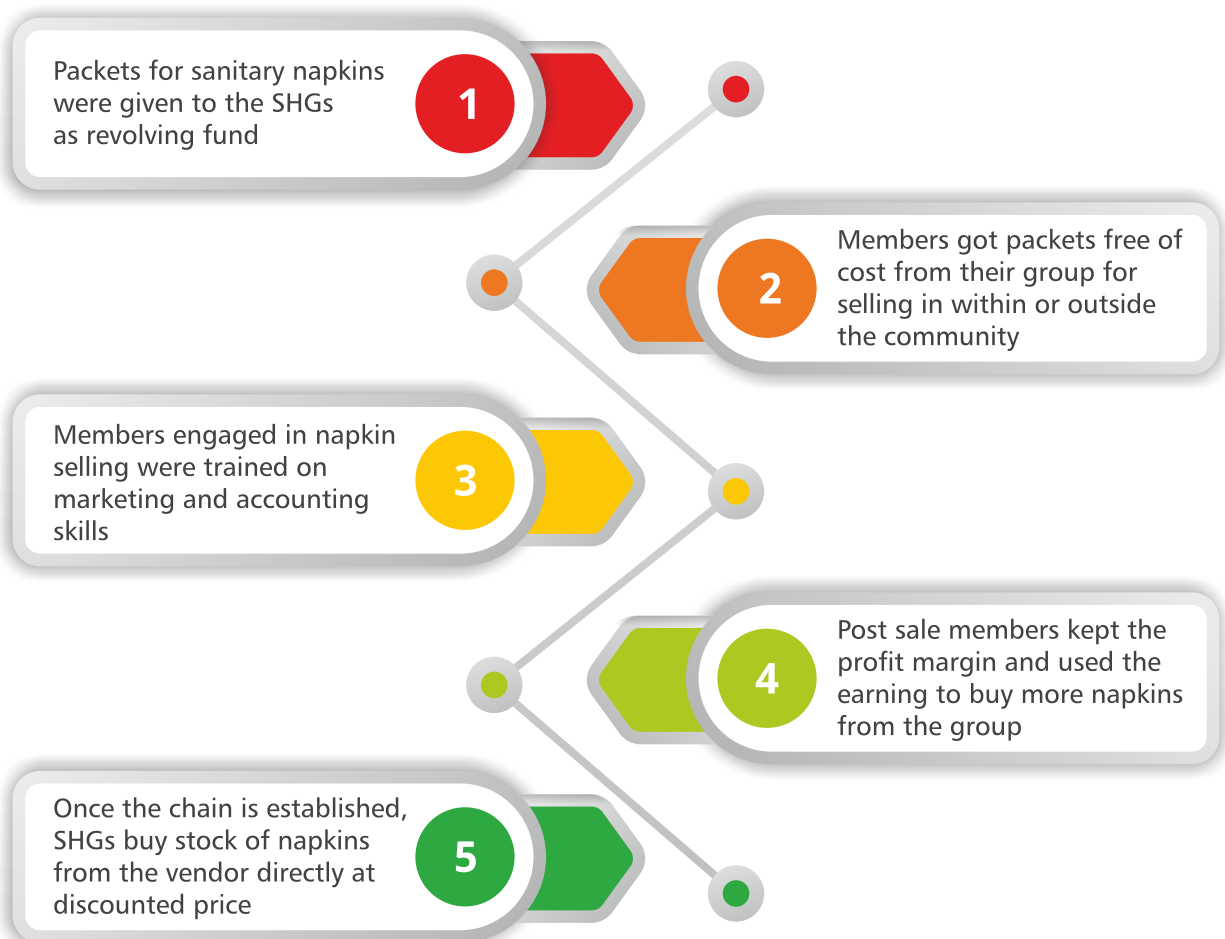


Inspiring Women to think beyond Menstrual Taboos ///

Sanitary napkin use is still taboo in most communities. With the help of SHG pre-formation meetings, awareness regarding sanitary napkins was generated amongst the women folk of the communities. However, affordability was a question. To counter this issue, the women SHG were taught sanitary napkin vending and management. A few packets of the napkins were provided to the women as a corpus to help the funds revolve.

