

UDAYA

Understanding the lives of adolescents and young adults

The UDAYA study carried out a survey with adolescents (10 to 19 years old) in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, India to record their transition into young adulthood. More than 20,000 adolescents were interviewed in 2015-16 (Wave 1) and followed up in 2018-19 (Wave 2).

Girls and young women in decision-making: ensuring an equal future

Women's equal participation in decision-making is essential to rebuild a just and equitable world. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises the critical role women and girls play in achieving not just Goal 5 on gender equality, but all the SDGs. India's annual *Economic Survey of 2017-18* pointed out, '... there is growing evidence that there can also be significant gains in economic growth if women acquire greater personal agency, assume political power and attain public status, and participate equally in the labour force. (Dollar and Gatti, 1999; Lagarde, 2016; Loko and Diouf, 2009).'



The opportunities available to adolescents and their experiences have a lifelong effect as they transition into adulthood. The ability of girls and young women to make decisions in personal and public spheres will determine the role they play in society as adults. The UDAYA study sought to assess participation of young girls in decision-making processes, and the factors that enable them to negotiate equal rights.

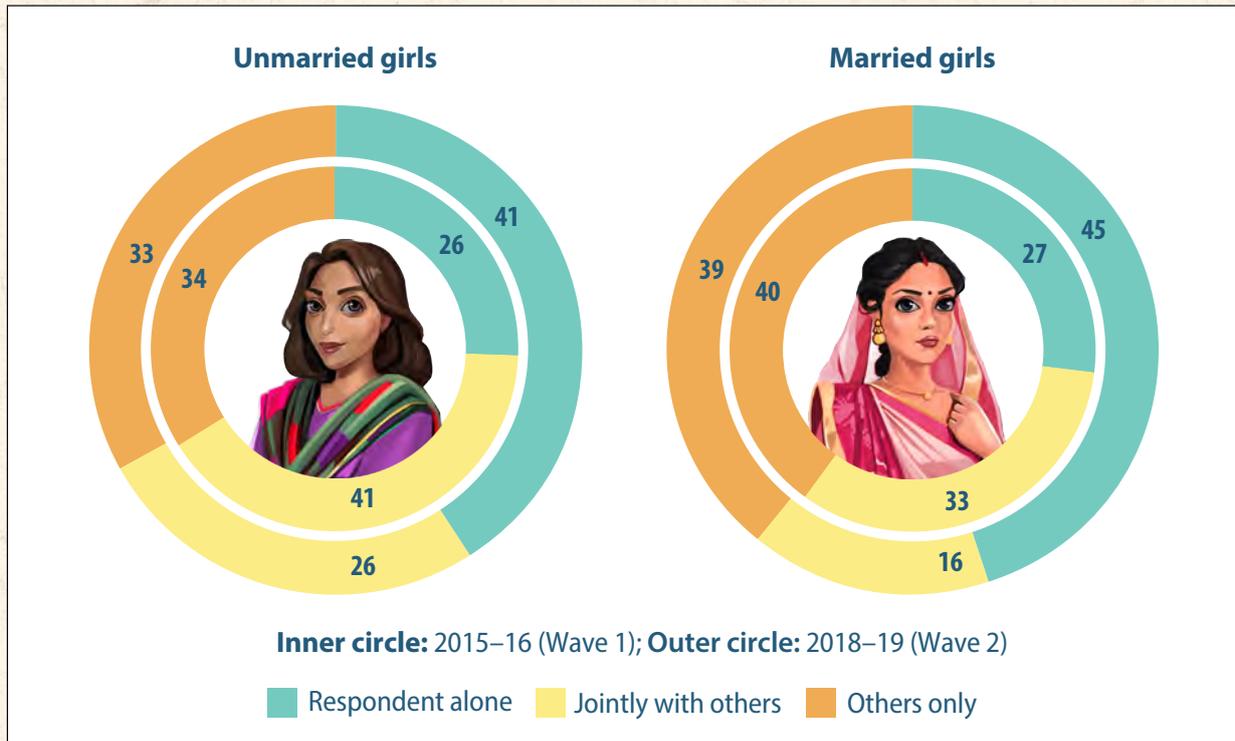
International Women's Day 2021 – Creating future women leaders



What helps adolescent girls make decisions regarding education and work?

