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#### **FOREWORD**

Girls and women are central to ensuring sustained development and empowerment. They have a tremendous will and power to bring about advancement and improve the quality of life in their families, communities and countries. One of the earliest goals of Plan International's global campaign 'Because I am a Girl' (BIAAG), launched in 2007, was to celebrate the power of girls and highlight the barriers they face. BIAAG is Plan's commitment to drive a global movement that transforms power relations so girls everywhere can learn, lead, decide and thrive. The campaign empowers girls and boys to become agents of change.

Under the aegis of BIAAG, Plan India has promoted affirmative action on a range of issues that adversely impact the participation of girls in the social mainstream or even to access a minimum threshold of choices for life. Plan India has been actively engaged in implementing programmes that keep girls and women in focus. Gender responsive and gender transformative programmes are being implemented for addressing gender based violence, including female foeticide and infanticide; ensuring improved access to quality education at the primary level; lifelong learning and lateral movement of adolescents to continuing education; economic empowerment of young girls and women through vocational training and community managed micro-finance initiatives and strengthening the participation and engagement of girls and women in decision making positions.

Committed to generating knowledge for evidence based advocacy, since 2009, Plan India has successfully drawn attention on a range of issues that affects the lives of girls and women in our country through annual reports on The State of the Girl Child. During the past six years, these reports have focused on issues such as gender discrimination and its impact on girls schooling; girls in changing urban and digital landscape; engaging men and boys towards gender equality; learning for life for girls and adolescents; situation of adolescent girls at times of disasters and pathways to empowering girls.

Plan India is at the dawn of its new five year Country Strategic Plan (CSP IV) with a goal to be "the leading child development organisation in India, known for lasting impact created in the lives of the vulnerable and excluded children and their communities." Aiming to impact the lives of two million children directly and five million children through advocacy and policy influence, gender equality and social inclusion is central to each of its six strategic objectives: child survival, growth and optimal development; water, sanitation and hygiene; holistic and quality education; employability and economic empowerment; protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation and disaster risk reduction.

Plan India's 2015 Report on the State of the Girl Child has a prominent role to play as it analyses and presents a synthesis of programming and policy recommendations from 2009-2014. This report also captures the opinions and suggestions of the development specialists and policy influencers who have done an explicit and commendable work in the area of empowerment of the girl child, adolescents and women. It not only contributes to the future framework for the BIAAG campaign in India and globally, starting 2016 but also develop a framework wherein successful programmes on the ground inform scaling up, replication and policy influence strategies.

I take pleasure in sharing that this publication coincides with a renewed commitment of Plan in India to the Sustainable Development Goals especially Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. I would like to wish Plan India the very best for its commitment and endeavours in empowerment of girls and women.

Govind Nihalani

Chair Emeritus, Plan India

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#### **PREFACE**

"Because I am a Girl: What Next?" is Plan India's seventh annual report on the state of the girl child in India. Since 2009, Plan India has taken an initiative to bring out Annual Reports on the State of the Girl Child in India, as part of the campaign "Because I am a Girl" (BIAAG) with the objective of creating awareness for the survival, protection, development and participation rights of the girl child. Plan's 2015 BIAAG report focusses on assessing the State of Girls in India on issues covered in previous years: gender discrimination and its impact on girls schooling; girls in changing urban and digital landscape; engaging men and boys towards gender equality; learning for life for girls and adolescents; situation of adolescent girls at times of disasters and pathways to empowering girls. The report also covers case stories of positive deviance from Plan programme areas and views of leading development specialists, policy and opinion influencers.

The report coincides with Plan India, commencing its journey towards implementing a new Country Strategic Plan - CSP (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020). During the next five years, Plan India's overall goal is to be the leading child development organisation committed to creating a lasting impact in the lives of the vulnerable and excluded children and their communities. The CSP sets an ambition of:

- Reaching two million children and young people in vulnerable and excluded communities through direct interventions;
- Developing innovative pilots through evidence based programming;
- Reaching five million children and young people through evidence based advocacy.

Plan in India is committed to six strategic objectives: child survival growth and development; holistic and quality education; water sanitation and hygiene; youth economic empowerment and financial inclusion; protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence; and disaster resilient communities through comprehensive disaster risk reduction and humanitarian assistance. Programmes under each strategic objective will engage with girls, boys, women and men, especially from the most vulnerable and excluded communities, to understand the impediments to inclusive and equitable growth. The programmes will engage and equip them to bring about changes in social norms and practices, especially by challenging specific forms of exclusion, inequalities and addressing power imbalances. Programmes will be gender transformative and ensure inclusion of vulnerable and excluded communities.

A synthesis of issues, programming and policy recommendations from our prior BIAAG reports bring to the fore a renewed focus and commitment to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, the Sustainable Development Goal 5. I would like to reiterate Plan's long standing commitment to promote and secure the wellbeing of girls.

We hope that the report will contribute to strengthening regional and national policy perspectives and help in developing programmes that look beyond quantitative achievements and aim to bring about lasting qualitative changes in the lives of girls.

Bhagyashri Dengle

Executive Director, Plan India

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Plan India's report "Because I Am a Girl: What Next?" - The State of the Girl Child (2015) is the seventh of the annual series of reports. This is a synthesis report of past six reports, discussions with policy and opinion influencers and with children and youth from Plan communities. This synthesis is aimed at guiding the way forward for Plan in India, with a new Country Strategic Plan commencing July 2015, and at the national and international level, with the commitment to Sustainable Development Goals.

Plan India acknowledges the contributions by eminent policy influencers for the report:

- 1. Ms. Arti Kirloskar, Chairperson, Plan India
- 2. Ms. Frederika Meijer, Representative India/ Country Director Bhutan at UNFPA
- 3. Ms. Jyothi Singh, President, Sakhi Sangam Society for Social Change, SHG Women's Federation
- 4. Professor Shyam B. Menon, Vice Chancellor- Ambedkar University, Delhi
- 5. Ms. Sumita Ghose Founder and Managing Director of rangSutra
- 6. Ms. Surina Narula, Patron Plan India, Philanthropist and Social Activist
- 7. Dr. Unni Krishnan, Head, Disaster Preparedness and Response, Plan International

Plan India also acknowledges *Nielsen India Private Limited* for undertaking research on three of the past six researches on BIAAG.

A special thanks to Plan India staff and partners in the states where researches have been conducted for facilitating and supporting the research team. The active engagement of the children, adolescent girls and boys, communities in the sites where field work was conducted is highly appreciated. Their understanding of the socio-cultural issues, constraints and ideas for the way forward are incorporated in the report. We thank them for being patient respondents and giving their valuable perceptions and insights without which each of the reports would not have taken concrete form.

This report has drawn relevant content from the Plan International State of the World's Girls, 2015 report. We express our appreciation and gratitude to the Plan International Research team that put together the global report.

Credits to Ashima Graphics for Design and Layout of the report.

Ms. Meena Narula
Director Programme Strategy and Policy

#### LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACMI Asia Child Marriage Initiative

AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AMCDRR Asia Ministerial Conferences on Disaster Risk Reduction
ARROW Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women

BBBP Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao BIAAG Because I am a Girl

BMTPC Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council of India

BOC Banking on Change BSY Balika Samriddhi Yojana

CASP Community Aid and Sponsorship Programme

CBO Community Based Organisation

CEDAW Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

CFR Council on Foreign Relations

CFS Child-Friendly Spaces
CHC Community Health Centre
CNO Canada national office
CSO Civil Society Organisation
CSP Country Strategy Plan
CSR Child Sex Ratio

CSW Commission on the Status of Women CVC Community Vigilance Committees

DLHS District Level Health Survey
DRM Disaster Risk Management
DRR Disaster Risk Reduction
EC European Commission

ECCD Early Childhood Care and Development

EFA Education for All

EMB Engagement of Men and Boys
FCC Family Counselling Centres
FVPF Family Violence Prevention Fund

GAR Gross Attendance Ratio
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GER Gross Enrolment Ratio

GGA Gender and Generational Analysis

GII Gender Inequality Index
Gol Government of India
GPI Gender Parity Index
GSS Gram Swaraj Samiti

HDI Human Development Index
HFA Hyogo Framework for Action
HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HLPF High-Level Political Forum

IAP The Asian Partnership on Disaster Reduction

#### LIST OF ACRONYMS

IAS Indian Administrative Service IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee **ICPS** Integrated Child Protection Scheme

**ICRW** International Centre for Research on Women **ICT** Information and Communication Technology

IFI International Financial Institutions

**IGMSY** The Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana

**IMR** Infant Mortality Rate

**INR** Indian Rupee

**IRC** International Rescue Committee

**ISDR** International Strategy for disaster reduction

IT Information Technology **ITPA** Immoral Traffic Prevention Act JSY Janani Suraksha Yojana

**KGBV** Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya

**KSY** Kishori Shakti Yojana

**MBA** Master of Business Administration MDG Millennium Development Goals

MHA Ministry of Home Affairs

MHRD Ministry of Human Resource Development

MISP Minimum Initial Service Package

**MMR** Maternal Mortality Rate MMS

Multimedia Messaging Service

MOSPI Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

**MSSA** Mumbai School Sports Association

**MWCD** Ministry of Women and Child Development

NACO National AIDS Control Organisation **NCRB** National Crime Records Bureau

**NDMA** National Disaster Management Authority

**NFHS** National Family Health Survey NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

NHM National Health Mission NIC National Informatics Centre NLM National Literacy Mission

**NPAG** Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls

**NRHM** National Rural Health Mission

NSDP National Skills Development Programme

NSS National Sample Survey

NSSO National Sample Survey Organisation

NUFPA National University of Educational Planning and Administration

Other Backward Class OBC Out-of-School Children OoSC

Р Provisional

#### **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

PRI Panchayati Raj Institution

PWDVA Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act

RCH Reproductive and Child Health

RGSEAG Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls

RKSK Rashtriya Kishori Swasthya Karyakram RMSA Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan

RTE Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009

RTI Right to Information Act

SAARC South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

SABLA Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls

SADD Sex and Age Disaggregated Data

SADKN South Asian Disaster Knowledge Network

SC Scheduled Caste

SDG Sustainable Development Goals

SHG Self Help Group

SMS Short Message Service

SOP Standard Operating Procedure SRH Sexual and Reproductive Health

SSA Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

SSH Short Stay Home for Women and Girls

SSY Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana

ST Scheduled Tribe

STI Sexually Transmitted Infections

STEP Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women

STI Sexually Transmitted Infections
TLS Temporary Learning Spaces
TRP Tsunami Response Programme

U5MR Under 5 Mortality Rate

U-DISE Unified District Information System for Education

UN United Nations

UN WOMEN United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

UNAIDS United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

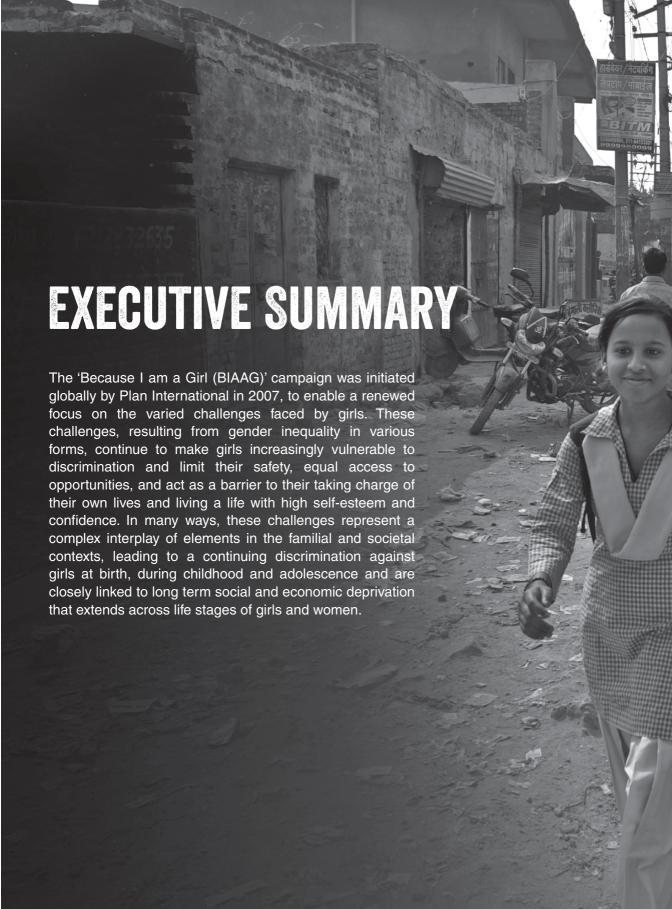
UNICEF The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNISDR United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

US United States
USD United States Dollar

WASH Water Sanitation and Hygiene

WCDRR World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

WEF World Education Forum WHO World Health Organisation





Plan India is committed to the cause of children, especially girls. In addition to its programming initiatives to address issues of gender inequality, under the aegis of the global BIAAG campaign, Plan India initiated an annual research on the state of the girl child since 2009. Plan India's programming, research and advocacy initiatives have successfully endorsed girls' rights and promoted action towards equipping. enabling, and engaging girls of all ages to acquire the assets, skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in life. In the past six vears. Plan India has implemented multiple endeavours to strengthen the BIAAG campaign. These include periodic assessments of the status of the girl child, as a continuing formative input to campaign efforts. As a component of such assessments, Plan India develops and releases reports each year on identified thematic areas that significantly affect the status of the girl child in the country. Past reports have examined thematic areas such as gender discrimination and its impact on girls' schooling; girls in a landscape of changing urban and digital frontiers; engaging men and boys towards gender equality; secondary education and life skills education for girls; the situation of adolescent girls in times of natural disasters; and pathways to empowerment of adolescent girls.

At an overall level, these and other reports inform that even though there has been an improvement in the status of girl child, progress has been uneven and disproportionately slow. A large proportion of the girl child population in India continues to experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. This population includes girls based at urban locations who may have a greater likelihood, in comparison to those residing in rural locations, to access educational, livelihood or other life goals

related opportunities including the use of digital technology. The discrimination they face manifests itself in many ways right from birth, through to childhood, adolescence and even later. For instance, the reports inform that a large number of girls in India continue to be at risk of violence and exploitation both inside and outside the home. Over one-half of girls reported corporal punishment in school or abuse at home. India also continues to account for a third of the world's child marriages, despite legislation and wide-spread awareness regarding the appropriate age at marriage. Furthermore, the reports highlight that the vulnerability of girls is further accentuated in disaster prone or difficult areas.

Disaster preparedness at the level of the community or family is largely lacking in the country, and girls often face adverse life impacts in the aftermath of a disaster. These range from immediate challenges such as the inability to utilise make-shift shelters due to lack of privacy or lack of access to functional toilets to lifelong impacts such as cessation of education, being married off or, in many instances, even being sold or trafficked. Living in an environment driven by such occurrences, the girl child continues to face challenges in accessing opportunities to improve her status and to make choices that give her a chance to transform her circumstances and life

As a core indicator, the access to education was explored by a Plan India report, as a key asset to expand life choices. The report determined that a number of factors prevent the continuance of secondary or further education of the girl child. Some of these include the family's economic capacity to support continued education beyond primary school, the girl having to own responsibilities to manage the burden of domestic work, early marriage and the

overarching influence of gender biased attitudes and norms that implicitly support discrimination against the girl child. The absence of further education effectively limits the possibility of girls acquiring skill sets that could equip them to be informed and make choices to transform their lives.

In considering the discussion on gender inequalities, Plan India's reports have also examined the role of males to help accelerate gender outcomes towards a more just society. The reports suggest the need for a significantly larger engagement and ownership among men and boys to achieve the needed progress towards a gender equitable society. Similarly, in examining the impact of rapid urbanisation and digitisation, the reports suggest that though these trends offer tremendous possibilities to minimise information and opportunity exclusion among girls, they simultaneously raise many concerns in terms of access to these opportunities.

The dimensions of issues emerging in these reports suggest the need for a concerted

The issues emerging in BIAAG reports suggest the need for a concerted multipronged effort that works to achieve systemic changes in terms of building a gender-responsive infrastructure and resource allocation, while creating a lasting transformation in social norms and attitudes as a primary goal.

multi-pronged effort that works to achieve systemic changes in terms of building a gender responsive infrastructure and resource allocation, while creating a lasting transformation in social norms and attitudes as a primary goal. The reports suggest that holistic change is only possible when the three interconnected dimensions of agency. social relations, and structures are addressed. At the level of individual, family and community, the reports emphasise the need to build a continuing dialogue with families and communities towards challenging cultural practices that are restraining, and encourage a change in behaviours to enable adolescent girls and women to live better lives

At a programmatic level, some of the specific needs emerging from the reports include advocacy efforts to engage with men and boys, developing schools as safe spaces for both girls and boys, involvement of adolescent girls in disaster preparedness, greater inclusion of women in emergency response teams, making cities safer for girls, and creating linkages for girls to leverage information technology for greater access to educational, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Plan India is seeking to incorporate these and other learnings in the transition of its Country Strategic Plan (CSP) to address the post-2015 scenario. The year 2015 is significant for a number of reasons and has been marked as a 'historic' year by Plan India. The year marks the 20th anniversary of the historic UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, a groundbreaking event that set the agenda for bringing women's equality issues to the world stage. The year also marks the culmination of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the transition to new strategic goals Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including the incorporation of emerging

national priorities for women and child rights in India in the context of the SDG framework. Plan India, also embarks upon the path laid out by the new CSP, that specifically commits to integrating principles, strategies and programmes for gender equality and social inclusion, while also implementing flagship programmes to address issues that place girls at risk or disadvantage.

This report has considered the BIAAG reports of preceding years, references from materials related to the issues of concern, as well as a perspective from policy makers, opinion influencers and civil society experts engaged in addressing issues that impact the girl child in the country. The deliberations suggest a number of future directions for programmatic consideration. These include suggestions related to advocacy efforts as well as broad directions for policy development and programme implementation at the country level. In terms of advocacy, the reports suggest a need to mobilise government and non-government actors to integrate a vision for an equitable and violence-free environment for girls a core element in the framework to achieve SDGs. They also suggest active engagement with international initiatives such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Commission on the Status of Women and the World Education Forum to press the agenda of child rights and gender equality. and also to facilitate local programming aligned with emerging global directions.

