

U-TALK

A BIENNIAL MAGAZINE
JULY-DECEMBER, 2025



About U-Talk

U-Talk Magazine is a multidisciplinary, biennial publication by Umran Green School (UGS) and Umran Academic Research Association (UARA), dedicated to fostering creativity, critical dialogue, and community-based storytelling. Bridging grassroots realities and scholarly reflection, U-Talk highlights voices often unheard—rural poets, folk artists, young thinkers, women leaders, and cultural changemakers—through essays, interviews, poetry, photography, and visual art. Rooted in the philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family), the magazine creates a vibrant platform where the vernacular meets the global, memory meets resistance, and expression becomes a collective act of dignity, learning, and transformation.

Special Section for the Next Issue:

- What images come to mind when you listen to music?
- What memories does a certain song or instrument bring back?
- Do you think of your childhood, teenage years, school or college life?
- What kind of music brings peace to your soul?
- What is your favorite kind of music—and why?
- What does your musical taste say about your identity?



We invite you to reflect, narrate, and share your stories, feelings, and imagination around music—for our special thematic section.

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SHeroes: Voices, Verses and Visions

Women who rise, speak, and shape change from the ground up



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SHEroes: Voices, Verses & Visions

Uma Rani: *The Woman Who Serves Love on a Plate*



Dr. R. Abeetha
*Vels Institute of Science, Technology
and Advanced Studies*

For Uma Rani, one of the SHEroes, feeding the hungry is not a charity job—it is a vocation, a holy commitment driven by unrelenting love and profound spiritual faith. What started off as an act of benevolence has grown into a lifetime's work, converting her humble kitchen into a sanctuary for the forgotten and starving. Her own organization, Thavamozhi Annadhana Koodam, is testament to the fact that if one acts on kindness, it can extend outward and transform lives.

The very title of her initiative, Thavamozhi Annadhana Koodam, itself holds deep philosophical and emotional meaning. "Thavam is not a matter of renunciation or spiritual asceticism at all," Uma Rani describes gently but with conviction. "It's a penance of love—a deep, personal commitment to serve others unselfishly." For her, spirituality has nothing to do with temples or practices but with the quiet, persistent act of feeding the hungry respectfully and with love.

Uma Rani feels that food is not just for the body. To her, food not only fills the belly, but it also fills the heart, lifts the spirit, and restores dignity. "When somebody eats with contentment after a long day of striving or hunger," she explains, "it provides them a moment of peace. That peace, that smile on their face, is my reward."

Guided by this philosophy, she has fondly referred to her food distribution center as Thavamozhi Annadhana Koodam, loosely meaning "a sacred place for giving food with love." Daily, this simple yet dynamic initiative provides refuge to those in distress—daily wage earners, housemaids, migrants, beggars, and discarded by society. Here, they do not merely get food—they gain hope, dignity, and compassion.

Her operations are modest, but endearing. With the help of her two children who attend school and a few short-term volunteers, Uma Rani cooks in her home kitchen. The food is plain, sometimes rice, sometimes sambar, or pongal, but each meal is prepared with complete care, hygiene, and love. In spite of her limited resources, she makes sure that no one who visits her goes away hungry. Her own tiny house, while small, has become a center of healing and peace—a place where the hungry are heard, seen, and valued.

Remarkably, Uma Rani's work has never been about fame, recognition, or applause. She did not start this initiative to become a social media icon. Her motivation springs from a deeper source—a sense of dharma, or righteous duty. However, as word of her compassionate service spread, she slowly gained attention online. Photos and videos of her serving people with love started going viral, and she began gaining compliments from all over the region and even the nation.

But fame brought problems. With a world so commonly characterized by indifference and jealousy, her rising popularity brought unwanted attention. A lot of people, rather than helping her honorable cause, sought to destroy it. "I never encountered much opposition before I became popular on social media," she says. "But after having exposure, some people started creating problems. They even complained to my house owner and attempted to halt the service by making it difficult."

These were especially trying times for her. In spite of honest intentions and selfless endeavors, she was beset on all sides by hostility. There were days when she barely managed to keep her kitchen afloat. Rumors, complaints, and intimidation shrouded her spirit—but never shattered it.

Uma Rani is also open about the psychological cost that has been extracted. She confides in how difficult it is to always be living under observation. "I don't know who is good and who is bad when they come to eat," she adds. "I have to be very careful all the time. Anyone could be watching, waiting to twist things. That's a heavy burden to carry."

But amidst all the turmoil, her religion never falters. She keeps cooking, serving, and smiling, sometimes with tears in her eyes and fortitude in her heart. She finds strength in the very people she serves—the old man who expresses gratitude with folded hands, the child who smiles in exhilaration at the receipt of a hot meal, the woman who silently weeps as she eats undisturbed. These are the moments that sustain Uma Rani.

The people in the neighborhood have also begun to sense her unwavering determination. Some neighbors, at first quiet or doubtful, have begun to volunteer at times. A handful of donors donate rice or vegetables whenever they can. Though her means are still limited, aid from compassionate hearts

streams in, providing her with the perseverance to go on.

Uma Rani is fondly referred to as Annapoorani—the goddess who feeds the hungry—by those she feeds. Though she smiles modestly at the appellation, she doesn't crave divine comparisons. For her, feeding another human being is a very human action, not divine. "We don't need to be gods to serve others," she says. "We just need to be human in the best sense."

Her small kitchen, in this sense, has become a beacon of hope in a world that tends to forget the poor and the oppressed. It is a reminder of what can be achieved when love is made practical, when individual suffering is converted into collective healing.

In an age where everyone pursues likes and followers, the tale of Uma Rani reminds us that the strongest deeds are those which are done out of sight, with quiet conviction and an open heart. Her journey is not merely one of service—it is one of grit, dignity, and the deep spiritual conviction that feeding the hungry is a sacred responsibility.

Today, Uma Rani is still serving with the same passion that set her on her path. Every plate she serves is not merely food—it is a show of love, respect, and common humanity. And in this act of simplicity lies a deep truth: sometimes the smallest kitchens serve up the biggest revolutions.



Uma Rani, founder of Thavamozhi serves food for people at Kilkattalai, Chennai, Tamilnadu