



**BITS Pilani**

# Leap 300 Unconditional Micro-Entrepreneurship Grant ( UMG ) for Poverty Eradication using Technology

Impact Study by BITS Pilani  
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Presented by

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# Leap 300 mission to remove extreme poverty in India

Extreme poverty, as defined by the World Bank, includes anyone living on less than \$2.15 a day, adjusted for purchasing power parity. According to Niti Aayog's Multidimensional Poverty Index Progress Report 2023<sup>1</sup>, 135 million people in India escaped multidimensional poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21. However, 195 million Indians still live in extreme poverty, facing daily struggles and barely surviving, desperately needing external assistance to break free from the vicious cycle of poverty.

Leap India Stack Foundation is a technology-driven NGO, set up in 2023, with a vision to end all forms of poverty in India by 2030. Its intervention Leap 300 combines the transformative power of technology with an Unconditional Micro-Entrepreneurship Grant (UMG) of ₹60,000 to sustainably lift the extremely vulnerable out of lifelong poverty within 300 days. Leap 300 targets the most structurally poor members of society; its beneficiaries are 10 times more likely to be disabled, 5 times more likely to be widowed, and 2 times more likely to be landless compared to the overall population.

1. <https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-08/India-National-Multidimensional-Poverty-Index-2023.pdf>

# Intervention Design

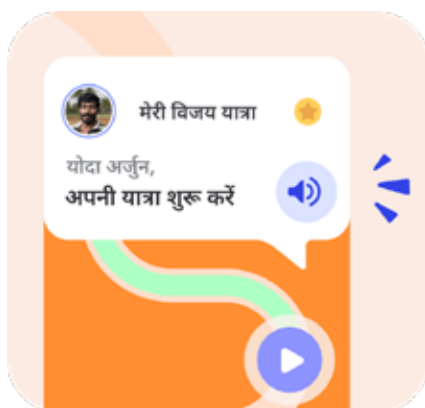
Leap 300 is on a mission to eliminate extreme poverty with technology in 300 days.

The intervention combines 3 pillars:



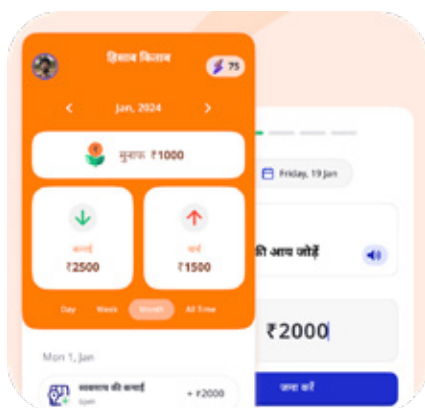
## Unconditional Micro-Entrepreneurship Grant

Lumpsum bank transfer of Rs.60,000 to selected beneficiaries based on Leap 300's targeting algorithm.



## Tech-Based Skilling for Business

Through a voice-assisted Learning Management System (LMS) designed especially for the illiterate poor, comprising step-by-step voice-enabled, visual modules required to start and run a small business.



## Support for Business Sustenance

Via continuous Community Linkages through Leap 300 beneficiary app, regular in person follow up meetings, at individual and group level. Access to Government Schemes and transactions data monitoring through an Accounting Tool

During the 300-day journey, there are seven key meetings called Super Sabhas. Each Super Sabha is followed by a task, with incentives linked to its completion. The intervention relies on a rigorous operations model, combining technology, bank transfers and a regular learning + problem-solving rhythm to prime the beneficiary to set up and successfully run their business.



The Leap India Stack Foundation, has tested and refined the intervention through 5 pre-pilots, helping over 40+ families. This helped to design the ongoing pilot for the RCT study in Chandauli district with 31 families in the treatment group and 20 in the control group.



# BITS Pilani Impact study



In order to study the impact of Leap 300, Professor Mridula Goel, from BITS Pilani, an Institute of Eminence (Ministry of HRD, Government of India 2018), is conducting a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT)<sup>2</sup> to assess the effectiveness of the Leap 300 intervention which focuses on income growth as well as certain multidimensional poverty indicators, including health, nutrition and education. The RCTs are conducted as pilots in Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh, which is identified as one of the most aspirational districts of the country by NITI Aayog<sup>3</sup>.