The members of the SHG were given sanitary napkin packets free of cost to sell in and around the community. The profit earned through selling the napkin is kept with the woman selling them and utilized to buy more napkins to be sold on a rolling basis after keeping the profit margin. A total of 108 packets of sanitary napkins were sold, and an income of INR 3000/- was utilized.

The members of the SHG were trained in accounting and marketing to check the supply and income spent and generated. Once established, the women buy the sanitary napkins at a discounted rate from the vendors directly and sell the napkins. Initial help was provided through Project Unnati volunteers. Still, now, the women can handle the work themselves, thus creating a self-sustaining system that promotes healthy habits, generates income, and makes them financially independent.





SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Building autonomy, power, and confidence amongst women constitute social empowerment. This also means enabling the women to enact change and helping them pave a better way to carve out their future. Women in groups benefit greatly through social empowerment that is co-created by the group members and percolated across the community. It can range from various issues that inhibit the functioning of women in society. Through project Unnati, several social issues were tackled collectively to help the women get rid of the taboos and participate on the social and economic front.

Promotion of Menstrual Health

Awareness Sessions for women and adolescent girls

Total outreach –

Women

Adolescent girls

Project Unnati stands for women's progress from hurdles that inhibit women from active participation. One such hurdle is menstruation because women cannot participate to the fullest of their potential.

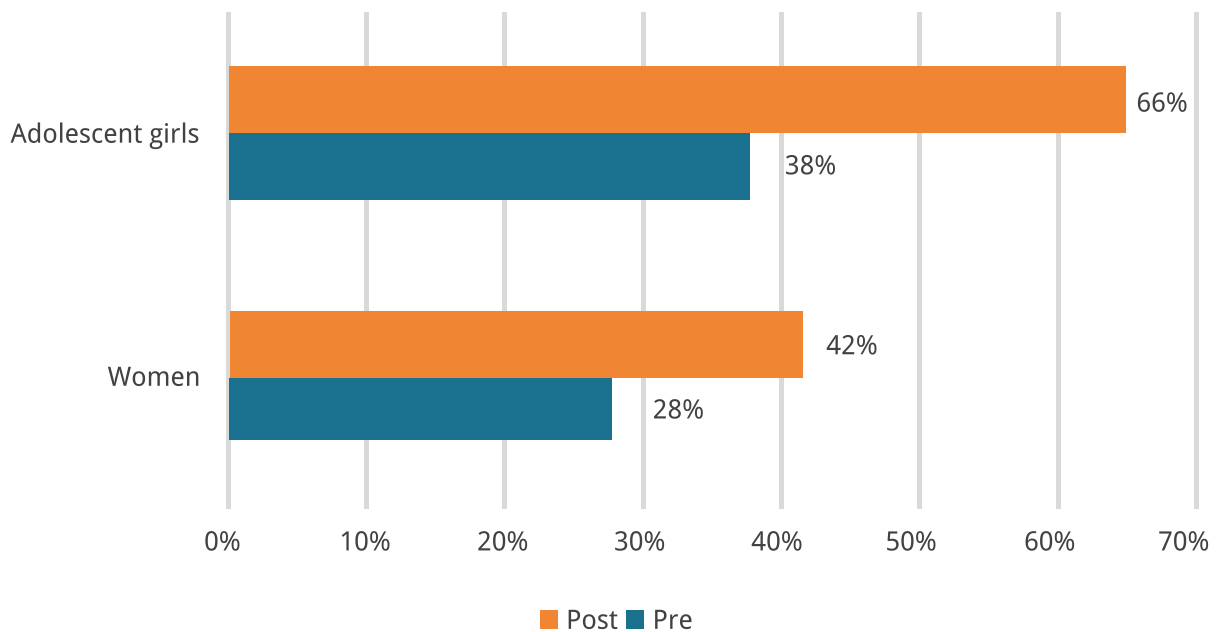
To increase awareness about menstruation health and hygiene in the communities, the SHG women were mobilized towards action. The objective of menstrual health and hygiene combined health education for adolescent girls and women in the community by providing proper knowledge and a regular supply of sanitary napkins. Awareness regarding good reproductive health was also generated amongst the women along with correct use and disposal of napkins, health challenges faced due to usage of napkins, etc.