Country level assessments recognise the disparities across India and suggest a programmatic focus on girls belonging to the most vulnerable and excluded communities. They suggest the need to strengthen a national level alliance to work closely with national and state governments and enable due priority for addressing gender issues within an assigned timeframe.

In terms of specific programme interventions, the BIAAG reports suggest consideration of programmes that work to assist families who want to support the education of their daughters, increased emphasis on programmes for skilling of adolescent girls, building safe spaces for adolescents, and building capacities of adolescents to negotiate their life choices and programmes to build community-level support systems including community-based vigilance committees to audit the status of girls on aspects of concern.

Some aspects of concern in this regard include improved implementation of legislation in context of the girl child, incorporation of gender equality aspects in transaction of school curricula and the design of interventions that serve to economically empower girls. The reports further suggest the need for advocacy to develop an SDG framework that includes gender transformatory aspects as an independent goal and has a specific focus on girls and women. Aligned with this aspect, the reports also suggest the need to recognise gender imperatives across

development programmes in the country, and the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting. Further, the reports call for a review to improve data collection and reporting methodology on the status of girls and women in the country.

In terms of specific programme interventions, the reports suggest consideration of programmes that work to assist families who want to support the education of their daughters but are constrained by economic. social, infrastructural or other factors. The reports also suggest an increased emphasis on programmes for skilling of adolescent girls, building safe spaces for adolescents. and building capacities of adolescents to negotiate their life choices. Further. the reports suggest consideration of programmes to build community-level support systems including communitybased vigilance committees to audit the status of girls on aspects of concern.

The reports recommend the need for an increased programmatic focus on community mobilisation to build awareness on the rights of women and girls, to inform girls and women of their entitlements from

government programmes, and to increase accountability of various stakeholders involved in delivery of programme benefits. The reports highlight the need for a specific emphasis on programmes that involve men and boys in addressing gender inequality. The reports emphasise the need for media to support a shift in the depiction of the status and role of girls and women in Indian society. In comparison to the conventional stereotypes depicted, the reports suggest the need to showcase role models, positive deviants and for media to consider depicting an inclusive imagery that actively considers girls and women who are educated, selfreliant and are significantly contributing to the development of the family, society, and the nation.

In releasing this report, Plan India acknowledges the invaluable support of its partners and communities where researches were conducted. We look forward to their continuing collaboration to help achieve the goals of equipping, enabling, and engaging girls of all ages to acquire the assets, skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in life.





While there are many aspects reported in indicators related to the status of women that reflect a marked improvement in the past two decades, issues such as early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and gender-based violence are being recognised across nations as barriers to well-being of women and poverty alleviation. Governments, civil society organisations and corporate entities across the world are working towards an increased resource allocation and an increased emphasis to develop and implement policies that help to address the multiplicity of issues adversely affecting the well-being and life choices for women.



## A look at the footsteps of transition for girls/women

Prevention of likely mortality of under-five over four million children (due to the increase in number of educated women<sup>1</sup>.

Higher enrolment of girls in primary education







Decrease in maternal mortality by almost 50 per cent in the past 15 years<sup>2</sup>





Increased programmatic focus on issues affecting adolescent girls



Increased focus on issues affecting women in governance and legislative frameworks

<sup>1</sup>Committee for Development Policy Note, UN, E&SA 2012.

<sup>2</sup>Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcomes

The MDG report 2015 informs that initiatives across the globe towards achieving the goals have led to a substantive contribution in saving the lives and improving life conditions of millions. However, the continued prevalence of these challenges suggest that past efforts have not been adequate. The MDG Report 2015 and other studies reaffirm this understanding of

and Marcalana and Title

uneven achievements, a pace markedly slower than planned, with inconsistent acceleration. These reports further emphasize the need for additional, consistent, and accelerated efforts by the international community to help achieve intended goals. The table below summarizes India's performance against core eight MDG Goals.

0045

Table: Status of Millennium Development Goals-India

Goal Number and Title	1999	2015
Goal 1 : Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	37.2%	18.6%
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	Global out of primary school 83%	children 100%
Goal 3: Promote gender equity and women empowerment	76 : 100 Girls:Boys	103: 100 Girls:Boys
Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality	Number of deaths of children	n under five 42
Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health	Global maternal mortality rat per 100,000 live births) 301	io (deaths
Goal 6: Combat HIV, Malaria and other Diseases	Global antiretroviral therapy treatment 0.45 0.27	
Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability	People have gained access t drinking water since 1990 30%	o piped 95.3%
Goal 8 : Develop a global partnership for Development	Global Internet Penetration 6%	21%

4000

Source: http://mospi.nic.in/Mospi\_New/upload/mdg\_26feb15.pdf

The status of the MDGs suggests the need for a renewed effort with a sustained emphasis across segments of influence to enable the requisite pace of change with a wider and lasting impact. A review of the Beijing Declaration in the current context reiterates the need for transformation of structures and institutions and norms economic, political and social that are holding back progress on gender equality.

"Leaders and stakeholders in every nation will work together, redoubling efforts to achieve a truly universal and transformative agenda."

- Wu Hongbo

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, UN

The approaches post 2015 aim to respond to this need and are based on learnings from experiences in implementation of MDGs. The continued alignment of nations striving to achieve common universal goals reflects the success of global action as a core premise of the MDGs. The current year has witnessed the global adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) towards achieving the planned and missed targets of MDGs and address the gamut of development related challenges in the post 2015 era. Governments. United Nations organisations and other institutions have deliberated on these aspects in multiple fora and are broadly in agreement on a common mandate of sustainable development The emergence of SDGs is based on sustainable development being a central focus to enable the world to better meet human needs while protecting the environment, ensuring peace, and realising human rights. The approach is validated in outcomes of deliberations of many global organisations considering approaches to achieve gender equality that include organisations such as the Asian Pacific

Resource and Research for Women (ARROW), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the World Education Forum (WEF). The outcomes, though addressing different dimensions of the issue, have a common focus on addressing systemic and deep rooted aspects that enable the required irreversible change towards gender equality.

ARROW suggests emphasis to correct power imbalances in society led by geographic, economic, and societal and gender disparities as a fundamental approach to enable equality.

## ARROW: Correcting Power Imbalances for Gender Equality

ARROW urges the governments of the countries and the United Nations organization to define and maintain universal principles and standards with regard to women's human rights and sexual and reproductive rights. It further suggests the need to make these principles and standards as part of the decision and monitoring responsibility of the high level political forum (HLPF). ARROW recommends this as a central approach to reduce inequalities and to mitigate underlying factors that cause economic, political and social marginalisation.

CSW works to promote women's rights, document the reality of women's lives, and shape global standards on gender equality and empowerment of women suggests links between women's empowerment and sustainable development.

### CSW: Sustainable Development linked to Empowerment of Women

The annual meeting of CSW in 2015: CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015), deliberated on the status of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the opportunities and challenges likely to impact gender equality and the empowerment of women in the ensuing years. The commission plans to focus on women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development as a priority theme. It also plans to review implementation of the recommendations from prior sessions to ensure elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.



WEF recommends a focus on equitable quality education across life stages in formal and informal settings. The recommendation is supported by UNESCO that has recommended specific targets to ensure equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030.

### WEF: Education for all - Across Life Stages

WEF recognises the need for education to be anchored in a lifelong and sector-wide perspective. addressing access and results, equity and quality for all. The organisations recommendations for equitable quality education in formal and informal settings span early childhood care and education, higher education, and adult learning. UNESCO further suggests translating these goals into countryspecific targets to ensure equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030 targets to which countries would commit and could be held accountable

The approach of these and other organisations, presents, in many ways, a renewed opportunity to integrate the transformation of gender relations into the underlying structures of our society. This transformation will be a much needed critical input to enable lasting change and to achieve desired goals. A fundamental component of this framework for sustainable development is the linkage of economic benefits with gender equality. There is an increased consensus on economic benefits of empowering women and girls as a key variable impacting development outcomes. The hypothesis is supported by a wide body of evidence that demonstrates the linkages of poverty with gender-based inequality, exclusion, and injustice. The MDG report 2015 also informs that progress tends to bypass women and those who are lowest on the economic ladder. This suggests the need for recognition and inclusion of gender equality as a core aspect of sustainable development agenda in a manner that is synchronous to address the requirements of the much needed economic transition



Sustainable Development
Goal 5: Achieve gender
equality and empower all
women and girls

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female enital mutilation
- 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

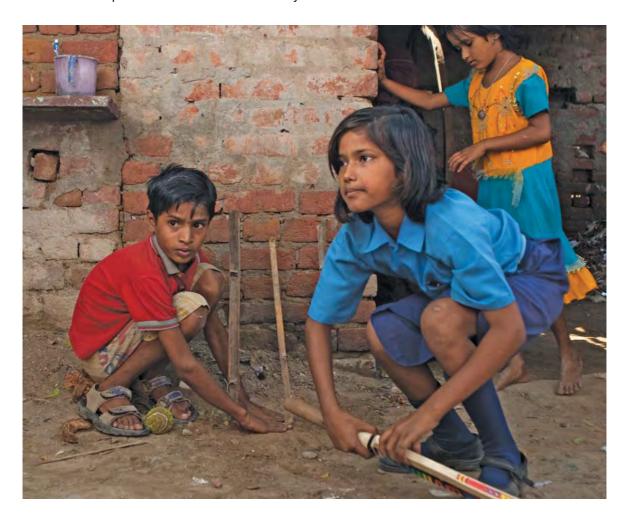
- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- 5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

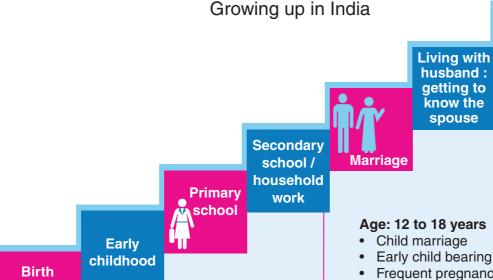
Even as the world order transitions to Sustainable Development Goals, a complex interplay of continued unequal power relations and discriminatory practices present a key challenge to achieve sustainable and ethical development across societies and communities.

#### The Indian Context

The composition of the Indian population and the socio-economic conditions of a large section of the population indicates the need for an increased emphasis on measures to address gender inequalities as a central premise of development initiatives. The MDG Report 2015 informs that nearly

60 percent of the world's one billion extremely poor people lived in just five countries in 2011. India<sup>3</sup> is one among these countries. The country presents one of the largest populations in the world at 1.28 billion people with nearly one-half being female and a similar proportion being less than 24 years of age. Compounding the scale of the challenge. India ranks 135 out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index and is ranked 127 on UNDP's Gender Inequality Index, 2013<sup>4</sup>. The facets leading to these rankings are reflected in experiences of girls through their years of childhood and adolescence as illustrated in the chart on the next page.





### Before birth to age 1 year

- Foeticide
- Infanticide
- Adverse health events such as absence of or, incomplete immunization

## Age: 1 to 11 years

- Discrimination in parental care
- Discrimination in access to food and health care
- Low school enrolment and school drop outs
- Restriction on play
- Vulnerable to trafficking, child labor, child marriage
- Abuse, exploitation and violence

#### Age: 12 to 18 years

- Child marriage
- · Early child bearing
- Frequent pregnancy and abortions

getting to know the spouse

Child birth

- Susceptibility to STDs and HIV/AIDS
- Maternal morbidity and mortality
- Marital and domestic violence
- Dowry harassment, desertion, polygamy, divorce
- Limited access to information and services
- Lack of voice whether in home or society
- Frequent illness due to malnutrition and anemia and micronutrient deficiency
- Restriction on mobility
- Unpaid and unrecognized work, and drudgery
- Domestic chores including heavy domestic work such as commuting long distances to collect firewood or drinking water

Looking after younger siblings

What Nevt? 15 The Government of India has focused programmes to address issues impacting the girl child. These programmes seek to address a range issues that influence the girl across the life stages from birth till the adolescence.

## Some of the key initiatives are summarized below

The efforts in the context of addressing the skewed child sex ratio and survival of the girl child include nation-wide programmes such as The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the girl child, educate the girl child) campaign and the Integrated Child Protection Scheme. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao is a national level multi-sectoral campaign focused on action in 100 selected districts across India that have a low child sex ratio. The campaign aims to reverse the sex selective elimination of girls and influence other factors that promote behaviours leading to a low Child Sex Ratio<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, the campaign seeks to build an enabling environment to ensure protection of the girl child and enhance opportunities for education and participation. The Integrated Child Protection Scheme has been designed as an inclusive umbrella programme that integrates a range of child protection initia-tives for children in difficult circumstances and vulnerable to harm. The government has also initiated programmes such as the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana to enable financial support towards education of the girl child and expenses incurred in marriage<sup>6</sup>.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya programme are among the other pivotal programmes designed keeping children, and especially the girl child in mind. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan aims to ensure quality elementary education to all children aged 6 - 14 years. The intervention mandates free and

compulsory education and recognizes a specific focus on the girl child. It adopts a holistic approach by including life skills education to equip the child to avail opportunities and computer literacy to bridge the digital divide. The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya programme provides for reservation in schools to increase enrolment of girls belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged groups. These efforts have led to an outcome where India is currently predicted to be the only country in South and West Asia to have an equal ratio of girls to boys in both primary and secondary education.



The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 implies that every child of age 6-14 age group has right to elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school that is responsive to defined standards. The act provides for admission of out-ofschool children (OoSC) in age appropriate classes, and facilitates support till the completion of elementary education. To achieve these objectives, the act has provisions for Special Training Centres for out-of school children from unreached and disadvantaged groups, who are above age 6 and have never been to school or have not completed primary school.

Addressing the continuum from childhood, the government has initiated flagship

programmes to engage with adolescent girls to support their mental, emotional, and psychological development. Kishori Shakti Yojana, the National Programme for Adolescent Girls and their successor the SABLA scheme are among the larger programmes being implemented across the nation. The SABLA scheme addresses girls in the age group of 11-18 years, with a special focus on out-of school girls and encompasses a range of health related, education and life skill aspects to comprehensively address likely needs of adolescent girls. The government is also implementing a range of programmes that address specific aspects of concern in context of the well being of adolescent girls. The Rashtriya Kishori Swasthya Karyakram is one such example in the health sector. The programme aims to enable adolescents to make informed and responsible decisions related to their health and well being by accessing the services and support they need to do so. It realigns a clinic-based curative approach to a more holistic model based on a continuum of care for adolescent health and developmental needs.

## Sabla Scheme: an overview of objectives

- Enable adolescent girls for selfdevelopment and empowerment
- Improve their nutrition and health status.
- Promote awareness on issues related to reproductive and sexual health as well as, family and child care.
- Upgrade their home-based skills and life skills and also enable vocational skills
- Mainstream out of school adolescent girls into formal/non formal education
- Provide information and guidance about public services including health, communication, banking, and legal services.

Despite these concerted efforts, the status of the girl child in the country continues to suggest a need for increased and accelerated efforts by the government and the civil society.



#### Plan India: Because I am a Girl

Plan has been working in India since 1979 with a commitment to improve the quality of life of children, particularly of girls from vulnerable and excluded communities by creating meaningful partnerships with the children, communities and CSOs. During 2011-2015. Plan India successfully reached out to 5,400 communities across 14 states directly benefiting about one million children. Plan India's seven national programmes ensured significant progress towards ensuring protection of children from abuse and exploitation, improving their access to basic services for optimal health, enabling their development, and creating an environment to promote their participation in decisions affecting their lives.

Plan India's goal for 2016-2020 is to be "the leading child development organisation in India, known for creating a lasting impact in the lives of the vulnerable and excluded children and their communities." The

organisation aims to impact the lives of two million children directly and five million children through advocacy and policy influence. Plan India's CSP IV encourages convergence of programmes, reach to the most vulnerable and excluded communities, and implementation of gender transformative programmes. The approach has further identified the components integral to all programmatic endeavours of the organization to help realize the planned goals. These include working with children and communities including community intermediaries and community level institutions as agents of change, a continuing focus on addressing issues of exclusion and gender inequality, long term engagement with civil society organisations (CSOs) at the grassroots level to maximize the reach and sustainability of programmes, active engagement with government to advance child development indicators and supporting a robust monitoring, and review mechanism to strengthen the organisations accountability.

## Strategic objectives: Interventions of Plan India

Child Survival, Growth & Optimal Development	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	Quality and Holistic Education
Employability & Economic Empowerment	Protection	Disaster Risk Reduction

All strategic objectives to integrate gender and social inclusion principles, strategies and programmes - monitored and measured.

All programmes to integrate citizenship and local governance strategies.

In 2007, global statistics portrayed a multitude of challenges faced by a girl child growing up in the many parts of the world. Among other aspects of concern, the indicators demonstrated that females constituted 70 percent of the 1.5 billion people living on less than \$1 a day; 62 million girls were missing out on primary education; one in three girls die in the first year of life. Aligned with its core values of working for children. Plan International initiated a global campaign "Because I am a girl" to address gender discrimination and to promote rights of the girls and support them to get education and skills required for taking charge of their lives, and in the process help them come out of poverty.

<sup>1</sup>Plan India, BIAAG India report 2009-14, Census 2011 report, NFHS-III, State of the World's Children, 2012 UNICEF

The "Because I am a girl" campaign was designed towards attaining objectives that span local, national, and international levels. The campaign aims to reach girls in 26,000 communities across the globe where Plan works (5400 in India), and assess the number of girls who survive beyond the age of five years, complete school, have access to healthcare and the skills to lift themselves. out of poverty. The campaign also aims to assess the number of countries that enact and enforce laws to enable girls to survive, be protected and have a say in what happens to them. At an international level, the campaign aims to assess the degree of modification in international law to enable girls to appeal through mechanisms of the United Nations in countries that are unable or unwilling to fulfill basic rights such as the right to health, education and survival. The campaign has developed an eight point plan as an overarching framework for action.