The BITS Pilani RCT selected control and treatment villages in Chandauli district. Village Basani in Sakaldiha block serves as the control, while Katauri and Sarane in Niyamatabad block are the treatment villages. These villages are similar in socio-economic aspects. The control and treatment villages are located on opposite sides of the highway NH-19 in different blocks, and were chosen so as to control for any spillover effects that could bias the study.

2. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/resource/introduction-randomized-evaluations>

3. <https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-09/List-of-Aspirational-Districts.pdf> 04

Participants in both the control and treatment groups were selected using Leap 300's advanced algorithm, which prioritises family income and vulnerability factors such as landless labor, single women households, and disability within the family. A total of 31 participants formed the treatment group and received the UMG, while 20 participants formed the control group. To ease the challenges of getting proper data from the control group, Leap 300 compensates participants with ₹100 per month for their time, along with potential implementation of the intervention after the 18 month study period is completed.

To monitor progress the team visits the house of each selected participant every 45 days, and gathers data on family income, savings, health, nutrition, and children's school attendance. Such regular visits also build support for the intervention. The information is gathered using Leap 300's Operations Application, and a selfie with the participant on site ensures the integrity of the process.

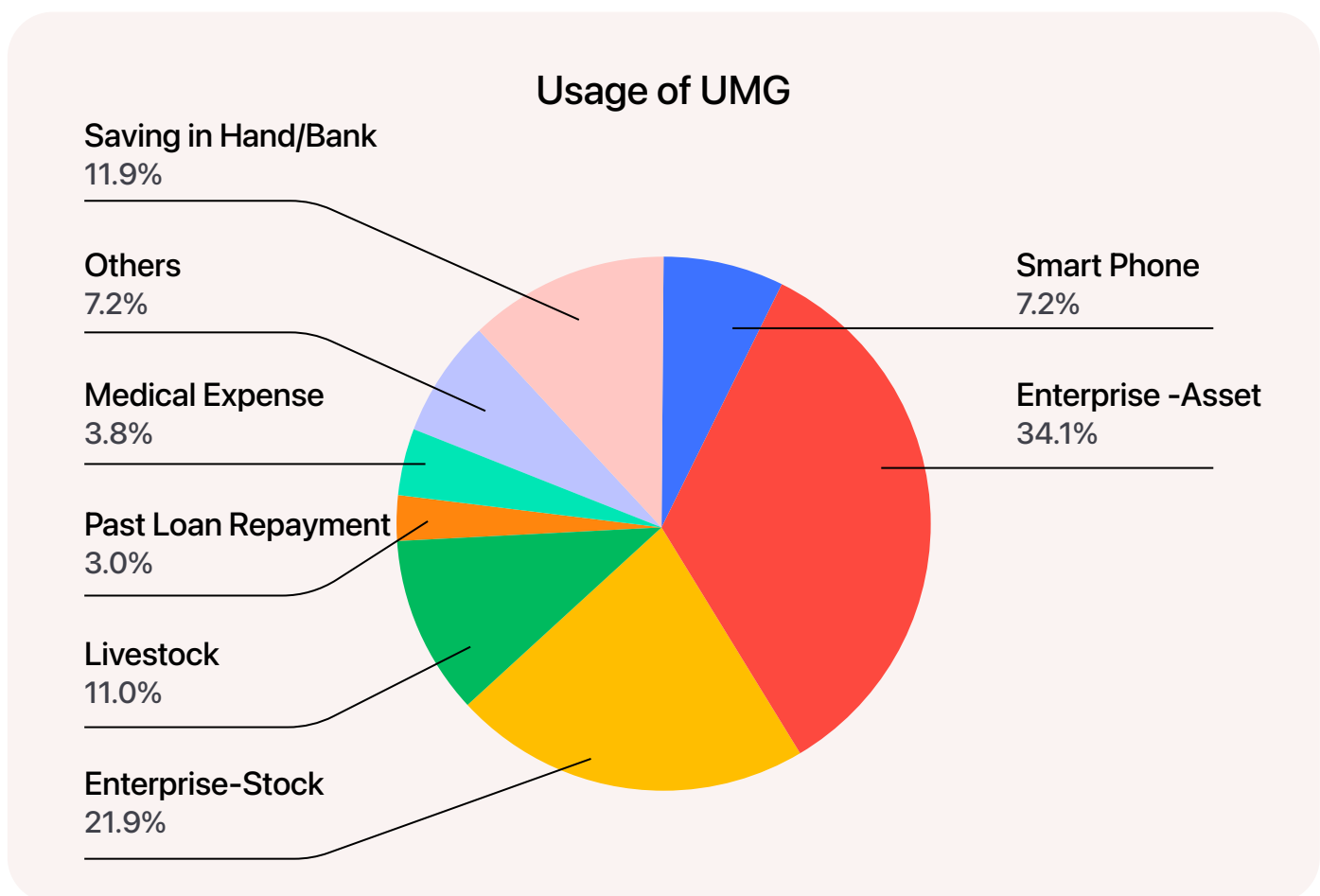
Even at the pilot stage, primary data collection posed certain challenges like physical access during the rainy season, ensuring availability of the participants, and maintaining their interest in providing data. In order to corroborate income data with evidence, passbook balances were to be checked. As almost all participants could not get their books updated, due to poor banking infrastructure, it is proposed to check their UPI balances.