The exercise was beneficial as peer learning was promoted by the women and for the women. The approach not only helped the women discuss the issues they faced but also helped the other women in the community openly come out and discuss the issues they faced about reproductive health.



Impact Created

Increased number of beneficiaries using sanitary napkins

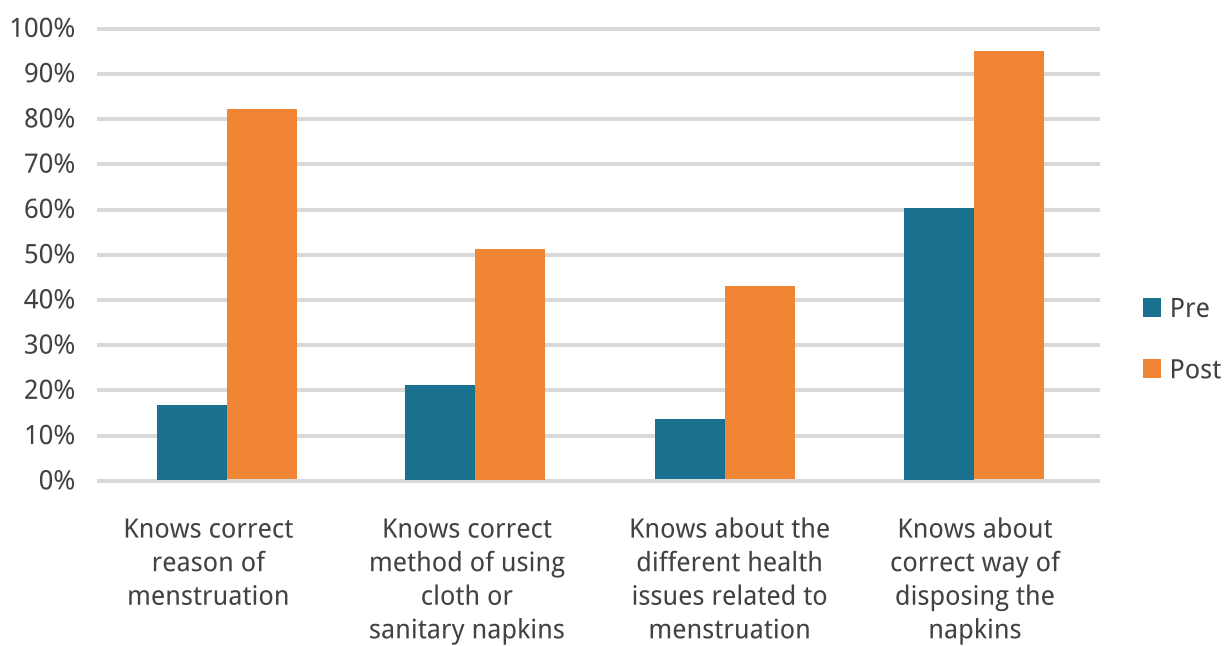


With the help of SHGs, sanitary napkin distribution and sales were increased. The result indicated that the number of women using sanitary napkins increased. While only 28% of the women used napkins earlier, with the help of SHG women's engagement, it grew to 48% of the women using sanitary napkins. The case with adolescent girls was even better where a large number of girls (66%) started using sanitary napkins.

The initiative of sanitary napkins distribution and sale by the women and for the women was a good one as it helped women to discuss the taboos and break them on a one-to-one basis to bring about a change in menstrual management. The SHGs have significantly impacted the use of sanitary napkins in the communities, and they strive for a hundred percent change towards the same!



Increase knowledge about correct and hygienic practices



The SHG women under Unnati have worked towards training women and girls towards safe and hygienic menstrual management practices. The women and the distribution of sanitary napkins have also worked towards helping women and girls rise above unsafe menstrual practices by equipping them with the correct information. A comprehensive social and behavioral change communication technique was implemented through dialogue, group conversations, and influencing change. As a result, there was an increase in correct knowledge about menstruation (82%), women and girls got to know about the proper method of using a cloth or sanitary napkins (52%), learned about the different health issues related to menstruation (44%) and learned about the correct disposal of napkins post use (95%).