# "Because I am a Girl" Campaign 8 point action plan

- 1. Listen to girls and let them participate
- 2. Invest in girls and young women
- 3. Change and enforce applicable legislation
- 4. Change attitudes
- 5. Develop a safety net for girls
- 6. Obtain specific data on girls
- 7. Adopt a life cycle approach
- 8. Lean, document and share good practice

The "Because I am a Girl" campaign was initiated globally by Plan International in 2007 to enable a renewed focus on the varied challenges faced by girls. These challenges, resulting from gender inequality in various forms continue to make girls increasingly vulnerable to discrimination and limit their safety, equal access to opportunities and to take charge of their own lives, live a life with high self-esteem and confidence. In many ways, these challenges represent a complex interplay of elements in the family and societal context that lead to a continuing discrimination against girls at birth, during childhood and adolescence and are closely linked to long term social and economic deprivation that extends across life stages of girls and women.

Plan India has been committed to the cause of children, especially girls. In addition to its programming initiatives to address issues of

gender inequality, under the aegis of the global BIAAG campaign, Plan India initiated an annual research on the state of the girl child since 2009. The programming, research and advocacy initiatives have successfully endorsed girls' rights and promoted action towards equipping, enabling, and engaging girls of all ages to acquire the assets, skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in life. In the past six years, Plan India has implemented multiple endeavors to strengthen the "Because I am a Girl" campaign. These include periodic assessments of the status of the girl child

as a continuing formative input to campaign efforts. As a component of such assessments, Plan develops and releases reports, each year, on identified thematic areas that are significantly affecting the status of the girl child in India. The reports have examined thematic areas such as Gender Discrimination and its impact on Girls' Schooling; Girls in a changing Landscape Urban and Digital Frontiers; Engaging men and boys towards Gender Equality, Learning for life; Situation of Adolescent Girls in Disaster; and Pathways to power: Creating Sustainable Change for Adolescent Girls.

Table: Research Studies 2009-2014

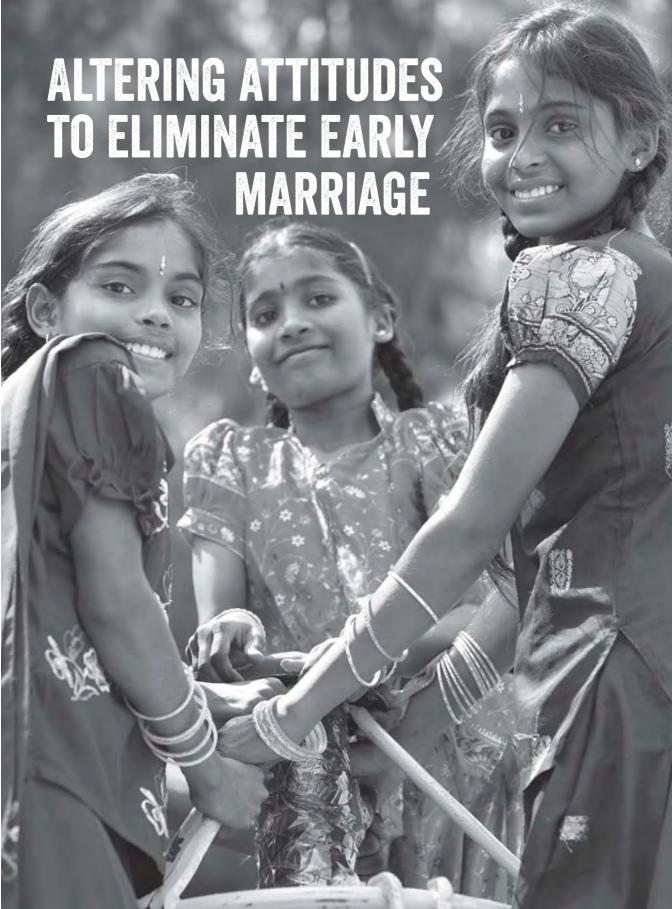
Report Title	Year	Number Co	overed/Contacted	Respondents
		States/Cities	Sample	
The State of Girl Child in India	2009	All India	Compendium of articles, case studies & data on girl child.	NA
Girls in Changing landscape Urban and Digital Frontier	2010	10	10,000	• Girls aged (14-21 years)
Engaging Men and boys towards gender equality	2011	5	6,011	<ol> <li>Boys and girls (10-14 years)</li> <li>Men and women (15-35 years)</li> </ol>
Learning for life	2012	3	8,424	<ol> <li>Girls (8th- 10th grade dropouts)</li> <li>Girls (8th- 10th grade continuing)</li> <li>Boys (8th-10th grade drop outs)</li> </ol>
Adolescent Girls in Disaster	2013	4	6400	Adolescent boys     and girls
Pathways to Power	2014	7	2,800	7. Young men and Women (18-25 years)

This document reflects a synthesis of the findings of these thematic reports and aims to present areas of concern and broad directions for programmatic inputs as the way forward in the context of meeting the targets that constitute the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aimed to be reached by 2030. The document has considered key observations and inferences from these reports, references from other materials related to the issues of concern, and a perspective from policy makers, influencers and civil society experts engaged in addressing issues impacting the girl child in India.

The chapters that follow address practices and issues that are obstructing the path to gender equity in India, and have been driven by patriarchal beliefs that are deeply embedded in the societal fabric of India. Discriminatory social institutions perpetuate

gender gaps in development areas such as education, employment, and health, and restrict the girls' and women's access to justice, rights, and empowerment opportunities. This has led to a sustained erosion of their decision-making authority over their life choices.

This document examines known and prevalent issues including child marriage, education, empowerment on an overall level; as well as other challenges like natural disasters, rapid and uneven urbanisation, and the digital age that have made women and girls increasingly vulnerable. The chapters attempt to give a perspective on these issues and illustrate challenges, and also seek to outline recommendations that emerge on the programmatic and policy levels for action steps so that the SDGs may be met.



"For a cultural shift, there will be challenges. No one wants to give up power."

> - Surina Narula, Philanthropist, social activist and Patron, Plan India

Talking on the issue of early marriage and its prevalence in India, Surina recalls the 1992 Bhanwari Devi incident, that left a lasting impact on her. Bhanwari Devi, the Dalit social worker was gang raped for speaking up and trying to prevent a child marriage. The case, underlined how deeply entrenched are traditions and beliefs around child marriage and girls.

Today, more than 700 million women worldwide were married as children. Around 250 million were married before the age of 15. Child marriage is recognised as a key barrier to progress in ensuring child development and ensuring their rights. Even though it has been declared illegal in most countries, social norms, religion, customary laws, and economic needs take precedence over national policies and legislation.<sup>1</sup>

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 administered by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, makes it illegal for girls in India to marry before the age of 18 years and for boys before the age of 21 years.

As per UNICEF's report on Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects, child marriage is most prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. India ranks fifth amongst the countries with the highest rates of child marriage, topped only by Niger, Bangladesh, Chad, Mali, and the Central African Republic. While South Asia is home

to almost half (42 percent) of all child brides worldwide, India alone accounts for onethird of the global total.

Plan India believes that gender equality is central to achieving its vision for change: a world in which all children, both girls and boys, realise their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignity. Child marriage is one of the deep-rooted hindrances in the development of children. Child marriage among girls perpetuates unequal community and family decision-making power, gender gaps in educational achievement and economic independence, and poor reproductive and sexual health.

To understand this issue at a deeper level and to explore ways to address it, Plan India commissioned a multi-country initiative in 2013 - Asia Child Marriage Initiative (ACMI). The objective was to improve knowledge, attitudes and practices in regard to child marriage and track the percentage of child marriages in its working areas.

In India, marriage is considered an essential and inevitable milestone in an individual's life. One of the key findings of ACMI

## Patriarchal values encouraging child marriage<sup>2</sup>

- Emphasis on virginity fear of sexual violence, compounded by insecure public spaces.
- Fear of elopement damage to family honour.
- Family pressure and inability of the girl to take charge of her life.
- Financial burden
- Belief that men are only attracted to young girls.

indicated that traditional causes for marriage are rooted in social values and norms. Marriage is considered necessary and inevitable by children and adults. Fear of sexual violence on the one hand and girls choosing to begin sexual activity on the other hand lead to child marriage of daughters.

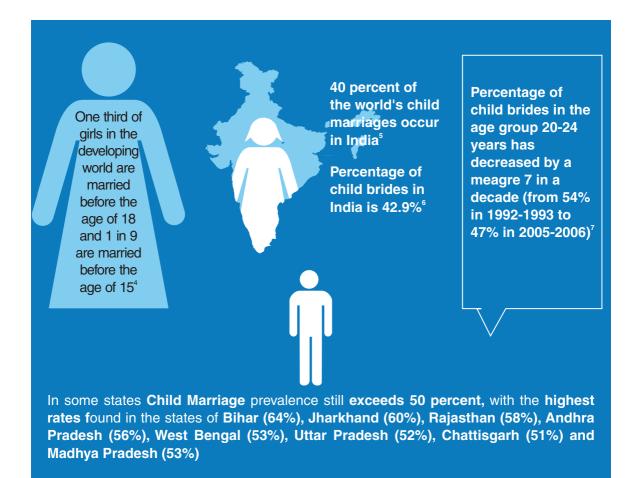
Younger girls call for smaller dowry while financial constraints often dictate marriage of a younger daughter at the same time as an older sibling to avoid the cost of a separate marriage later.

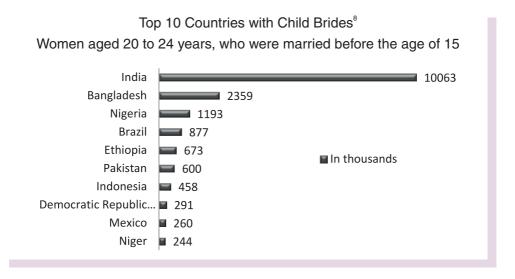
The study also describes poverty playing a significant role. Girls from poorer families are more likely to end their studies while

boys' education may be looked upon as an investment.

Access to middle and high schools is yet another factor in girls discontinuing studies after primary classes. In Bikaner district of Rajasthan for example, traveling long distances to neighboring villages and the lack of safety on travel routes discourage parents from sending their daughters for further education, as do the poor quality of schools.<sup>3</sup>

In order to contain the practice, Plan has adopted multiple strategies in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. One of these includes promoting children's organisations and their participation in creating awareness





about social issues including child marriage. This has resulted in increased knowledge and has also taught the children about their rights and how to negotiate with adults.

Plan India has established partnerships with the governments and civil society to capitalise on the strengths of the two sectors, i.e., the scale of government programmes and the community outreach of civil society organisations. At the grassroot level, engaging community leaders to advocate a change in norms with regard to the age at marriage is a strong step taken towards social change. Plan India has also proactively engaged in dialogue on consequences of child marriage and violation of child rights. One significant example from Plan programme areas is a bridge programme in the state of Rajasthan to facilitate girls' transition to the formal education. Plan India's partner Urmul-SETU organises residential education camps. where broad-based capacity building and life skills training is provided to adolescent girls. The initiative hase had a positive impact in encouraging the parents to invest in their daughters' education.

According to Surina "Educating the girls is not enough to lower the rate of child

marriage in India", She observes government promoted schemes such as Balika Samriddhi Yojana are a welcome step, but it is like water on sand. The impact, she adds, will be there, of course but it will be very little and very slow. She further says, education may give the girls a voice, but it is the father who needs a major shift in perspective. She further adds, "look around us, even with women who are successful, educated and empowered, most of the times men still have the last say in financial decision making. We cannot bring about gender equality without interventions that involve boys and men equally."

"Mothers are conditioned. And they grow up and implement the rules set by men. If you can win them, it will be easier. Whether it's through role models, or celebrities..."

Community leaders and government officials feel that there has been a positive change in the overall scenario concerning child marriage. According to them, there has been an increased awareness about the issue owing to collective efforts of the government and non-governmental

"Celebrate men. Celebrate fathers who have stood up to prevent child marriage."

organisations (NGOs). However, creating greater awareness, stricter implementation of the law, eradication of dowry and promoting girls' education are needed for a wider impact (ACMI report). Surina adds, "It is not only the young girls, older women in the family need to be sensitised too. The older women can perpetuate what goes on in the family. If we can change them by educating them or persuading them, they can bring the family together by motivating others towards positive change."

Responding to the decrease in the number of child marriages as shown by NFHS-3, the Surina feels it is not enough. She says "Certainly, there has been a downward shift in child marriages. But how much? only seven percent, from 1992-93 to 2005-2006. Seven percent is nothing. We need to

change gears and begin interventions through media, films, and engagement with men and boys," she suggests

She thinks answer perhaps lies in "making the law tougher and prosecuting for child marriage" but given that implementers are mostly men, it will only help so much she reflects. "So first, there needs to be a change in the mindsets and attitude. And that can only happen if we have role models a respected policeman as a role model, a senior politician as a role model, a film star as a role model. When they say something, people will listen." Surina says. The idea is to find role models among the masses as well people who are easy to identify with, people who inspire the thought 'if he can do it, so can I! and to.

"Celebrate men. Celebrate fathers who have stood up to prevent child marriage. The government can also offer conditional cash transfer to parents who do not marry off their daughter till 18 or 20. Maybe that will help." She ponders.



"...When they (boys and men) are at the dinner table, the mother will ask the daughter for a glass of water and not the son. Likewise the daughters are encouraged to take up jobs in the homecity and nearby areas as opposed to sons who do not face this challenge. The subconscious mind needs to be reached to change these things."

## **Emerging Recommendations: Programming**

Child marriage is still a widespread practice in India, mainly due to persisting patriarchal beliefs, socialised gender norms. These range from the role of parents being the preservers of a daughter's chastity and the associated stigma if they fail to do so, girls' lack of power in the decision-making concerning their own marriage, the practice of treating daughters as commodity to be exchanged in return for a bride, to perpetuating the belief that men only find young girls sexually attractive. Poverty is also a crucial factor. Education of girls is perceived as an additional and often unnecessary and avoidable expenditure.

Plan's ACMI study informs that there has been gradual improvement. The age at marriage has seemingly shifted from 11-12 years to 15-17 years. There is an emergence of girls who continue their education and/or delay marriage with parents' consent, and women getting paid employment and this is inspiring other girls and families to consider options and opportunities.

To accelerate progress towards positive change, the study emphasised the need for a multipronged approach to address the issue on different levels, and further strengthen the strategies and programmes that have been successful. Additional factors in the enabling environment also need to be identified and focused on to create a resounding impact.

Based on the findings of studies undertaken by Plan India the following recommendations for programming have emerged:

#### Make elimination of child marriage a priority

Direct organisational focus on the issue. Allocate adequate funds. Formulate multipronged integrated programmes keeping prevention of child marriage as the primary objective.

#### Create a model programme

Implement demonstration projects addressing the most important causes of child marriage and use multi-dimensional strategies. Create and monitor a database of child marriage in the programme areas. This model can be shared for replication in other programmes.

#### Develop approaches to engage with community, parents and male members

Strengthen Community Based Organisations (CBOs), NGOs and other local bodies to build effective relationship with parents in the vulnerable communities on a regular basis and influence the decision makers in the family through engaging with young men who are the "bread winners". Celebrate male members who are torch bearers to bring about a change.

#### · Promote safety of girls

Create sensitive and trustworthy spaces for adolescent girls and build their capacities to understand and articulate their views on marriage and sexuality. Help community develop safety mechanisms for school going girls.

#### Leverage aspirations

Utilise the increasing recognition among parents and young girls that education can enable a better quality of life. Exposure to potential opportunities and roles for women outside the house expands their understanding and worldview.

#### Extend financial, resource, and capacity building support

Create a pool of financial and human resources to support parents and girls who want to fight and not surrender to the social pressure of early marriage. Support skill building efforts for adolescent girls as a means of livelihood and income. Engaging both married and unmarried women in income-generating activities increases a girl's wellbeing in her marital household and may play a role in delaying marriage.

#### · Identify, encourage, and promote role models

Enable and sustain an environment that values girls' education through positive image building campaigns. Help create and promote role models of the girls and parents who have gone for higher education and economic independence in adverse circumstances. Increase their visibility and promote them to set an example that girls are an asset and not a liability.

#### Identify champions among religious leaders

Religious leaders can act as a powerful medium to promote the welfare of the child by incorporating relevant messages in their moral and spiritual discourse.

#### Involve celebrities and political leaders

Due to their aspirational stature, noted personalities whom the masses look up to, tend to influence people's way of thinking. Involving these personalities in advocating for or showcasing model behaviours can contribute to re-defining what is acceptable in the current times.

#### Use mass-media to spread the campaign

Utilise media like radio, television etc. and other folk media to influence the public opinion against child marriage. Reinforce positive outcomes of education, economic self-sufficiency, and marriage at appropriate time. Create and help sustain a platform for discussions on this issue so that a public dialogue takes place on eliminating child marriage.

#### Design programmes specifically for children married early

Outreach services may be made available in sexual and reproductive health, life skills and counselling. Emphasise the value of completing secondary education even for married girls though community education and public education campaigns.

#### · Make special efforts to reach the excluded and vulnerable families

There is a higher incidence of child marriage within families living in poverty and facing multiple vulnerabilities. The efforts should be to reach the last mile - these most in-need families.

## **Policy Recommendations**

To initiate action and positive change at a macro level, efforts are needed on the policy level that supplement and drive organisational programmes. Combining programmatic and advocacy efforts is likely to make an impact

#### Prioritise girls' access to quality secondary education

Prioritise girls' access to safe and quality secondary schools. Universalising financial support for completion of secondary education by girls should be considered.

#### Initiatives to drive economic empowerment

Interventions are needed at the national and local levels that economically empower girls and women, specifically in locations of high prevalence of child marriage and in marginalised communities.

#### · Commitment and prioritising: Duty Bearers

Advocate for prioritising commitment to eliminate child marriage with setting of clear milestones. Care for collective action by government, NGOs, alliances and consortiums to address deep-rooted issues.