The impact analysis of the RCT integrates qualitative and quantitative methods with data triangulation. Qualitative analysis captures participant experiences and context, while quantitative analysis evaluates numerical data on income, health, and education. Data triangulation combines these insights to ensure a comprehensive and accurate impact assessment.

As part of this study we will have detailed reports in Feb'25 & Dec'25, post completion of Leap 300 intervention and the 18 months RCT.

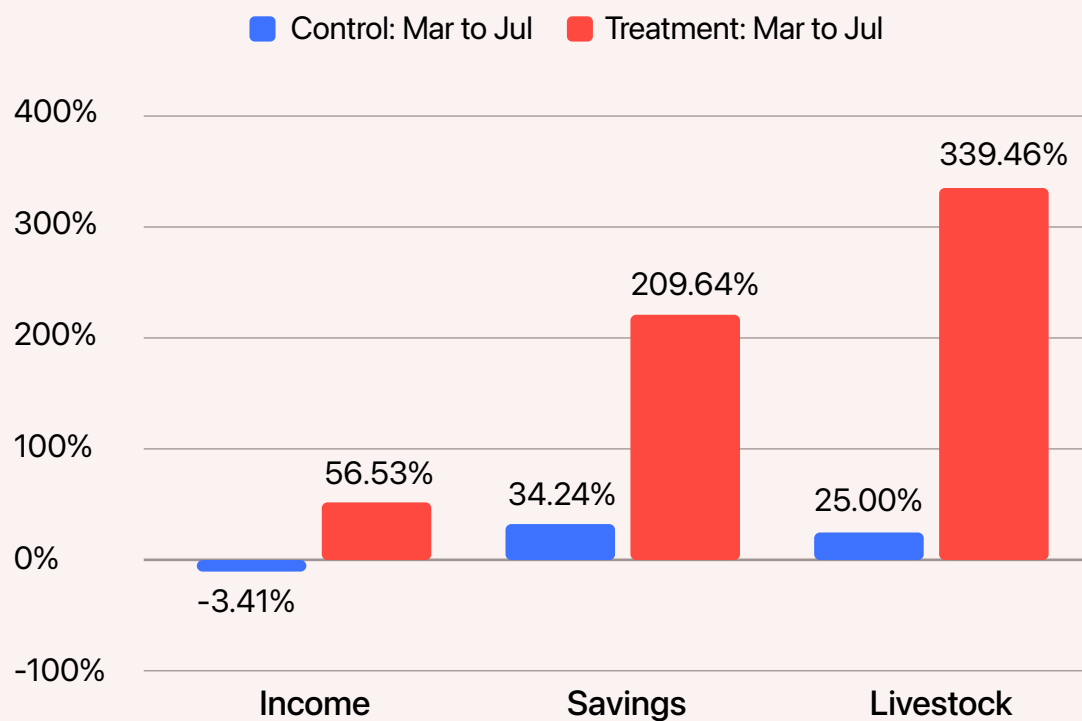
# Impact

A thorough analysis of the utilisation of Leap 300's ₹60,000 UMG by the treatment group revealed that 74% of the grant was used for micro-entrepreneurship activities. The remaining 26% funds were directed towards medical expenses, other household expenses, loan repayment or held as savings for contingencies.