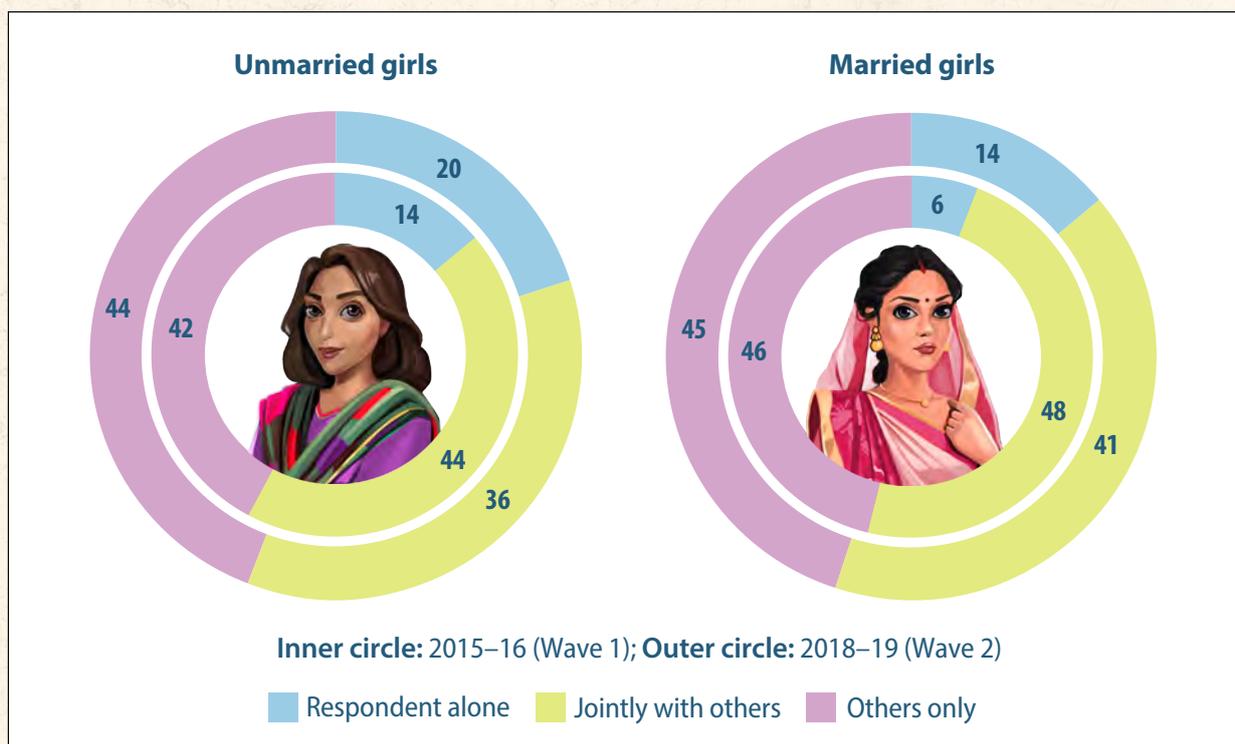
Among older girls who had ever attended school, a higher proportion had autonomy in decisions related to their level of schooling in 2018–19 (Wave 2) as against 2015–16 (Wave 1). A similar increase was also observed in decisions about taking up a job. However, older married girls had far less say in these decisions than their unmarried counterparts.

Participation of girls in decision-making for education (%)



Girls 15–19 years old in 2015-16

Participation of girls in decision-making for work (%)



Girls 15–19 years old in 2015-16

What are some enabling factors that help girls assume leadership roles?

Findings from the study show that among girls aged 15–19 years in 2015–16, those who had completed secondary school were 20 per cent more likely to participate in decision-making related to work as against those who had not completed secondary school. Adolescent health programmes are seen to have a significant impact on older girls' decision-making and ability to express their opinion to parents. Those who participated in adolescent health programmes were 40 per cent more likely to make decisions related to further schooling, and 30 per cent more likely to make decisions related to work, as against those who had not participated.

Factors helping decision-making of adolescent girls

Completed secondary school



20% more likely
to participate in decisions related to work

Participated in adolescent health programmes



40% more likely
to participate in decisions related to further schooling

30% more likely
to participate in decisions related to work

40% more likely
to freely express aspirations to parents



Though the progress towards equal participation of women in leadership and decision-making might be slow and dependent on a complex interplay of factors, the UDAYA study findings provide clear indication of enabling measures that can accelerate the process. India's National Education Policy 2020 recognises 'the special and critical role that women play in shaping society', and underscores the importance of providing quality education to girls. Existing government programmes for girls such as scholarships and bicycles are seen to have helped retain them in school, and should be implemented widely. UDAYA study findings underscore the importance of adolescent health programmes in enhancing the ability of girls to become future leaders.

Contributors

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UDAYA Project

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About Udaya Study

The UDAYA (Understanding the lives of adolescents and young adults) study establishes the levels, patterns and trends in the situation of younger (10-14) and older (15-19) adolescents in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Its findings provide insights on how and where to make investments to improve their lives by the time they reach young adulthood and beyond. The study recruited more than 20,000 adolescents aged 10–19 years in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in 2015–16 (Wave 1) to record their transition from adolescence to young adulthood.

Wave 1 was followed by another survey round in 2018-19 (Wave 2) with the same respondents and achieved an 80% follow-up rate. This makes UDAYA the largest adolescent–centric longitudinal study in India and globally, carried out by the Population Council. The recruitment of adolescents for the study coincided with the adoption of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, providing an opportunity to track their progress over time.



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UDAYA builds evidence