#### · Effective coordination among stakeholders

Streamline the multi-stakeholder efforts at all levels (local, district, state and national) for a better convergence among government, non-government, corporate, civil society and community to eradicate the evil of child marriage.

#### • Strengthen law enforcement

Efforts should be made to identify and prosecute those involved in child marriage to make the law a deterrent. Penalties should be made heavier and enforced stringently. Innovative ways should be developed to work with law enforcement agencies for effective implementation.



# Anandi's desire for education fuels her dream of empowerment

Anandi enrolled in the bridge course at Urmul-SETU Sansthan and re-enrolled in Class 5. But pressure from the community started building up to get her married once she completed her middle school. She recalls how neighbours and others prevailed upon her mother to keep away her, and her sister from going to school. The concern: they may elope with someone if they were allowed to go to the town for continuing studies and bring dishonor to the family.

Anandi was losing all hope of continuing her studies when her father intervened and convinced her mother to allow her to keep studying. Her elder sister was not as lucky and was married off, becoming a victim of abuse at her marital home. This further fueled Anandi to continue her education against all odds and get employment before she got married. She also challenged her mother's conventional outlook and repeatedly reinforced the value of education in her by telling her that education was the only way to become empowered.

After finishing high school, Anandi graduated from Dungur college in Bikaner, completed her B.Ed. and is currently pursuing her M.A. in Hindi Literature. Anandi is now a confident young woman who feels that there has been a world of change in the mindset of her family and they are proud of her. Today, she is involved in all the major decisions of her household. Anandi has now taken second grade exams to become a teacher in a government school. She aims to be a successful teacher someday soon.

Anandi intends to continue working even after her marriage regardless of any opposition she might have to face. If given a chance to take part in local governance, she wants to take up roles and responsibilities and utilise the platform to spread awareness about the importance of girls' education. This, she feels is the single weapon to bring about gender equality. She believes education is the pathway to knowledge and information which empowers women to raise their voice against social evils, and gives them the strength to stand up against the community elders.

"An educated girl can face any challenge life throws at her; if she's not educated, people treat her like dirt."



'There is a need for a lot of preparatory work with the community, the government and the judiciary to ensure a common understanding on quality parameters and on equity and make RtE an effective instrument. We can also work with the curriculum to make it more meaningful for girls, and incorporate gender sensitivity, so that both girls and boys become more gender-aware to build a gender-just society.'

- Prof. Shyam B. Menon Vice Chancellor, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University



Education has been recognised as a fundamental right and a tool to attain capabilities to participate in a productive life. International focus on economic progress and increased productivity entails 'high priority to the development of human capabilities since human capabilities are considered to be an important instrument to raise the productive capacity of the economy'. It is acknowledged that education at all levels needs to be inclusive and of high quality, so that all children not only stay in school but come out of it equipped with appropriate learning levels and skills.

Education For All (EFA) Goal 2 states that 'Ensuring that all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality by 2015.' However, the presence of free schooling of good quality does not always make education accessible. Access is impeded by extenuating circumstances at home, which can compel even a school-going girl child to stay at home for prolonged periods of time and eventually drop out completely.

Providing free and compulsory education to all children as a means of social empowerment, natural justice and development is an underlying principle that is enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Adoption of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (henceforth referred to as RtE) has given further impetus to the national efforts for ensuring quality education for all in a time-bound manner. RtE mandates that all

children in the country are guaranteed of safe and fear free schools within a reasonable distance<sup>2</sup> and of a reasonable quality<sup>3</sup>, trained teachers, child-centred learning and a continuous and comprehensive evaluation system. It is this commitment and sustained effort to promote formal education for all children that has resulted in India becoming one of the few countries to have achieved outstanding progress in bringing all children within the fold of formal education.<sup>4</sup>

The programme framework in the country, though intensively addressing the issue of education of children, is largely based on considering aspects within the education system. The Government of India has endorsed the objectives of Education for All (EFA) to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015 both at the level of policy and in terms of programme implementation. There are bouquet of government schemes to facilitate enrolment and continuation of school education for all school-age children. The government from time to time has brought out directives and schemes for providing Education for all. (see Table)



## **Government Schemes and Programmes:Education**

Period	Policies and Schemes (Gol)
1950–1979	1950: The Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 45) of the Indian Constitution declared: 'The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years.' 1969: Planning Commission of India introduced district-level planning in India.
1980–1989	<ul><li>1986: National Policy on Education declared and Operation Blackboard introduced.</li><li>1987: Shiksha Karmi Programme launched.</li><li>1988: National Literacy Mission (NLM) launched.</li></ul>
1990–1999	<ul> <li>1990: India participated in the Jomtien Conference in Thailand and signed a treaty with a pledge to ensure 'Education For All' through people's participation.</li> <li>1993: Government of India introduced the 73rd and the 74th Constitutional Amendment for decentralisation of education through people's participation.</li> <li>1994: District Primary Education Programme launched by Government of India to ensure universal primary education for all children.</li> </ul>
2000-2009	<ul> <li>2000: India participated Dakar Global Conference on Education at Senegal.</li> <li>2002: Government of India passed the 93rd Amendment Bill in the Parliament and incorporated the same into the main body of the Constitution as Fundamental Rights.</li> <li>2002: India took a policy decision to ensure compulsory education for all children between 6–14 years of age under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.</li> <li>2003: The National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level was set up as a intervention to reach 'hardest to reach' girls, focusing on those not in school, and to provide additional support over and above the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.</li> <li>2004: The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas were estabilished as residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities.</li> <li>2009: National Literacy Mission recast with a new variant, Saakshar Bharat with the aim to accelerate adult education, especially for women in the age group of 15 years and above</li> <li>Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan also launched to enhance access to secondary education, by providing a secondary school within reasonable distance of any habitation.</li> </ul>
2010–2019	2010: The Right to Education Act and it came into force.

Despite various policies and programmes, issues of access and equity continue to mark gender disparity in education, right from the difference in enrolment rates, but continuing with the difference in drop-out rates and learning levels.

Niconala au af aiula	برما الممسلم متربط سمما	بنظ اممالمسميم		5
Number of girls	per nunarea boy	s enrolled by	stages of	education

Level	Primary (I-V)	Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	Secondary (IX-X)	Secondary Senior (XI-XII)
2013-14 (P)	93	95	90	89

As per, U-DISE close to half (48 percent) of girls dropout of the formal schooling system by the time they reach grade 10th.

Drop-out rates level-wise 2013-14 (P) in School Education in % age<sup>6</sup>

Level	All	Boys	Girls
I-V	19.8	18.3	21.2
I-VII	36.3	32.9	39.2
I-X	47.4	46.7	48.1

Data Source: U-DISE-2013-14 (Provisional)



### **Enrolment and Retention: An Ongoing Challenge**

As per the Global Gender Gap Report, published by the World Economic Forum in 2008 the girls-to-boys ratio for enrolment in primary education in India stands at 0.96.

As per the Ministry of Human Resource Development's Educational Statistics for 2009–2010:

- the drop-out rate at primary level is 27 for girls and 30 for boys;
- the number of female teachers per 100 male teachers is 86 at primary level and 63 at secondary level; and
- the gross attendance ratio (GAR; i.e., the ratio between those attending school at a certain level and the estimated number of those expected to be in school at that level) is:
  - o Urban girls: 70
  - o Rural girls: 48 (indicating fewer opportunities for schooling for girls in rural settings).

Plan India, conducted studies to understand the facets of discrimination and its effect on enrolment, retention, dropout and grade progression. Studies undertook in the states of Delhi, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, gives credence to the hypothesis that school and class environment play a significant role in children, coming to school and completing education particularly girls. Two studies conducted after an interval of six years, had more similarities than dissimilarities. The studies identified school infrastructure, class room environment, gender insensitive curriculum and differential behaviour on the part of teachers, and exclusion hurdles in formal education system.

Eminent educationist and academician Prof. Shyam B Menon, throws light on the caste dynamics affecting the enrolment of the girl child, in response to the guerry on forms of discrimination and its impact on enrolment. He shares 'In Bihar, a village may have a number of hamlets (tolas). If a child belongs to the "Mussahar" or "Paswan" caste s(he) is not sent to school. Explaining the dynamics further he adds. "it is because these are "Dalit" castes and the school is located in a hamlet that is populated by members of the "Gujjar" caste which is a non-Dalit caste. Mussahar and Paswan families do not want to send their girls to the school since they do not feel it is safe for them to go to a Gujjar hamlet"

Speaking about another facet of gender discrimination, Prof. Menon says "Even a boy who is told that he is some kind of a demigod is a victim, as is the girl who thinks she is there to serve. Both are victims and fed with false consciousness... sensitising young men and boys is much more important because if they are going to be the perpetrator then they need to be sensitised on the unacceptability of the





"Being able to study, even while battling the various forms of social oppression that are heaped upon them, is not at all easy. The girls are not taught about their rights, or tools of critical thinking and analysis. They are not empowered to handle the exigencies of early or compulsory marriages, domestic violence or exorbitant demands for housework. Marriage still frames the lives of girls in the eyes of parents and teachers whether or not they go in for schooling. Assumptions of gendered hierarchies male head of family with male decisionmakers remain unquestioned."

arrangement from a larger view of the normative of the justice structure."

The studies done by Plan in 2006<sup>7</sup> and in 2012<sup>8</sup> found that teachers generally paid more attention to boys than to girls while teaching. The textbooks predominantly have male characters in stories and pictures with a few female characters in passive or typical family roles. The teachers were also reported to make negative comments to girls enrolled in elementary school, most importantly, the number of male teachers were found to be significantly more than the number of female teachers, and are trained to deliver curricula, rather than be agents of social transformation.<sup>9</sup>

The lack of provision for medical attention, especially for girls was also found a significant factor for dropouts. Another major issue was the lack of safety for girls, on way to school and even inside it. The report states that, 'Routes to school are often not safe or are not considered safe by parents. Sometimes there are incidents of abuse or assault on the way to school. There is lack of safe and affordable transport; the schools uniformly do not take responsibility for any of these, many schools do not have a boundary wall making it easy for outside elements to enter.'

"Even a boy who is told to be some kind of a demigod is a victim, as is the girl who thinks she is there to serve. Both are victims and fed with false consciousness. Sensitising young men and boys is much more important because if they are going to be the perpetrator then they need to sensitised on the unacceptability of the arrangement from a larger view of the normative of the justice structure."

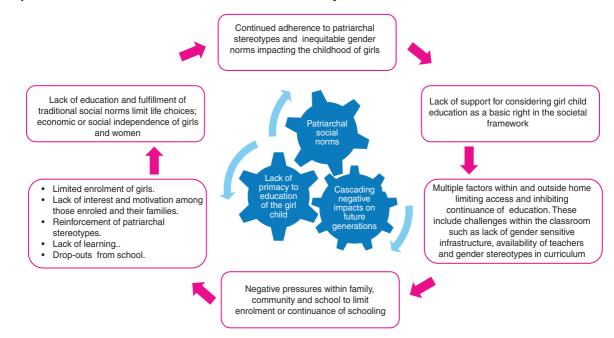
"The solution to the problem of Indian girls of school-going age not being at school, lies not just with the schools and the education system, but within the very fabric of society and community." He further states, 'Devoid of a larger social movement to correct the imbalances and asymmetry in cultural and social spaces particularly related to patriarchy, it's not easy for these efforts by themselves to bear results."

The data trends and findings of the referred studies indicate that the issues causing lower enrolment levels in schools or higher dropout rates from schools among girls include and extend beyond challenges within the schools and the education system. According to the Prof. Menon, "The solution to the problem of Indian girls of school-going age not being at school, lies not just with the schools and the education system, but within the very fabric of society and community.' He further states, 'Devoid of a larger social movement to correct the imbalances and asymmetry in cultural and social spaces particularly related to patriarchy, it's not easy for these efforts by themselves to bear results."



The chart below summarises the self-fulfilling negative spiral faced by the girl child in accessing education in the country.

#### Impediments to Universal Access to Education by Girls



There is therefore a need to address a range of underlying factors in society and for programmatic interventions to consider broader approaches to achieve the required transformation in the larger social framework. Though a number of development interventions within and outside school have been addressing these issues, the absence of a long-term community development approach, as a central aspect of education related programming, is likely to limit long-term systemic outcomes and may continue to yield localised results that reflect an immediate and short-term response to programme interventions. Linked with this approach is the need to integrate a larger societal framework for monitoring and evaluation of education programmes.

The current status strongly suggests the need for a multi-pronged effort to address

the range of issues impacting the enrolment and continuance of the girl child in school. This points to the need for initiatives within and outside the education system to work towards addressing the larger gender context as a primary step to enable support for education of the girl child.

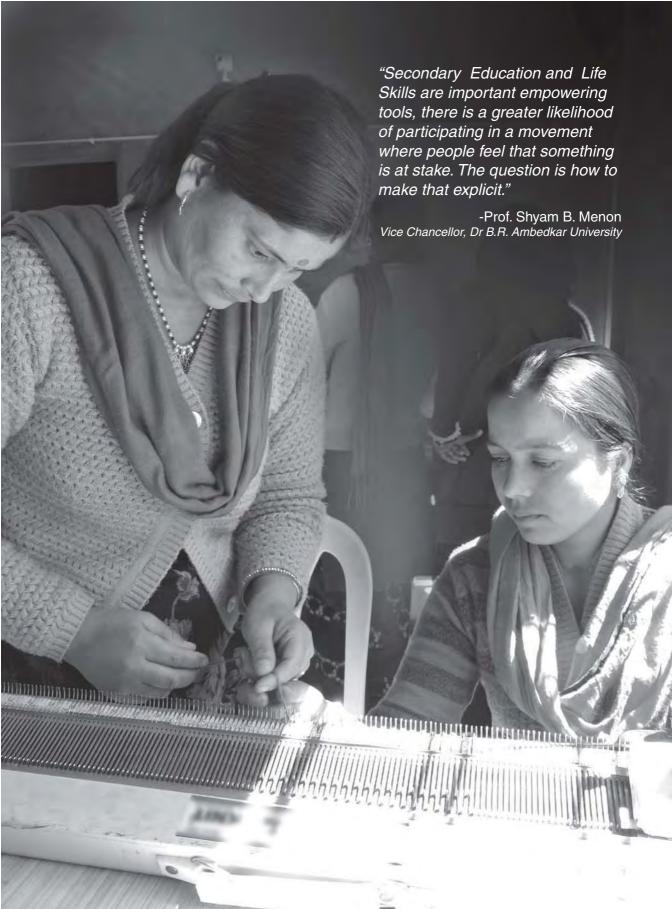
## Working towards a safer school environment

Plan India works closely with the government towards preventing all forms of violence against children. The organisation's campaign 'Learn without fear' involves school contact programmes to sensitise school administrators and teachers on these issues.

At the level of the education system, Prof. Shyam B Menon, reiterates the need for pre-service training of teachers on the issue of gender sensitisation and the need to support this with a continued in-service training engagement. This is essential to enable the required primacy on these issues. He further opined that making the curriculum more gender-equitable may not alone be sufficient to tackle gender inequality. He advocates for a classroom atmosphere that encourages girls and boys to engage with these issues and provides freedom to openly discuss and question the 'normals' (such as only the mother or sister cook or clean)- "You cannot attack such deep-rooted social asymmetry through textbooks alone". It is important to support training of teachers on the issue of gender

sensitisation, developing curriculum content that is more gender-sensitive and creating spaces in schools that facilitate school staff to engage with these issues towards an attitudinal and behavioural transformation that may not be achieved through textbook curriculum alone. Given the scale of the challenge within and outside the education system, the programme approach may actively seek collaborations between state and non-state actors to include government agencies, universities and leading private schools. The situation also suggests the need for convergence among programmes that are working towards gender equality to create the required promise for acceptance of programmes related to girl child education.





The past decade has witnessed much effort and resources being invested into education and skill-building for youth. Despite sustained effort, the participation of girls at the secondary schooling level remains unsatisfactory. The real need is to now make the stake explicit enough for the families of girls, the community, and for the girls themselves to seek to participate in secondary education as a means to maximise their potential; as the means that makes them achieve upward socioeconomic mobility in real terms. The issues which can be used to unpack the stakes and benefit need to involve the pragmatic

discourse of the day-to-day lives of the girls such as employment and family income, participation in decision-making, healthy choices in life, delayed marriage and childbirth, safety and security. Plan India's programmes try and focus on building this dialogue with the communities.

The challenges in ensuring enrolment and continuance of education of the girl child in primary education are further compounded in the context of secondary schooling, and livelihood-centred vocational streams in a patriarchal society. The overlap of girls achieving or moving towards achieving



# She supports the family — who supports her? Sudha's story is the story of many girls across India

Fifteen-year old Sudha lives with her father, mother, and six siblings in Dhani block of Maharajganj district of Uttar Pradesh. She is presently studying in Class 10 in an all-girls school. Her mother and father are daily-wage earners and work as agricultural labourers. In the lean season, with little or no work, the family struggles for three meals a day. Her father has often had to take loans. Seven years ago, Sudha's mother fell severely ill and was confined to bed. Sudha was just eight years old and much of her mother's workload immediately became her responsibility. She had to take care of her mother, cook for the family, clean the house and take over the care of her younger siblings. Even as the family was coping with the debt burden, Sudha began to feel that in addition to doing the household work, she too should go out to work in the fields and add to the family's income. Sudha has since been taking care of her mother and siblings at home and adding to family income. However she has not given up on her school and is somehow managing her studies along with these responsibilities. When she runs short of time, which is fairly often, she has to give the school a miss.

Sudha wants to complete her graduation. She is aware that she will have to go far away from home for this. But having seen her parents struggle, she values formal education as a means to end this vicious cycle of poverty and deprivation. Her aim is to learn and acquire better skills and provide a better life for her future family.

puberty plays out in the form of safety, pressure for domesticity and early marriage. In India the socio-cultural norms discourage the economic independence of the girls and even look down upon families where girls' income add to the family income, in addition to her own personal confidence and independence.

World Bank studies<sup>10</sup> identified main factors that restrict adolescent girls in India from accessing upper primary, secondary or higher education.