High level summary based on quantitative analysis

## Income, Saving & Livestock



The RCT pilot study has so far generated three data points; launch in March, and follow ups in May and July. Initial findings reveal that the design of the intervention is trending towards significant success in achieving the main aim of poverty eradication. The treatment group experienced 56.53% growth in their income, despite overlapping with severe heat conditions in the region. The weather challenges made it difficult for the control group participants to gain employment in part of the study period, and their income fell marginally by 3.41%. The treatment group was better able to keep aside small amounts towards savings as a result. As the average number of sick days decreased by 61.1% for the treatment group, against 11.76% for the control group, the preliminary results suggest a positive impact on health. This could be due to better protein intake, regular meals and access to better medical care. Further, as the treatment group moved to being self-employed, elimination of the daily stress of seeking work, coupled with reduction in heavy physical labour, can be possible factors leading to better health.



Inputs from personal interactions with the participants were used to add to the quantitative data. This helped in gaining their perceptions after the intervention as well as understanding the progress and challenges related to the building of assets and running of the micro-enterprise.

While the qualitative observations from the control group were obviously limited, they reveal that participants are pleased with both the technology and the structured physical visits, seeing them as essential for continued guidance and support for their welfare. They are optimistic about future participation in the intervention. They said that having their own business will free them from the vagaries of continuously seeking jobs and irregular income.



In a short span of three months, early data from the beneficiaries clearly brings out improvement in their income, access to food with some improvement in protein intake. While changes in education and health cannot be truly reflected over this brief period, it was found that there was reduction in school absenteeism and fewer sick days for the family. The overall sentiment was found to be optimistic, from a strong feeling of self-defeat, many of them feel in control of their future.

Unconditional Cash transfers have been shown to create a positive impact on people's lives, but the design of the UMG by Leap 300 appears at the outset to have better potential. The heavy emphasis in training for running their own business has resulted in productive use of 74% of the allocation. The ability to understand finances and having strong community linkage through the Leap 300 beneficiary app and in person Super Sabhas has ensured rigorous beneficiary skilling to handle the shocks in establishing their business.

The key aim of Leap 300 is to eliminate all forms of poverty in India by 2030 and on that count we note that out of 31 beneficiary households, 28 are already earning above the poverty level income.

The average growth rate in income during the period March to July 2024 is 56.53% for the treatment group as compared to a decline of 3.41% for the control group. As per t-test<sup>4</sup> this difference in income growth across treatment and control groups is found to be statistically significant.

4. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/25752723\\_THE\\_t\\_TEST\\_An\\_Introduction](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/25752723_THE_t_TEST_An_Introduction)

# Beneficiary stories



## Neetu Kumari

*“After my husband abandoned me, I was mentally stressed, couldn't sleep, had low self-esteem, and felt like a liability on my family. With Leap300, I have found purpose. My business has given me my own money, and for the first time, I feel like I have a future.”*

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## Basdev

*“I used to work at a shop, loading customer goods. Most days, I earned nothing and had to borrow to feed my children ‘namak-roti.’ After starting my own business with Leap300, I no longer worry about finding work. I always have money and no loans. My children eat pulses and vegetables, and I feel confident that my business will grow and my family will prosper.”*

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## ChandraKumari

*“Earlier, we were just surviving. Barely managing to eat was a daily struggle, and we had no money left for our kids’ clothes. After joining Leap 300, within 3 months, we can save money, eat dal, and buy milk for our kids. This year, our kids are going to private school, which was once unimaginable.”*

ChandraKumari 34, Village Sarane , secondary school educated. Both her husband and she are physically handicapped, but the UMG from Leap 300 has enabled them to set up a vegetable shop and buy a goat. They have already saved ₹25,000 to improve the shop. ChandraKumari is determined to give her children a bright future.





## Shyamsundar

*“Earlier, I was earning ₹5,000 per month and always had money worries. Now, I easily earn ₹10,000 plus and still have more time. My financial worries have decreased, and I’m confident my income could increase to ₹15,000 over time. Leap 300 has given me the courage to start my own business.”*

Shyamsundar 43, Village Katauri, illiterate. A skilled weaver, he supports a family of five. With the help of Leap 300, he has been able to set up own weaving unit.





# Thank you

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