While behavioral change is a long way ahead, the women have collectively been successful in helping the women and girls get rid of the ill practices and taboos related to menstruation that inhibit them from participation.



Health Camps – Total outreach –

Health camps were organized under the Unnati initiative in Vadadla and Maninagar to help women get tested for various gynecological problems, HB testing, and essential check-ups by general physicians.

Often, women neglect their health and prioritize their family's health over their own. Through the formation of SHGs, self-care and worth were promoted amongst the women, and they were motivated to come for testing in large numbers to get diagnosed with any illness to get timely and effective treatment.

The SHG women were instrumental in creating awareness regarding the health camps and ensured that the maximum number of women came for the health check-ups. 90% of the women and girls were tested for HB and were reported to have HB levels of more than 12.5. g/dl.

It was observed after the check-up that most of the women faced dermatological issues due to poor hygiene practices that were followed.

It also came to light that many women faced gynecological issues like white discharge and other RTIs. The health camp helped in the diagnosis of the problems faced by women and ensured timely referral and treatment of the women. The role of the SHG women has been beneficial as they were instrumental in mobilizing the majority of the women towards getting themselves checked.





Enhancing Social Harmony

Celebration of Women's day – Celebrating Womanhood

Every day should be a women's day, as Womanhood should be celebrated. For the first time ever, the women of Maninagar and Vadadla came together to celebrate the spirit of Womanhood through the celebration of women's day.

The event included games and conversations surrounding the spirit of Womanhood that encouraged women to bond with one another and create a bond. Several competitions were held for the women in which they participated with fervor and zeal. It of a kind event where women got to socialize with each other apart from household chores and daily activities. The women enjoyed themselves to their hearts' content. They discussed their achievements and feelings concerning joining the SHG and how it is helping them shape themselves as independent women.



ARCH

Unnati

Engage...Empower...Sustain

A CSR initiative by Voltamp Transformers Ltd.
In collaboration with ARCH Foundation

PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT

Psychological Empowerment

Empowerment of women is not only social or economic. The empowerment starts when the women begin to free themselves from the psychological hurdles that inhibit them from participating. Women empowerment is more about achieving autonomy, the ability to make decisions, and the use of power. All these things combined lead to empowerment where women have a free mindset to exercise their social and economic rights.

Four facets of psychological empowerment were identified: the perspective of women regarding the meaning and worth of SHG formed, the competence of women, self-determination to bring about change, and the impact created at the individual and community level.

Overall, the four facets helped improve the development of the SHG women. The feelings of self-worth and the belief that women can also sustain their families and are worth engaging independently in economic activities were developed amongst the women SHG members. The women have come a long way from overcoming their hurdles and becoming socially and economically independent, which was only possible through a change in their psychological selves. Project Unnati has been successful at bringing about a change that will foster change in the upcoming generations.



WAY FORWARD

Most Government programs and schemes see people, especially women, as rhetoric participants and mere beneficiaries of the program without having much say about the decisions involving their capacities and development regarding access to resources and opportunities. While most of this happens unknowingly, it is essential to bring it to the common parlance of development that women are not mere receivers; they can be contributors too, given the right opportunities and leveraging their potential. Until there is targeted direct engagement with women collectively to help them claim their space in society, this slip will be almost automatic.

The SHG intervention is based on the premise that the community learns better from its own; the program strengthens the capabilities of rural women by creating a cadre of them. The identification and training of SHG leaders led to the percolation of the efforts in the form of small-scale training to a large number of women in the villages to come and form the women's collective for the betterment of themselves and their entire communities.

Project Unnati started from a small-scale idea of building a small women's collective. Still, due to the participation and cooperation of the women members, it could achieve the intended goals at a significant level. The women have not only become independent but have started managing and making decisions that concern themselves, their families, and the resources that they own and have access to.



Upscaling to new villages ///

Project Unaati has received an overwhelming response from the villages where intervention was done. The future plan is to scale up the intervention to other nearby villages so that the benefits can be reaped by a maximum number of women. The same pedagogy shall be applied to create women collectives who would be trained and guided towards economic and social independence.