More educated women tend to be healthier, participate more in the formal labour market, earn more income, have fewer children, and provide better health care and education to their children, all of which eventually improve the wellbeing of all individuals and can lift households out of poverty.

#### · Gender inequitable family norms

The transition to adolescence for girls in India entails shouldering multiple household responsibilities such as fetching water from distant places, collecting fuel for cooking, taking care of vounger siblings and cooking food. Most of these tasks involve a continued daily routine and preclude the possibility of considering attendance at school. Furthermore, this transition signals the need to prepare the girl for marriage as a primary family goal which in turn. dismisses the need for further education as a life choice for the girl. In many instances, early marriage derivative of norms or economic circumstances preclude the possibility of further education.

#### Distance of secondary schools from homes of adolescent girls

The remote locations of secondary schools inhibit access to girls who often face the challenge of not being allowed to travel out of the village. Further, the lack of adequate transport and a safe travel environment lead to a decision to opt out of secondary education.

#### Poor infrastructure facilities especially in context of the adolescent life stage

Inadequate space within classrooms, non-availability of separate toilets for girls and inadequate public transport systems are some of the main infrastructure-related causes for girls dropping out of secondary education.

#### Pedagogy and school environmentrelated factors

Aspects such as inadequate and substandard pedagogy, lack of trained teachers, authoritarian systems of regulations, discrimination and violence in schools contribute to a lack of motivation for continued education.

#### Poverty

Continued prevalence of patriarchal settings in economically disadvantaged families ensures that the choice of educating the girl child is among the least of economic priorities. The exercise of this choice is further accentuated at the stage of secondary education, where it is often felt that there is no need for the girl to continue education and instead she could usefully contribute to the household by participating in domestic chores or supporting income for the household. In the latter case, girls in rural areas often are found working in fields or in small scale industries located in 'safe to travel' proximity and their counterparts in urban centres are found to work as

domestic help. None of these occupations offer possibilities for the girl to exercise a choice of higher education or to seek a variety of life choices for economic and social empowerment. Poverty also extends its impact on other aspects of the lives of adolescents including inadequate nutrition leading to adverse health conditions that impact their attendance at school.

At a much broader level, ensuring girls' education, while supporting a transition to a more gender-equal society, is also likely to bring about multiple positive effects for families, communities and the country.

According to Convention on the Rights of the Child, adolescents have rights including those to information and skills; access to services, such as education, health, recreation and justice; a safe and supportive environment; and opportunities to participate and to have their voices heard.

Global experiences inform that the continuance of education to the upper

primary stage and the subsequent transition to secondary and further education ensure a cascade of positive impacts for lasting change. These are manifested in transformation of gender roles, in empowerment of women, in enhancing their social and economic independence, in improving their ability to make life choices and in a continuing transformation of norms for future generations to embrace education of girls as a basic right.

As a part of the global campaign BIAAG, Plan India assessed the status of girls in context of secondary education in India the study 'Girls Gain Skills for Life: Learning for Life'. 11 specifically focused on the status of adolescents belonging to marginalised communities and educationally backward blocks in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh

The assessment examined factors facilitating and hidering transition of girls from primary to upper primary and to secondary education and continuation. The study also looked at the status of adolescent girls in the context of opportunities to gain life skills such as increased self-awareness and improved abilities to communicate and negotiate with their environment.





## Fighting for her Rights: The Story of Madhuri

Madhuri, a 16-year old girl studying in Class 9 in Dumka district of Jharkhand, faces the double travails of poverty and an alcoholic, violent father. She lives with her parents and four siblings. Her family does not own any land and her parents work as dailywage agricultural labourers. Her father spends all that he earns on alcohol. Madhuri often works as an agricultural labourer to support the family.

He father has ruled out schooling for Madhuri and feels that she is of a marriageable age and should get married at the earliest. Madhuri has been supported by her mother in delaying the decision to marry. However, there is continuing pressure from her father for her to either get married or to relocate to a large city to earn and send home money. The fact that she has no skills, little education and nowhere safe to stay if she moves out does not seem to matter. Madhuri has so far held her ground on this too, and once again has her mother's support. Both mother and daughter get beaten up for this when the father is drunk, which is often.

Despite living in these circumstances, Madhuri's spirit is far from broken and she wants to qualify as a doctor. She has managed somehow to get to Class 9, and she hopes life will work out a path to realise her dreams.

The study reveals that, most girls who dropped out from school did so after completing primary (Class 5) or elementary (Class 8) education, depending on the level of school in their vicinity.

Gender bias towards boys education came out prominently. In terms of causative factors, one in every five girls who dropped-out reported to face resistance from family members, if they wanted to attend school. Factors such as poor financial conditions, reluctance of parents, non-availability of adults to take care of household chores (95% of the respondents in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar reported to be engaged in domestic work), low value of education for

girls, early marriage also contribute to drop-out of girls from school.

In terms of empowerment and learning, the study found a lower percentile of girls, compared to boys, sought clarifications at school. Girls were either afraid or too shy to ask questions. Girls who had dropped out of school found it difficult to freely express their views at home when compared with schoolgoing girls. When it came to decision making for self' or the confidence that they could make proper decisions about their future, a lesser number of girls who dropped-out of school reported doing so, in comparison to those who were in school.

The study also examined the participation of girls in group activities other than the textbook curriculum in context of assessing the role of schools in enabling girls to determine life choices. The findings reveal an insignificant level of involvement of girls in group activities across the survey states, with the exception of Bihar. The limited participation in group activities suggests the lack of emphasis on in-school activities to build life-skills among adolescent girls.

The environmental context of girls, including physical and psychological violence and biases and socio-cultural restrictions, which are more especially significant in context of the life stage of adolescent girls. Over 60 percent of school-going girls reported beating and nearly half reported corporal punishment. A significant proportion of girls reported harassment including teasing and taunting. Almost one third of girls across the states reported violence/abuse to authorities, teachers or parents.

The linkage of future aspirations to education is significant, as it is a strong determinant towards the girls' motivation to attend the school despite all struggles and challenges. The importance of education was well recognised by girls with 77 percent of school-going girls and around 56 percent of dropped-out girls agreeing that completion of school education would help them attain a better future including linkages of higher education with jobs. A higher percentage of dropped out girls in comparison to school-going girls also expressed the belief that school education would make them a better parent.

As articulated in the 2012 Education for All Global Monitoring Report by UNESCO 'The current knowledge economy demands a work force with middle and higher levels of education and trained in specialised trades that will substantially contribute to the

market economy'. In other words, young people need to have higher levels of education and vocational skills that can help them to adapt to different work environments and thus improve their chances of staying in gainful employment in the current knowledge and skill - driven economies. As discussed above the status of adolescent girls in context of opportunities for secondary education, vocational training or higher education presents multifaceted challenges at the level of the education system, infrastructure and socio-cultural factors. At the same time. evidences from programmes of Plan India across the country that focus on these aspects such as the Balika Shivirs, demonstrate the tremendous potential for the country to benefit from girls being able to pursue further education and equip themselves with economic independence and a voice in their choices for life.

A number of broad directions emerge for consideration by government and non-state actors to improve the efficacy of programmes that address challenges in context of girl child education in India.

#### **Key recommendations include:**

Working with the school system and review of curricula

The scenario suggests the need for organisations to work with the school system to sensitise them on gender issues and help to make the school environment more conducive for girls. It may also be considered to implement a pan national review towards making curricula more gender responsive.

 Increased emphasis to work with communities

The complex interplay of socio-cultural factors calls for programmes that will approach education beyond the confines

of the education system and work to address the larger societal framework towards addressing gender-related inequities. A fact highlighted by Prof. Menon, as well, "The community holds a lot of stake and investment in schools. Community sensitisation to monitor what happens at schools, monitor the teachers and also their actual engagement in the classroom."

To do so, the programmes need to lay a primary emphasis on engaging with communities and to mobilise the communities for involvement in education processes. The dimensions of community involvement may include participation in design and conducting of in-school activities, as well as implementation of community-based monitoring mechanisms.

- Linking vocational education with livelihood and increasing the intensity of such programmes
- Unless education is linked with fundamental issues in economic terms, Prof. Menon opines, "the chances of gaining ground are few." Moreover, he adds, "One has to touch the consciousness of people at a level that matter to them. Livelihood is such a lever. Education has to link issues related to livelihood."

It is now increasingly realised that the value of education needs to be linked to its economic value. Over the last decade the focus of the UN Organisations has also shifted to secondary education and vocational or transformative education that will lead to opportunities for gainful employment and reduction of poverty. Incountry programmes may consider an increased emphasis on vocational training. Such initiatives may help in achieving dual goals of economic empowerment of women and at the

same time address barriers to adoption by demonstrating a tangible outcome for economically disadvantaged families.

 Engaging men and boys to achieve the required transformation in gender inequities

Empowerment of girls is not possible, unless supported by favourable family attitudes that encourage equal opportunities for girls in various spheres, including education. The evidence cited in this report and in numerous programmes highlights the criticality of this aspect in a patriarchal society like India. Education programmes may therein consider specific efforts to sensitise men and boys at the community level, in household settings as well as at school.

To enable a lasting change, it is imperative for programmes to consider approaches that build ownership of the transformation among men and boys and enable likely positive deviants to take the first essential steps towards building a critical mass.

• Building enabling support structures for girls

If one is to expect a greater inclusion of girls in education, it is essential to address the factors that withhold their participation and build an enabling environment. These include aspects such as shouldering home and family responsibilities, being engaged in income-generating occupations at a young age or discrimination with male siblings in the choice for education. The scenario requires a re-examination of policies in this context and to also improve implementation structures. As Prof. Menon points out "concomitant legal frameworks need to be effective. If you look at the education of girls in a holistic

perspective then there is a need to consider the efficacy of legislations such as those related to child labour as well as the need for advocacy in these areas. If looking after younger children is one of her chores then she has to have some form of support such as a village crèche.'

 Advocacy with data centres to identify relevant and disaggregated data indicators

Prof. Menon, stresses on the need to have to disaggregated data (gender and social constructs) for effective local level planning to be implemented. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh there is no point in aggregated data because the kind of plans required for NOIDA will not work in Basti.' He further emphasises on "Advocacy efforts with data centres such as the Census or the National Sample Survey will help to ask the right kinds of questions and incorporate the right kind of parameters in routine and special surveys ....India is actually not one country, it is many countries. The real repository of education data will not be

merely disaggregated data that can be aggregated, but also the identification of specific locations where there can be deeper probing of the datato generate additional numbers and anecdotal data.' Pesently, current data-sets often do not permit specific analysis at the level of distinct geographies or communities which may represent highly varying programme environments. Disaggregated data if made available could help in understanding the unique requirements of each area, and further for different types of communities, so that more relevant and effective programmes could be designed. Furthermore, data sets originating from education related programmes while offering comprehensive information on parameters related to the education system, often do not present a cogent picture of underlying socio-cultural factors and gender inequities. A mix of quantitative and qualitative data is suggested to understand the prevalence of issues and a deeper understanding of factors leading to those issues.





# Balika Shivirs: making the difference for secondary education and life skills

Plan India has been actively engaged in addressing issues related to secondary education of girls. Among initiatives undertaken in this regard are residential education camps (Balika Shivirs) for those girls in the 6–18 year age-group who have either dropped out of school, or have never enrolled in school. The Balika Shivirs aim to empower these disadvantaged girls so that they can collectively break the stereotype by getting higher education, or taking up skilled livelihood opportunities and evolve as role models for many more girls in their vicinity.

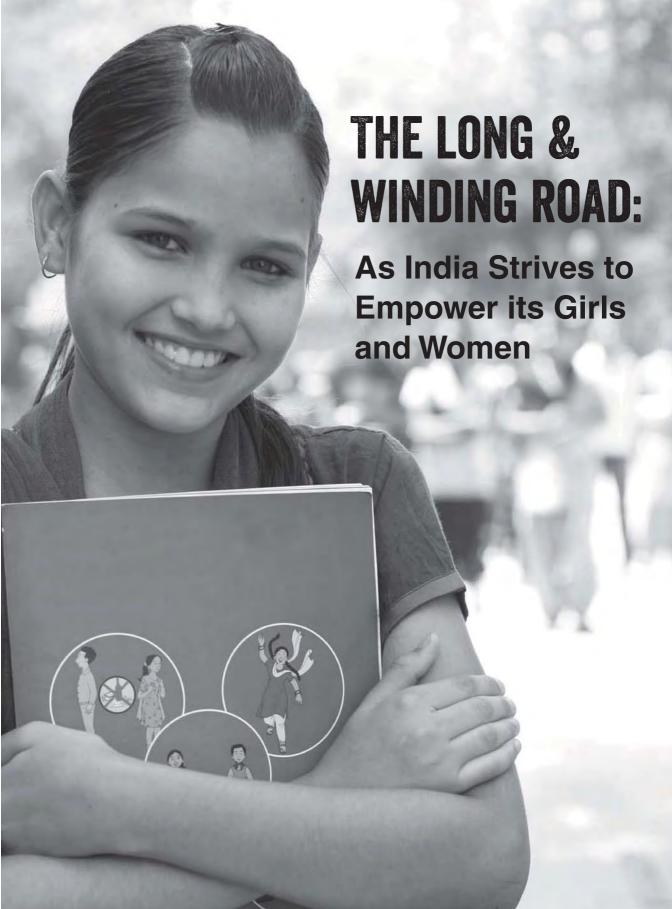
Plan in India organised Balika Shivirs under its broader child protection programmes and in collaboration with Urmul-Setu, a partner NGO in Rajasthan. The state is witness to a multitude of factors that inhibit the access of girls to upper primary or secondary education. These include among others, early marriage and child bearing, restricted mobility of girls, unfavourable climatic conditions and a scattered population. The Balika Shivirs help girls attain secondary education milestones (classes 10 and 12) and also assist in development of vocational skills and support for employment opportunities.

A total of 3377 girls have passed out from the Balika Shivirs since 1997. Of these, 789 girls are pursuing higher education, 281 are working as part-time workers, 654 are into full-time employment and 100 have established themselves as independent entrepreneurs.

Of the girls who were supported from 2011 for classes 10 and 12, 81 percent have successfully completed their Class 10 examinations and 86 percent their Class 12 examinations from the Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan. These figures are significantly higher than the state average.

# Programme implementation: Recommendations for consideration

- Form Community Vigilance Committees (CVCs) at the village-level that ensure school enrolment and attendance of all girls in the village.
- Have a mid-day meal scheme for all girls, irrespective of the stage of their school education.
  - Create gender-awareness in the educational system:
  - Build an environment that is sensitive to girls' needs
  - Design and conduct gender-sensitisation trainings for teachers
  - Review and modify textbooks and curriculum material to reflect positive images of girls
  - Introduce special curriculum modules on aspects that:
    - reinforce economic and social empowerment of women
    - encourage open discussion and knowledge-dissemination on issues such as personal hygiene, early marriage, prevention against abuse etc.
  - Conduct gender-sensitisation trainings for teachers
- Help adolescent girls develop the skills to protect themselves and to distinguish opportunity from threat.
- Make authorities and other 'duty-bearers' accountable to make schools and the local environment safe and girl-friendly.
- Develop systems for regular engagement with parents, including home visits by strengthening Community Based Organisations with a specific focus on families that are the poorest, have several daughters, and/or those with daughters who have already dropped out of school.
- Utilise the increasing recognition among parents and young girls that education can enable a better quality of life. Create exposure to potential opportunities and roles for women outside the house to help expand their understanding and worldview.
- Identify and support cases of positive deviance among girls who have rejected traditional gender roles and sought higher education, employment and economic independence. Similarly, identify parents who have internalised the value of education and stood up to social pressure by waiting till their daughter has completed at least high school, if not college before her marriage.



The issue of gender equality and women's rights is complex in India. Young women especially, face marginalisation and multiple discrimination, driven foremost by their gender, and further by caste, ethnicity, class, religion and disability.

In a country with deeply entrenched norms governed by patriarchy, girls are frequently denied their right to survival, protection, participation and development. This is indicated in incidences where women are denied access to health care, education, vocational training, employment and income-generation opportunities, while being excluded from social and community activities to a large extent.

Power, in the context of 'empowerment' is the ability to have control over one's behaviours, and influence the actions and decisions of another person in order to satisfy one's interests within a given period of time and space. Being 'disempowered' prevents girls and women from realising their rights and escaping cycles of poverty. At the same time, empowerment goes beyond developing vocational and life skills that may provide girls and women with tools to generate earnings and gain some degree of economic independence. True empowerment entails building the individual, social, economic and political assets of girls and women. This requires addressing the structural barriers to gender equality that lie rooted in attitudes and institutions. This systematically erode a girl's strengths and potential and deny her opportunities she needs to have in order to develop her skills and an opportunity to engage in gainful employment outside home.

Households and communities, economic institutions and workplaces, and the legal and political institutions of the state wield power in different forms: visible, hidden, and invisible. The dynamics of power depend

very much on the type of space in which it is found, the level at which it operates, and the form it takes.<sup>1</sup>

Jyoti Singh, President of Self-Help Group (SHG) federations promoted and supported by Plan India, under its "Banking on Change project", recalls her life before she decided to join the programme. 'It did not matter that I was educated and a graduate. I was not allowed to step outside the house. My world was confined to the four walls and what I could see from behind my ghoonghat(veil).'



#### Power takes different forms

- Visible: observable decisionmaking mechanisms\_
- Hidden: shaping or influencing the political agenda behind the scenes
- Invisible: norms and beliefs, socialisation, ideology

## Power is acted out in different spaces

- Closed: decisions made by closed groups
- Invited: people asked to participate but within set boundaries
- Created/claimed: less powerful actors claim a space where they can set their own agenda

#### Power occurs at different levels:

- Local
- National
- Global

With the MDGs having concluded, a new approach to gender equality is in order. An order, that creates an enabling environment for all women and girls, and addresses about power directly to them The SDG -5 looks to undo the past. A facilitative framework, it will enable women to make strategic life choices by strengthening the personal, inter-personal or political power. Social economist Naila Kabeer says, 'The different dimensions of empowerment are closely inter-related so that significant change in one dimension is likely to generate changes in others.'

The usage of the concept of empowerment is based on a particular understanding of power that includes an unobservable decision-making process as well as the ability to exert influence over the decisions made. Empowerment is thus, rooted in how people see themselves their sense of self-worth and how they are seen by those a round them and the society. Conceptualised in terms of 'the ability to make choices among the given alternatives', choices necessarily implies the possibility of

alternatives and can only be exercised on the basis of three inter-related aspects: resources (pre-conditions), agency (process) and achievements (outcomes).

Sustainable and transformative change would involve an investment in girls, in tandem with a strategic shift in the external barriers that block their way to power. This means extensive and consistent working with the social institutions, families and communities as well as the powerful political, economic and legal institutions that can either promote or impede girls' access to equality and their exercise of real choice in the way they live their lives.

#### **Gender Transformative**

An explicit intention to transform unequal power relations. The focus goes beyond improving conditions for women and girls and seeks to change their social position how they are valued in society as fully realising their rights.

#### Agency:

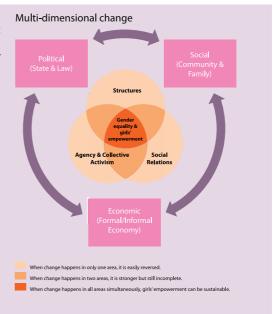
Agency is the ability to define one's goals and to act upon them. Having a high level of agency implies that girls can decide what they want for themselves, set goals, and then take action to achieve those goals. Agency refers to 'power within' and also 'power with'. Increasing girls' agency is a critical part of girls' empowerment and gender equality.

#### Social relations:

These are the interactions girls engage in every day. Girls' lives are deeply affected by the gender power relations with the individuals surrounding them (peers, parents, siblings, teachers etc). Girls' ability to exercise agency is often determined by this balance of power. How girls are valued – through attitudes, norms and behaviours – is key to girls' pathways to power.

#### Structures:

Structures are often reflected in deeply rooted (or systemic) norms and values and how these play out in, for example, government services, laws and policies. Structures may be visible or invisible, formal or informal. Changing structures is a key component of girls' empowerment.



## **Types of Power**

#### **Economic**

- Employability in formal sector
- Increased assetbase
- Improved conditions of selfemployed women (including homebased and small producers)
- Work-force participation
- Financial inclusion
- Equal remuneration
- Skill development (beyond genderbased)
- Provisions, aids, schemes for female farmers
- Social security for women in unorganised sector

#### Social

- Violence against women (early marriage, domestic violence, sexual and emotional abuse, trafficking)
- Vulnerable women (differently-abled, trafficked, SC/ST, widows)
- Inclusive growth
- Gender and age appropriate schemes
- Food security
- Enabling educational environment
- Safe sanitation and transport facilities

#### **Political**

- Participation in political processes (voting etc.)
- Equal participation in political institutions/local governance
- Equal participation in the decisionmaking process
- Important political organisations:
- Urban Local Bodies
- Gram
   Panchayats'
   representation
   and active role in
   political
   institutions and
   local governance

#### Legal

- Enabling legislations (should also ensure equal protection under the law for all)
- Legal literacy
- Awareness on women's rights
- Gender sensitive legislative system
- Redressal mechanisms





In the process of women's empowerment, the legal and political frameworks define the relationship between citizen and state. It is in the formal and public institutions of the state that power is most visible and examining its implementation and how these institutions operate in the day to day lives of women and girls provides valuable insights into the challenges and the way forward.

Although there have been several improvements in laws on gender equality in India and many other countries, legislation has not really played the critical part it ought to have in making a significant difference to the lives of women and girls. Addressing governance issues at all levels is necessary if the structural barriers to women's empowerment are to be overcome. Governance comprises the processes by which a state exercises power, and the social contract between the state and its citizens that should be acknowledged and fulfilled. It is not enough that laws exist: equally important is to examine how they are applied and enforced.

# Women's empowerment efforts in the global context

The focus on women's empowerment gained momentum in the 1990s. It was driven by an increasing recognition that women's empowerment was pivotal to the success of development programmes. The UN has led global discussions and taken initiatives on women's rights and empowerment, including four world conferences the first of which was organised in 1975, and the last in 1995 in Beijing that led to a global commitment to gender equity.

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing was a major human rights accomplishment for women, where it was recognised that despite progress, women still suffer obstacles to achieving equality with men. Also, progress was further impeded by the poverty suffered by so many women and children.

Through the Beijing Declaration, governments re-committed to the full implementation of the human rights of women and the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The governments also committed to:

- 1. Elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls.
- Equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for women and girls who face additional barriers because of race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people.
- 3. Equal access of women and girls to economic resources, including land, credit, science, technology, vocational training, information, communication and markets.
- Adequate mobilisation of national and international resources, as well as new and additional resources to the developing countries, from all funding mechanisms.





**TARGET:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education by no later than 2015

#### **INDICATORS FOR MDG 3**

- 1. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
- 2. Ratio of literate females to males of 15 to 24 year-olds
- 3. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- 4. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

Source: 'En-gendering' the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on Health, WHO

With the MDGs culminating in 2015, attention is now shifting to the SDGs which will define the targets for the period 2015-2030:

# SDG 5: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women<sup>2</sup>

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- 5.4 Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the

- provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.
- 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and

control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

- 5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
- 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

# India's commitment to women's empowerment goals

India as a member state is committed to fulfilling the UN declarations and conventions it has ratified to signed. To meet these commitments, national and state policies are aligned to these declarations and conventions.

#### National Policies and Programmes

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution of India, in its Preamble, Fundamental Duties and the Directive Principles of State Policy. The Constitution also empowers the states to adopt positive discrimination in favour of women.

There are 15 Constitutional provisions including Articles 14, 15, 16, 39, 39A, 42, 46, 47, 51A, 243D and 243 that are related to equity of women before law, in right to adequate means of livelihood and employment, equal pay at work and equal opportunity in securing justice. The Articles entail special provisions for women and children to improve the nutrition level and standard of living; secure just and humane conditions at work and maternity relief; promote educational and economic interests

of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation and renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

To curtail gender-based violence and to control discrimination against women within the household, it is important to make the protection of the individual a component of the legal framework.

#### Legislations impacting women

- The Marriage Acts and the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA) were drafted in the 1950s.
- The Maternity Benefit Act (1961), mandated maternity benefits to women employees.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act was passed in 1961 and later amended in 1986.
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancies for medical reasons, legal till the 20th week.
- The Equal Remuneration Act was also passed in 1976.
- Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation)
   Act was passed in 1986 and amended in 2006.
- The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act was passed in 2005 to protect women (either wife or a live-in partner) from domestic violence.
- In 2006, the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act prevented and prohibited child marriage and gave choice to the children in marriage to seek annulment.
- The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009 guaranteed every child (6–14years) the right to education.
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 defines sexual harassment at the work place and creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints. It also provides safeguards against false or malicious charges.

## Budgeting for including the aspirations of women and girls for inclusive growth

India's Five Year Plan outlays have seen a progressive change to integrate the increasingly recognised needs of women and children over the last six decades. There has been a shift from a 'welfare' oriented approach in the First Five Year Plan (INR 40 million) to 'development' and 'empowerment' of women in the subsequent Five Year Plans. The outlays reflect the

increasing need for resources: from the First Five Year Plan's INR 40 million, outlays went up to INR 78.1 billion and 137.8 billion in the Ninth and Tenth Five Year Plans respectively. While the Tenth Five Year saw the adoption of the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, the current Five Year Plan (2013–2017) aims at mainstreaming gender concerns and keeping inclusive growth at the heart of policy-making.

Programme /Scheme	Key Features
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), 2000	Government of India's flagship programme to universalize elementary education and operational since 2000 provides for a variety of interventions for universal access to education and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), 2004	A scheme launched to set up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the marginalised communities.
Mahila Samakhya Programme , 1988	Launched to pursue the objectives of the National Policy on Education, 1986
Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)	Enables groups of women to take up employment-cum-income generation programmes of their own, or to access wage employment by providing training for skill up gradation.
Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), 2005	Safe motherhood intervention, under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), being implemented with the objective of reducing maternal and neo-natal mortality by promoting institutional delivery amongst poor pregnant women.
The Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls, 2002-03	Address nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY)	Advance the nutritional, health and development status of adolescent girls.
Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), 2010	A Conditional Maternity Benefit Scheme that targets pregnant and lactating women (19 years and older with maximum two children).
'Dhanalakshmi', 2008	Conditional cash transfer scheme introduced as an incentive to protect the birth of a girl child. $ \\$
Short Stay Home for Women and Girls (SSH)	Extends temporary shelter and rehabilitation to women and girls who have no social support systems and facing abuse
Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG): SABLA (2011)	Promoting the holistic development of adolescent girls and aims at enabling their self-development and empowerment through improving nutrition and health, promoting adolescent reproductive and sexual health (ARSH), mainstreaming them into formal/non formal education and upgrading life-skills with the National Skill Development Program (NSDP) for vocational skills

# **Programmes and Schemes for Girls and Women**

## National Policy for the Empowerment of Women

The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was adopted in 2001 to accelerate the pace of the empowerment of women, the policytooktheshapeofamission. The National Mission for Empowerment of Women or "Mission Purna Shakti" was unveiled on International Women's Day, in 2010. It aims to "To strengthen the processes which promote holistic development and empowerment of women, gender equality and gender justice through inter-sectoral convergence of programmes that impact women, forge synergy among various stakeholders and create an enabling environment conducive to social change."

## **Challenges to Empowerment**

In the 2013 edition of an annual report prepared by the WEF that assesses the progress made by countries across the globe in bridging the gender gap, India was placed in the 101st position among 136 countries. The Global Gender Gap index measures the 'relative gaps between women and men in four key areas: health, education, economics and politics. On the political empowerment factor, India was ranked high at 9th position.

Patriarchal systems and beliefs continue to be the biggest roadblock to empowerment for women and girls. Caste, class and region play their part in relegating womanhood to an inferior role a protected commodity to be preserved within the fences of a tradition of power. Women, including girl children, adolescent girls and young women have thus been devoid of an identity outside of

## The National Mission for Empowerment of Women

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realise their full potential.
- The de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
- Equal access to participation and decision-making of women in the social, political and economic life of the nation.
- Equal access by women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.
- Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.
- Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organisations.

the roles they are placed in, both within and outside the household. This lack of power manifests itself in five key aspects of their lives: sexual health, early marriage and early pregnancy, domestic violence, education, productivity and income.

A major cause of concern is the declining CSR across the states, down from 927 in 2001 to 918 in 2011. The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save the girl child, educate the girl child) scheme aims to arrest and in due course reverse the trend. A 100 critical low CSR districts have been identified for focused and convergent action spearheaded by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

The State of the Girls in India, 2014 report, titled 'Pathways to Power-Creating Sustainable Change for Adolescent Girls' is a report based on the conceptual framework of girls' empowerment and takes a look at the changes in the social, political and economic spheres of governance.

Despite efforts in the right direction, there is still a yawning gap between policy and practice. Social norms and traditions leave many communities on the margins with little knowledge of their rights and even less protection from local, state, and national government policies. In spite of the policies, the law, as well as several initiatives by civil society institutions, violence against women has not abated.

The enforcement of laws and sentencing of perpetrators is a long and arduous process and these gaps are further widened by corruption. In addition, the acceptance of certain forms of violence as inevitable and even justified, coupled with the social stigma and the fear of abandonment by the family play a part in women and girls remaining silent on the abuse they suffer.

The report was prepared based on a literature review of existing, legislative, and programmatic provisions for ensuring the rights of girls and young women on issues related to education, early marriage, gender-based violence and domestic violence. An analysis of the role of local governance structures, women's collectives, and governments in enabling and constraining the rights of girls was also done. The perceptions, opinions, and views of voung women and men (18-25) years and their family members were documented regarding existing social and cultural norms on attitudes towards girls and factors influencing change.

Almost one-third (30 percent) young women in both programme and control areas reported that they have been physically abused (beaten), followed by teasing/taunting and stalking/bullying (about one-fifth young women). A comparatively higher percentage of young women from rural areas reported experiencing physical abuse (37 percent reported beating) and emotional abuse (22 percent reporting teasing) as compared to those belonging to urban areas (18 percent reported beating and 16 percent reported teasing).

# Determining factors for the empowerment of girls

The MDG on gender equality and the empowerment of women aimed to eliminate gender disparity in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Education, employment, and political participation were identified as indicators and progress was tracked by the ratio of girls to boys in class, the share of women in paid employment in sectors other than agriculture, and the proportion of female representatives in National Parliaments.

Currently, India (11 percent), Brazil (10 percent), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (11 percent) fare almost equally in the World Bank data on the proportion of seats held by women in National Parliaments. Interestingly, developed countries like the United Kingdom (23 percent) and the United States (19 percent) are close to Bangladesh (20 percent) in the proportion of seats held by women indicating that the indicators should be viewed in alignment with other factors and indicators to get the true picture.<sup>3</sup>

The findings in the primary research of The State of the Girls in India, 2014 look into the influence of family and community, as well as local, institutional, and political governance on the lives of young women (18–25 years) in their pathways to power.

# **Education as an enabling factor for empowerment**

Among the young men and women interviewed, 61 percent of young women had completed secondary education or above. This included 29 percent who had completed secondary education and seven percent who had completed diploma/degree level education. This was against 77 percent of young men who had completed secondary education.

Several factors influence women's completion of education, including geographical, socio-cultural, health, economic, religious, legal, political/administrative, educational (access, quality) and initiatives (by government and nongovernment bodies).

Gender roles and restrictions on mobility play an important part in girls discontinuing their education

Around two-fifths (39 percent) of young women reported having dropped out or

discontinued their education due to their marriage. This was followed by household work (35 percent).

#### Education improves sense of self-worth

Young women and men contacted for the primary survey (urban and rural areas) unanimously expressed that education had been instrumental in contributing to their level of confidence and bringing about a positive change in their mindset and outlook. Young women also felt that education had led to improving their economic and/or social status.

# Providing financial, resource, and infrastructural support to girls to continue their education

To bridge gender and social gaps in elementary education, incentives are offered by the national and state governments in the form of resource support, textbooks, uniforms, mid-day meals, scholarships, as well as infrastructural facilities and support. In all, 97 percent of young women were aware of the different forms of incentives and scholarship programmes. Over 81 percent of those aware also reported receiving one or more of these incentives and scholarships. A large number (over 60 percent) of the young men and women accepted that the incentives helped them continue or complete education and perform better.

## Education improves the economic and social status of women

68 percent of young women admitted that education had been instrumental in increasing their level of confidence and bringing about a positive change in their mindset and outlook. Most of the young women recognised the importance of education in gaining self-confidence and respect from the family and society. However, even though they felt that

education improved their economic and social status, only 31 percent of the rural women and 19 percent of the urban women mentioned education will help them achieve gainful employment.

## Vocational training and its perceived advantages over vocational education

Women across the study showed interest in enrolling in vocational trainings to enhance their income-generation opportunities. There's a basis for this interest. Lack of adequate skills is one of the impediments affecting women's participation in the workforce, particularly in the secondary and tertiary sectors, resulting in their concentration in low paid sectors. The survey indicated that the young men prefer short vocational trainings to formal vocational education.

"When I would go out, it interfered with mv work in the house. Mv in-laws said you are going out and you are not earning also and wasting time. They did not understand that we are going outside and we are learning so many things....now I am talking with you but earlier I never used to talk like this. This actually built my confidence. I talked with my sir about how I could earn some money, he told me about the (financial) training and I started making some money from that. I started giving that to mother-in-law and she became cool. Now she has no problem sending me outside."

-Jyoti Singh President of Sakhi Sangam Society for Social Change, Banking on Change Project (Plan India)

#### Awareness of schemes and provisions

Nearly two-thirds or more men in the programme (76 percent) and control areas (62 percent) are aware of the Right to

Education (RTE) and a similar proportion in urban areas are aware about Right to Information Act (RTI) - 72 percent as against 48 percent in rural areas. The comparative awareness levels for women were lower in both programme and control areas (RTE: 61 percent in programme and 45 percent in control areas; RTI: 39 percent in programme areas and 21 percent in control areas).

# Social and cultural norms around early marriage supercede awareness of legal age

Despite there being high awareness regarding the legal age of marriage, more than 72 percent married young women (of a total of 1050 contacted) reported getting married before the age of 18. It was found that cultural and social norms and the economic status were the key determinants of the age at marriage. 22 percent of young men reported being married, highlighting the gender discrimination and the vulnerability of girls in becoming victims of early marriage.

"We've built an international architecture of laws and norms to protect women's rights, but in many ways it remains a bare scaffold without the bricks and mortar needed to make those laws effective in people's lives and turn our rhetoric into reality."

- Hillary Rodham Clinton

# Gender-based violence against women continues

Gender-based violence continues to be a common feature in both rural and urban areas and underlines the inequalities

between men and women. Nearly 30 percent of the young women contacted reported having been physically abused (beaten), followed by being teased/taunted and stalked/bullied. Women from rural areas reported experiencing more physical and emotional abuse than the ones in urban areas. At the same time, around 31 percent young women admitted that there had been a reduction in the incidence of violence against women in their area in the last three years.

There continues to be shame and stigma attached to these experiences. Almost 32 percent of the young women mentioned having shared the experience of violence with their parents/guardians followed by their friends. However, very few women made a formal complaint reporting such incidents, whether for themselves or for someone else

# Positive perception of women's rights - a glimmer of hope

In a show of support to the tenets of women's and girls' rights, four-fifths of young women and men in the study were found to have a positive attitude towards the current practices pertaining to women's rights. These included supporting active and meaningful participation of women in local governing bodies, group-based activities, receiving equal wages for similar work done, and their independent mobility.

# The more things change...Traditional role of women in the family

#### Father's property—No access for women

Despite the law treating all children as equal, inheritance rights continue to serve

the sons in the family. This was highlighted in the findings with a mere three percent of young women reporting ownership of property or land in their name. Both young men and women felt that married women should not seek their property care from their maternal home.