Starting a Unnati training centre ///

To help the women learn new skills and trades, the Unnati Training centre shall be proposed to be started so that women can have a common place to gather and learn the trades and skills that interest them. A commonplace can encourage them to come and learn through peer education methods, and trained professionals can impart the training through which the existing skills can be polished and earning can be ensured.

Introducing new trades - long-term with better income avenues: ///

Based on a need assessment and baseline assessment of what women want, new trades shall be started through which the existing pool of knowledge and skills amongst the women can be increased, and their efforts can be channelized towards concrete actions for change.

Focusing on personal grooming, leadership skills, and exposure to the outside world ///

While women have started coming out of their shells and participating in society's social and economic realms, a more significant push is needed to ensure that women's self-confidence can be built. There's a long way to go regarding leadership proficiency, communication, and competence when interacting with the outside world. These women have come a long way after countering the social and cultural taboos; a little more strengthening and guidance are required to ensure that women can function independently.



Improving women's menstrual health through improved practices

The women have started reflecting on the other dimensions of their lives other than economic constraints. They have become problem-solvers, risk takers, and social leaders. Through collectivization, the women have broken many myths and have been instrumental in making women realize their social inhibitions. With the help of the "women-raising-women" initiative under Project Unnati, menstrual hygiene, access, and health shall be envisaged to be worked upon. The women shall become catalyzers of change, bringing about awareness of menstrual health and hygiene practices in their respective villages.

Project Unnati has not only been beneficial in creating economic independence but has transformed the dominant capitalist system by embracing the concept of solidarity and mutual support. Women folk have come together and explored the dynamics of synergizing for development. There is a need for more technical support to make these groups sustainable, and efforts shall be continuously made to make them stronger.

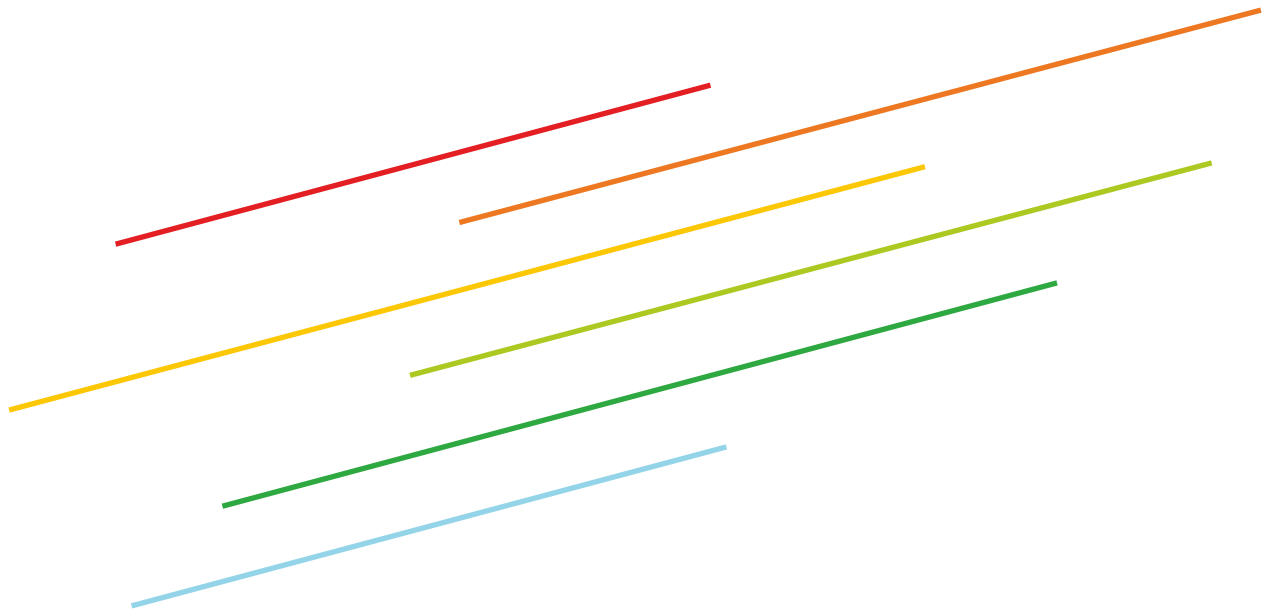




“ The highest education is the which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. ”

Rabindranath Tagore





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