"If she is a good girl then my sister will not take her share of property and while deciding it's share she will give it in my name. That is the custom, and also if she is married to a well-off family then she will not be interested in maternal property."

- Young man from Lunkaransar

## Women continue to be disproportionately involved in domestic work

Traditional roles still play out with women being expected to do all the household chores. The domestic work is divided between the mother and the female siblings; however, one positive development reveals that they are not expected to do housework during their examinations. Young men, on the other hand, are expected to be engaged in grocery shopping followed by fetching water. During group discussions both young women and men mentioned, at times when women and girls are busy or not there at home, the boys/men do the household work. Bovs/men however are not willing to participate in household chores when girls/women are there at home.

## Conformity to gender-specific roles and expectations within family

According to the young women, most of the parents/guardians do not object to their girls going out when they are younger. This openness wanes when the girls grow up and society considers them to be ready for marriage.

## **Banking on Change - for change**

Plan's work in India in gender-related issues includes programmes on girls' safety, prevention of female foeticide, and girls' education. Plan also strongly believes that economic independence is extremely crucial for the empowerment of women and a better quality of life, and is running a project, 'Banking for Change' to work towards building a community-based micro-finance institution in the Mangolpuri and Sultanpuri areas in North West Delhi. The project is supported by Barclays Bank and has successfully mobilised 15000 women till date through Self Help Groups (SHGs).

Implemented to address household poverty in the urban sector, this microfinance initiative is designed to draw lessons, experiences, and learnings for the inclusion of women from urban poor families into the organised financial sector through microfinance interventions and augments family income, enabling women's economic empowerment though incomegenerating activities.



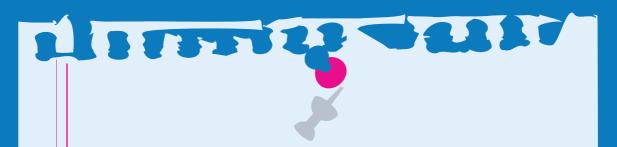
## Journey from behind the ghoonghat (veil) to fronting an SHG

Jyoti Singh is the President of Sakhi Sangam Society for Social Change, one of the SHG women's federations promoted under Banking on Change project of Plan in India supported by local NGO partner Dr. A.V. Balling Memorial Trust. Three years after joining, Jyoti today heads a group of 16 members that has total savings of Rs 175,000.

Jyoti became involved in Plan's programme on economic empowerment of women for economic security and better life for children when she got married and came to Mongolpuri. She was trained in stitching under the micro-enterprise service of the programme. This equipped her to open her own boutique at home.

Following this, Jyoti participated in financial literacy training and started working as a trainer of Financial Literacy for SHGs. The members of SHG voted her to become a cluster leader and later the Federation leader Sakhi Sangam and President of Federation. She is now working as supervisor in Banking on Change project. Her aim is to work for the development of poor and deprived children and women like rag pickers, street children etc.

She says, 'Before Banking on Change, my family never allowed me to go out of the house. It didn't matter that I was educated a graduate. My world was confined to the four walls and what I could see from behind my ghoonghat. I had no confidence and very poor communication skills; but after becoming a member of the SHG cluster leader and receiving training on the banking system, financial products, accounting, and documentation, I learned these skills and they helped me in becoming the Federation Leader.'



# rangSutra — Weaving the threads of social and economic empowerment

rangSutra, rural based organisation owned by artisans, who are mostly women. Brain child of a Full Bright scholar, Sumita Ghose, the rangSutra, provides platform for sustainable livelihoods to artisans in India.

The rangSutra provides technical and organisational support to crafts and artisans and design marketing strategies to enable traditional crafts based rural industries become turn viable enterprises. The aims is to help and provide regular home and village-based employment to 3500 rural artisans.

rangSutra, weaved itself into a prominent entity through meticulous planning and strategies. The social venture capital set up in 2006, with a paid-up capital of rupees 50 lakh. And with thousand artisans as its major share holders with an investment of rupees 1,000 each for a quarter of the shares in the company and the remaining capital investment from microfinance giants Aavishkaar, and Fabindia's Artisans Microfinance.

rangSutra, model of work model is through networking with small producer groups, based in villages and small towns in remote regions of the country. A producer group consists of artisans or weavers, as well as those involved in the management of the group. The group facilitates the production processes, sourcing the yarn, the dyeing, and allocating designs to different artisans. Initially operating out of Western Rajasthan, the rangSutra projects have spread to artisans of eastern Uttar Pradesh including Varanasi, as well as Assam and Manipur.

With each successive year, rangSutra has grown vertical and horizontal. It has expanded its customer base in domestic market through Fab India retail chain, through which rangSutra, products are mainly marketed and also has put up its own outlets at Nature Bazar's Kissan Haat, in nation's capital. rangSutra, it forays into international market through it has tied



up e-commerce space Indian Roots, a NDTV venture and has MoU for home furnishings in European markets with IKEA.

Based on the rangSutra experiences, Sumita Ghose, Founder and Managing Director of rangSutra, added that there is a strong need not just for an individual but for a group of people to take leadership to ensure the commercial viability of the vocational training schemes, because as far as women or even young girls are concerned they are willing to take every risk for the little opportunity they have.

She recalled that when rangSutra was started, she herself was doubtful about making it into a for-profit, artisan-owned company. But the women artisans were ready to invest money. Some of them put in INR 500, some put in INR 100, which in monetary terms is a huge amount to them. Some didn't even have the money, but took money on loan from SHGs to invest.

On spending of money that was earned by women, she added that - 'I asked them how are you spending your money? The older ones normally invest in their children's education. Some would say we're saving up to buy bicycles, mopeds. The younger girls were putting aside money for their own education. The ones who couldn't study after Class 10 are now enrolled in open education.' She further added that 'because the girls' parents didn't want to invest in their education or couldn't afford it, girls discontinue education and skill-building. I think if we provide the facilities, provide options, then from their side (the women) there's nothing which is restricting. It's us. It's the leadership (that's holding back).'

She also emphasised the need to strengthen the cadre of leadership. She shared the notion of 'Vyavasthapak', or manager. At rangSutra only women are prepared for the managerial roles, because if they train men, the women end up doing all the background work while men benefit from the marketing work and hence may become the face of the enterprise. Some women have studied up to Class 5 or 8, and some of them up to Class 10.



Currently rangSutra has about 35 such women who handle the entire process from planning to packaging to shipping.

However the process of running such an innovative enterprise is also fraught with challenges. Major challenges include the restrictive attitude of the people, keeping the women motivated, and encouraging entrepreneurship among the groups.

Regarding the change in the attitudes and behaviours of women after becoming economically independent, she recalled, 'Some of the women artisans had come to Delhi two vears back and I had sent them to a Fabindia store all by themselves. They visited the garments store at the Greater Kailash market and found their garments there. In the evening, when I met them, their response was that now that they'd seen what beautiful places their products were sold in and how much people were paying for them, they'd be even more careful about the quality. That was the level of pride they felt.'

The key thing for the empowerment of women is to sustain the work and ensure regular work for women



### **Recommendations**

It is widely believed that the MDGs did not exhaustively cover aspects of gender equality and empowerment, including adolescent girls. Given the special needs of adolescents and the particular constraints faced by adolescent girls at this critical stage in their life cycle, Plan believes they should receive increased attention in the new post-2015 agenda. The post-2015 framework provides occasion to reaffirm commitments to achieve human rights and sustainable development for all.

As the way forward, Plan, along with key global partners, has proposed some indicative goals and targets to be included in the post-2015 framework.

*Education goal:* All girls and boys complete free, inclusive and quality primary and secondary education in a safe and supportive learning environment, with opportunities for life-long learning.

## **Programmatic Recommendations**

- Support and honour local power holders both men and women as champions of promoting human rights of girls and women.
- Mobilise and organise girls and women and disseminate knowledge on all major legal and constitutional rights of women. Train them to effectively to use those rights.
- Educate girls and women about their entitlements of government schemes, social security programmes and policies. Support them to access those.
- Mobilise communities to make the government machinery, the judiciary, and political leaders accountable to the promises made and rights given by the Constitution.
- Create and maintain village level 'Capacity Building Centre for Girls' where they have access to newspapers, books, radio, and other reference material related to education, health and employment. This centre may also provide trainings in self-defence, interpersonal relations and negotiation, languages, skill-development and the use of the computer as well as internet (if available).
- Create public/community fora for debates and discussions with participation of adolescent girls and young women on issues of interests for the entire community.
- Create and support an environment in the village where adolescent girls are encouraged and respected to participate and voice their opinions on village/community matters.
- Promote and support spaces for adolescent girls to participate in collective activities, particularly sports and games.
- Identify young girls with leadership qualities, take their parents/families and teachers into confidence and build their leadership skills.
- Provide incentives and quality vocational training, in addition to creating employment opportunities for adolescent girls.

- Use mass media, local media, as well as folk forms to popularise the positive image of educated, informed, healthy, skilled, self-dependent and confident woman contributing to the welfare and development of family, society and nation.
- Campaign relentlessly to end violence against girls/women. Use all forms of mass media to communicate.
- Promote and strengthen convergence of multi-stakeholder efforts at all levels (local, district, state, and national) for a better coordination among the government, NGOs, corporates, civil society, and community to support and enable girls.
- Encourage and promote adolescent girls' and the role of young women in various decision-making bodies in the community.

## **Policy/Advocacy Recommendations**

- Push and support the Post-MDG 2015 framework that includes gender transformatory stand-alone goal with explicit mention of rights and needs of adolescent girls.
- Influence government to improve data collection and reporting, both qualitative and quantitative, through disaggregation by sex, age, poverty level and disability.
- Review all plans and budgets with gender equality, non-discrimination and human rights as one of the main considerations. Identify gaps and make recommendations for improvement. Extend gender responsive budgets beyond health and education to cover all sectors.
- Advocate for and support the government in improving access to justice for girls and women via one-stop centres for integrated services comprising of medical care, psycho-social counselling, and legal and skill-building support.
- Campaign for universalisation of secondary education for all in a non-discriminatory and safe environment and make the government accountable for ensuring that every girl gets free education up to secondary level.
- Promote and strengthen alliances, networks and multi-stakeholder efforts at all levels (local, district, state, and national) for better convergence and effective percolation of all government policies, programmes and schemes for girls and women.
- Influence the government to prepare a time-bound focused plan of action to end violence against girls and women.





# India: Incidence and Impact of Natural Disasters - An Overview

India is prone to natural disasters, and over the past three decades several parts of India have been struck by a number of major earthquakes, typhoons, floods and landslides. Additionally, several parts of the country are regularly affected by slow onset disasters such as droughts, which ravage crops and countless lives. Annually, an estimated 65 million people, of which nearly 40 percent are children, are adversely affected by any form of natural disaster in India. Almost 57 percent of the total land mass is vulnerable to earthquakes (high seismic zones III–V), 68 percent to droughts, 12 percent to floods and 8 percent to cyclones. Exposure to multiple hazards further compounds the effects of persistent poverty, complex social stratification and vulnerabilities.

Given the context, over the past decades there have been intense efforts by the Government and civil society actors to undertake large-scale disaster preparedness and risk-reduction interventions. The focus has now shifted from post-disaster reactive actions to a pre-disaster proactive approach. Accordingly, the priority has been on strengthening preparedness at both the systems and grassroots community levels, with a clear focus on risk-reduction, mitigation and prevention.

The huge cost to the national exchequer due to these natural disasters is multiplied by the human toll, where the most vulnerable are at greatest risk. Images of the Gujarat earthquake of 2001, the aftermath of the Tsunami of 2004, the Kashmir earthquake in 2005, the massive cloudburst in Ladakh in 2010, the flash floods of Bihar and Uttarakhand and Cyclone Phailin in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh are still fresh in our minds. The Vulnerability Atlas of India estimates that the 21 major cyclones in the Bay of Bengal have taken nearly 1.2 million lives in coastal parts of India and Bangladesh.

## Major Natural Disasters in India (1972–2014)<sup>3</sup>

Event	Year	Impact/ Fatalities
Kashmir floods	2014	2600 villages affected 390 villages completely submerged
Maharashtra drought	2013	Worst-hit areas - Jalna, Jalgaon and Dhule
Uttarakhand flash floods	2013	More than 1000 people killed Maximum damage of houses and structures
Sikkim earthquake	2011	At least 111 people killed
Cloudburst — Leh, in Ladakh district of Jammu & Kashmir	2010	-
Drought in 252 districts in 10 states	2009	-
Floods in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, Kerala, Delhi, Maharashtra Kosi floods in North Bihar	2009 2008	300 people died 527 deaths 19,323 livestock perished 2,23,000 houses damaged 3.3 million persons affected
Cyclone Nisha — Tamil Nadu	2008	204 deaths
Maharashtra floods	2005	1094 deaths 167 injured 54 missing
Tsunami hits coastline of Tamil Nadu, Kerala Andhra Pradesh, Pondicherry and Andamar and Nicobar Islands of India		10,749 deaths 5,640 persons missing 2.79 million people affected 11,827 hectares of crops damaged 300,000 fisher folk lost their livelihood
Gujarat earthquake	2001	13,805 deaths 6.3 million people affected
Orissa super cyclone	1999	Over 10,000 deaths
Cyclone — Andhra Pradesh	1996	1,000 people died 5,80,000 housed destroyed INR 20.26 billion estimated damage
Latur earthquake in Latur, Marathwada region of Maharashtra	1993	7,928 people died 30,000 injured
Cyclone — Andhra Pradesh	1990	967 people died 435,000 acres of land affected
Drought in 15 states	1987	300 million people affected
Cyclone — Andhra Pradesh	1977	10,000 deaths 40,000 cattle deaths
Drought in large part of the country	1972	200 million people affected

## Girls Affected by Natural Disasters

Winds of change has been blowing In recent years various global movements and initiatives have provided an increasingly receptive environment for improving the situation of girls affected by disaster. the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), an inter-agency forum of UN and non-UN humanitarian partners founded in 1992, to strengthen humanitarian assistance, in 2009 introduced, a gender marker. It is based on the idea that 'men, women, boys and girls experience disasters in different ways', and on the universal humanitarian imperative of reaching all affected populations equally and without discrimination.

There is also debate globally, to look at data from different perspective, The pundits

questions Sex and Age Disaggregated Data (SADD) and Gender and Generational Analysis (GGA). The experts contest looking at gender and age through the same lens. It cities, an example in its defence, that, the experiences of a 55-year old woman in a disaster are quite different from the experiences of a 13-year old girl.

Those who respond quickly, especially, the donors, when disasters occurs, are increasingly recognising the significance of 'bridging the divide' between development work and humanitarian work. This includes, in relation to adolescent girls, investing in the tripod of programming of protection, education, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health, and investing in gender transformative programming, leaving communities more equal and more resilient than they were before the disaster.<sup>4</sup>



# Plan India: research and response - an overview

Govind Nihalani. Chair-Emeritus (Plan India), notes, 'It has been reported and observed that during disasters, children. adolescents, the physically disabled, old and infirm get particularly affected and face severe physical, emotional and psychological hardships. The reasons are manifold and complex in nature. Further. with the growing frequency and intensity of disasters, it is becoming imperative to develop an informed understanding of the impact of disasters on various vulnerable groups to guide planning, programme designing, policy formulation and its implementation. This would, in turn, help in reaching out to the unreached vulnerable sections of the population and in effectively developing institutional mechanisms for creating strong support structures.<sup>5</sup>

This indeed was the context in which 'Situation of Adolescent Girls in Disasters' became the focus for Plan India's The State of the Girl Child in India 2013 study.

# Research: The situation of adolescent girls in disasters in India - a study across four states

The study focused on rural and urban areas affected by natural disasters in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Purposive selection of vulnerable groups including the physically challenged, the HIV affected, and girls from Plan India programme areas was undertaken for the primary survey.

These four states were selected because of the repeated occurrence of specific disasters there (Rajasthan for drought, Andhra Pradesh for cyclones, and Bihar and Uttar Pradesh for floods).<sup>6</sup> In addition to these, the occurrence of other disasters was also noticed in these states and a 'Hazard Profile' was drawn up for each state.

As per the hazard profiles, adolescent girls in these states would be amongst the most affected of the vulnerable populations during times of natural disasters. The findings of

## **Hazard Profile of The Study States**

### Earthquakes (Bihar and Uttar Pradesh)

More than two-thirds of India's land-mass (68 percent) is prone to earthquakes. Amongst the earthquake-prone areas, 12 percent is prone to very severe earthquakes, 18 percent to severe earthquakes and 25 percent to damageable earthquakes. The Himalayan region, and the urban centres around the Himalayas and their foothills, are particularly prone to extensive damage and loss from earthquakes. Thus Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are affected, sometimes severely.

### Floods and Flash Floods (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan)

Floods in the Indo-Gangetic-Brahmaputra plains and delta are an annual feature and can range from minor localised flooding to major multi-district — for instance, the Kosi floods in Bihar in 2008. The Krishna and Godavari rivers, flowing through Andhra Pradesh, also

flood often depending on seasonal rainfall and dam management. On an average, a few hundred lives are lost, millions are rendered homeless. In the more recent past, severe and at times, unseasonal rainfalls have led to flash floods causing extensive damage to livelihoods and assets.

#### Droughts: (Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Parts of Andhra Pradesh)

About 50 million people are affected annually by drought. Rainfall is often poor in nine meteorological subdivisions in India including across the Thar Desert in Rajasthan, parts of the Deccan Plateau (including parts of it in Andhra Pradesh), and central India particularly the Bundelkhand region (parts of which lie in Uttar Pradesh).

#### Landslides (Hilly Regions of Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh)

These occur often in the hilly regions of India, exacerbated by the development of urban centres in the Himalayas (parts of Uttar Pradesh), North-East India, the Nilgiris and Eastern and Western Ghats (parts of Andhra Pradesh). They also occur frequently as secondary hazards following heavy rainfall, flash floods and earthquakes. Their impact, though severe in most cases, tends to remain localised and not extensive.

#### Cyclones (Andhra Pradesh)

About 8 percent of the Indian land-mass is vulnerable to cyclones, of which coastal areas experience two or three tropical cyclones of varying intensity each year. Most frequently Andhra Pradesh, parts of coastal Tamil Nadu and Odisha are affected by cyclones and much has been done for preparedness in these states. West Bengal, the Konkan region and Gujarat are also sporadically affected by cyclones. Other forms of windstorms occur in western and northern India but have not been known to impact human lives too adversely.

Plan India's study on the 'Situation of Adolescent Girls in Disasters' in 2013 are highlighted below.

## The Findings

Adolescents, both girls and boys are vulnerable at times of disasters. They are often forced to take on roles that ideally should be performed by adults. Lacking skills, such as cognitive skills, and the emotional or psychological maturity to cope with such circumstances, coupled with near

absence of structures that are expected to advise and protect them, they are most vulnerable in situations of disasters.

Disasters pose greater dangers for girls, as they may lack the above mentioned skills, lack awareness of redressal mechanisms, and have no say in decisions that affect them for the rest of their lives.

Interventions such as ensuring continuing education, protection and empowerment are not at the centre of programming immediately after disasters, as immediate

relief and response activities focus on rescue, saving lives and reconstruction.

#### Discrimination

The study found that adolescent girls shared the prevalence of discrimination against girls in the community even at normal times. 'During disasters, families tend to hold on to sons as they see them as the future bread-earners of the family, plus boys can travel anywhere for work', said the girls. They also said that boys received dowry at the time of marriage to support the family income at times of financial distress. However, the girls said they were confined to the house and to household responsibilities.

#### Increased Vulnerability to Abuse

Girls reported being more vulnerable to abuse during times of disasters — Bihar (57 percent); Uttar Pradesh (48 percent); Andhra Pradesh (45 percent); and, Rajasthan (26 percent). It was found that susceptibility of girls to various forms of abuse increases in the aftermath of a disaster, and the vulnerability of adolescent girls increases, especially if they are separated from their parents or are left orphaned.

Almost three-fifths of the adolescent boys in Rajasthan also reported that girls were more vulnerable to abuse during/after a natural disaster. Across all states, except Uttar Pradesh, a higher percentage of boys confirmed the vulnerability of girls.

#### Sexual abuse

In emergency situations, many girls faced the danger of sexual abuse and exploitation when staying in temporary shelters, when using unsafe latrine facilities or when collecting firewood and water. In addition, girls in adverse situations are sometimes forced into prostitution for food and survival, which together with trauma and social

exclusion can lead to risks of sexually transmitted infections including HIV.

#### Physical abuse

One-fifth of the girls in Uttar Pradesh (21 percent), and about one-third in Bihar (34 percent) reported being subject to physical abuse at home and in school. Among the girls who reported physical abuse, about half of them in Uttar Pradesh (49 percent), three-fourths in Bihar (75 percent), over one-third in Rajasthan (39 percent) and Andhra Pradesh (37 percent) shared that their parents beat them. In Andhra Pradesh, of those reporting physical abuse, almost a half (47 percent) said that they had been beaten by strangers.

## Preferential Treatment to Boys During Disasters

Overall 40 percent of the boys felt girls were weaker than them and more vulnerable during disasters; more than 40 percent of the girls in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar agreed with them, though less than one-fifth of the girls in Andhra Pradesh (18 percent) felt this way.

Despite acknowledging this weakness and vulnerability, more than 40 percent boys and girls in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh stated that preferential treatment was given to boys over girls during disasters. In Uttar Pradesh, about one-third boys and girls opined the same. In Bihar, few boys (6 percent) felt that there was any preferential treatment towards them at times of disasters.

#### Post-disaster Share of Workload

Amongst girls and boys reporting discrimination against adolescent girls, more than 50 percent boys and girls in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh opined that girls had to shoulder greater work responsibilities (Andhra Pradesh: 45 percent boys and girls; Bihar: 41 percent girls and

13 percent boys opined the same).

#### Access to Food

The chaos following a disaster, the impact on livelihoods and health, all placed

Gender bias in terms of access to food was reported by less than one-third of all adolescent girls across all four states.

Inequities were higher in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh as compared to Rajasthan.

adolescents at greater risk of being unable to meet basic dietary requirements. When faced with paucity of food, families often give priority to the elderly, infants and boys, ignoring the girls.

#### Bihar

Availability of food declined three days after the disaster, where only 67 percent girls and 74 percent boys confirmed adequate availability of food. This improved over time, and 83 percent girls and 96 percent boys confirmed adequate availability of food after three months in the event of a disaster.

#### Andhra Pradesh

Only 33 percent adolescent girls and 29 percent boys confirmed access to food in the first three days post a disaster. However, this vulnerability reduced over time and three months post the disaster, 74 percent girls and 76 percent boys reported access to food.

#### Rajasthan

In a drought year, 96 percent adolescent boys and girls reported access to food up to six months after the drought set in.

### Access to Safe Drinking Water

During disasters, household water treatment, including chlorination, filtration,

However, after three months, all families had to borrow money or take up additional work to meet the food requirement.

solar disinfection and combined flocculation/disinfection are effective in improving the microbiological quality of drinking water thus preventing the risk of waterborne disease.

#### Andhra Pradesh

Two-thirds of the respondents had safe drinking water in this state where piped water supply is the main source.

#### Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh

The tube/bore-well was the chief source of drinking water, and at times water bodies such as lakes, ponds, dams and surface water served as sources of drinking water. Water for personal hygiene and washing was stated as adequate by adolescent girls.

#### Access to Shelter

Nearly all the adolescent girls and boys

While 87 percent adolescent girls in Rajasthan said they used cloth to filter drinking water, 90 percent adolescent girls in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, and 58 percent in Andhra Pradesh did not adopt any filtering technique.

reported living in their own homes. About one-third in Rajasthan (41 percent) and Andhra Pradesh (36 percent) reported having 'pucca' houses, as opposed to only 10–15 percent adolescents from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. More than half of adolescent boys and girls (55 percent) reported damage to their homes following a disaster.

Only about 10 percent took shelter in makeshift arrangements provided during relief operations. Lack of privacy and respect at the centres were cited as major reasons.

Four-fifth of all adolescent girls in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh agreed that disasters had an adverse impact on their access to safe shelter.

They suffered from lack of privacy, dignity at home or relief camps after the disaster.

Of the adolescent respondents, nearly one-fourth in Bihar mentioned that their houses were completely destroyed, while in Andhra Pradesh, 24 percent reported minor damage to their homes. Only about a tenth of adolescents in Rajasthan reported damage to their homes due to disaster. This was because the disaster affecting them was drought, not cyclones and floods that cause structural damage.

Overall 10 percent of all adolescents in Uttar Pradesh, 25 percent in Andhra Pradesh and 32 percent in Bihar had to move to shelters with their families, or move in with their neighbours/relatives. Access to government buildings, makeshift shelters was minimal and 11 percent adolescent girls recalled living under the sky for the first three days after the disaster.

More than 90 percent adolescent girls and boys (82 percent adolescent girls in Bihar) reported living in their own homes three months after the disaster.

## Access to Functional Toilets and Sanitation Facilities

Majority of participants mentioned that girls faced a lot of problems in the absence of toilets. Practicing open defecation is not dignified, and their troubles multiplied during the menstrual cycle. Most girls said they used cloth pads during the menstrual cycle as sanitary pads were unavailable.

Both girls (70 percent or more) and boys (80 percent in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and 62 percent in Andhra Pradesh) said that girls were especially hard-hit by lack of sanitation facilities. Usage of cloth/rags as absorbent during menstruation in the first three days was reported in Uttar Pradesh (78 percent), Bihar (35 percent) and Andhra Pradesh (85 percent).

#### Access to Health Care

Overall, 71 percent adolescents had access to government health facilities on normal days, the corresponding percentage being higher for Rajasthan, where majority of the adolescents had access to any government health facility.

#### Prevalence of Infectious Diseases

In the first three days post-disaster, it was found that fever and cough/cold were the most common diseases reported by girls in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh (46-63 percent). In Uttar Pradesh, 30 percent girls suffered from fever.

#### Receiving Treatment

85 percent of girls in Rajasthan reported receiving treatment mainly from the Community Health Centres (CHCs) and private clinics, for all ailments up to three months post-disaster. More than 60 percent of the girls in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar reported having received treatment in the first three days (more than 70 percent from a private clinic/doctor). In Andhra Pradesh, 50 percent of the girls reported receiving treatment for some of their ailments in the

first three days after the disaster struck.

A considerable proportion of girls in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh also mentioned that they could not attend school due to ailments. In absence of medical aid during the disaster, respondents reported that they resorted to homemade remedies and medicines like tulsi leaves and hot water to cure family members suffering from cough and cold.

#### Access to Education

The impact on girls' education was found to be severe as many reported dropping out post-disaster, as against few boys.

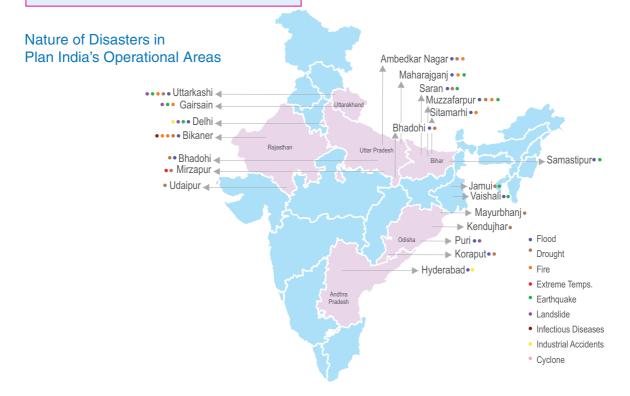
Overall, 60 percent in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh were not able to attend school/college as these areas were found to be severely affected by floods and cyclones. School dropouts in Andhra Pradesh comprised 20 percent girls and 5 percent boys post disaster.

#### Disaster-preparedness and Mitigation

The study indicated lack of preparedness in communities against natural disasters. Most participants were unable to recall any mock drills or training on how to mitigate problems faced during disasters. Emotional support from parents helped in managing the situation better, informed a majority of the respondents. About 50 to 60 percent reported getting support and care from family. However, there was very little emotional support from peers or other community members.

# Response: strengthening community response, protecting adolescent girls

In the past few years, especially since 2010, India has experienced natural disasters in successions. Plan India has responded to ten disasters-including the Uttarakhand flash floods. Plan India's Country Strategy



In almost all natural or manmade disasters, children and adolescents, especially girls, are most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and are being forced into anti-social groups/ vulnerable professions.



Plan 2011–2015 is committed to ensuring right to life with dignity during emergencies. Plan's programmes in India focus on strengthening community, staff and implementing partners' capacities on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and preparedness.

Plan in India is committed to preventing and responding to physical violence and harmful practices against children and adolescents, especially in emergency situations. In all response situations, it has worked in close collaboration with local authorities and government, civil society organisations and communities to ensure that its approach is appropriate, effective and sustainable in the long term.

## Plan India's Disaster Risk Management Programmes (2011–2015)

Plan India's Disaster Risk Management (DRM) efforts during 2011–2015 have focused upon enhancing children and

community preparedness during the natural disasters.

#### **Training**

Plan India has invested more than USD 5.1 million (INR 32 crore) over the past five years in training 69,000 people, primarily children and youth, on various aspects of DRR. It has also supported the development of community-level DRM plans through participatory techniques, and 2135 such plans are already in place. In line with Plan India's commitment to gender mainstreaming, each of the plans are based on strong analysis of gender in the community and with the active participation of girls and women.

Plan in India has provided DRM trainings to 2,700 community-level humanitarian workers and 180 frontline government officials. Gender equality, gender analysis and budgeting have been key training modules, with a focus on community-preparedness planning and capacity building to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable, particularly girls and women during and in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

#### Humanitarian Support

Plan India has provided humanitarian support in the form of food and non-food relief and livelihood assistance to more than 50,000 families severely affected by natural disasters. More than 20,000 houses and 200 schools destroyed by disasters in different parts of the country have been rebuilt with Plan's support, thus enabling families and children to come out of the emergency situation and continue with their normal lives.

#### Research

In order to be updated with the grassroots and policy situation, Plan India has also completed eight research studies related to

disaster-preparedness and climate change adaptations. The studies have not just helped the organisation in making its DRM plans, but have also been useful for other civil society actors and government in their work and planning.

Child-friendly Spaces (CFS) and Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS)

Study and play, normally routine part of a child and adolescent's life; and both are

adversely impacted following a major natural disaster and stay disrupted until life normalises, if at all. It is with this in mind that Plan in India started CFS and TLS. Plan has closely coordinated with education and child protection factors for CFS interventions. It has successfully initiated education programmes in emergencies with children, and especially adolescent girls in all its response programmes.

## Plan India and Asian Tsunami Response

The Tsunami Response Programme (TRP) comprised:

- livelihoods activities primarily fishing, credit and micro-enterprise and agricultural activities;
- establishment of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres and services;
- establishment of Children's Activity Centres/Children's Clubs and Parliaments;
- · construction of housing;
- construction/provision of water and sanitation facilities;
- disaster-preparedness activities; and
- institutional capacity-building of Plan India partners.

It is clear that despite significant challenges posed by the operating environment, and by Plan India and its partners being new to the area, to each other's approaches and systems, and to large-scale response and rehabilitation work, the TRP has managed significant achievements and generated strong and positive outcomes that merit recognition and celebration.

In particular, the work on Child Care Centres and Livelihoods specifically land reclamation and organic farming and support to vulnerable women generated strong direct and indirect outcomes that have been recognised and applauded by communities. Plan's interventions to build the capacity of its partners have resulted in significant strengthening of institutional capacity, particularly of financial policies, systems and procedures.



# CFS programme draws youth as well as strong community support

Ms Subhashree Jena, the facilitator for the Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) Programme in Achyutpur village, was apprehensive of handling the overwhelming response of 80 children, who turned up at the Centre the very first day. However, she received support from the community members who cleaned the Centre, made drinking water available to the children and even assisted the facilitator in ensuring hygiene habits.

As the facilitator, she had discussed two basic principles with the community for children, that would help in achieving the objective of the Centre be neatly dressed and with well-combed hair. These were very well accepted by the community. Children enjoyed being in the CFS in Achyutpur, while half of them returned with an inclination to join the mainstream education process and attend school.



# 'When disaster strikes, we are the most vulnerable': 11-year old Malathy

Malathy's happy childhood was disrupted by devastating cyclone Nilam, which hit her small community in Santhinagar, on the banks of Thandava river in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.

The flood waters entered her neighbourhood, forcing Malathy and her family to flee the house and seek shelter in the auto rickshaw her father drove for a living. There was unprecedented loss of property and belongings, including fishing and farming equipment, and schools were decimated as were all other buildings, by the powerful winds generated by the cyclone.

Recounts Malathy, 'My house and all houses in the area were flooded. I lost all my books, bags and clothes. One floor of my school was under water.' Her school shut down for a week, but when it reopened the true extent of the devastation became apparent. 'We realised that all the notebooks, textbooks and teaching material were damaged and spoilt. Also the raw material for our mid-day meals like rice, pulses, tamarind etc. stored in the school building was inundated by the flood waters.'

For Malathy and the other children of the community, cyclone Nilam would have meant the end of their education and the daily healthy midday meal.

In such a situation, the community received relief support from GSS-Plan India. GSS-Plan provided/replenished the education kits. 'This is the first time we have received education material as relief in emergencies. I like going to school... I read books and play games... I have five friends in school...,' says Malathy smiling happily.

# **Disaster Management: existing provisions**

# Qualitative shift in Government of India's strategy on DRM

The Government of India recognised the need for a shift from a post-disaster reactive approach to a pre-disaster pro-active approach in terms of preparedness, mitigation and prevention. The move is to minimise the damage, losses and trauma to people, as well as reduce the costs of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. In 2014, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh experienced super cyclones. The super cyclones landed at Gopalpur and Vishakapatnam threatened to cause major loss of life. Both, instances are best examples of Gol's pre -disaster pro active approach, which kept loss of human and cattle life to negligible and helped re-build life quickly post disaster.

## National Policy for Natural Disaster Reduction

#### The Objectives

To reduce loss of life, property damage, and economic disruption, by:

- creating public awareness about safety from disasters;
- amending/enacting legislation for safety from hazards;
- planning development areas with safety from hazards;
- protection of habitations from adverse hazard impacts;
- constructing new buildings as safe from hazards; and
- retrofitting existing buildings for improving hazard resistance.

The Disaster Management Act was enacted on 23 December 2005, and lays down institutional and coordination mechanisms at all levels. It provides for the establishment of a Disaster Mitigation Fund and a Disaster Response Fund at the national, state and district levels. This shift in strategy has been made feasible because of:

- · advances in science and technology;
- effective implementation that has shown a decline in casualties;
- advances in forecasting technologies and warning systems;
- government policy to strengthen hazard mapping, R&D and standardisation; and
- enlargement and reinforcement of disaster-prevention systems, equipment and facilities.

Under National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) guidelines Minimum Standards in Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotions, there is a provision for discreet laundering or disposal of menstrual hygiene materials and provision of communal washing and bathing facilities particularly for women, adolescent girls and persons with disabilities.<sup>7</sup>

# Integrating DRR strategies into Development Goals

The Government of India has taken the lead to adopt a holistic approach with special focus on women and girls. The approach now is that development goals should guide disaster response and recovery strategies and interventions. This idea is being mainstreamed into all sectors. Gender integration and the inclusion of vulnerable groups in disaster-management strategy is also being done.

## Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP)

This very encouraging intervention at the global level being promoted in India by UNFPA safeguards sexual and reproductive health during disasters. MISP is a set of emergency response strategies inclusive of makeshift toilets, street lights and safe spaces.

Also, UNFPA's Dignity Kits have become an essential component of humanitarian response worldwide. Besides reusable sanitary napkins, these kits contain new clothes, towels, soap and other essentials that women and girls need in such situations.

In India, with support from UNFPA, various states have already begun training on-ground personnel on MISP.

# Representation of women in Local Governance

The Government has also granted a third of local government seats to women in order to increase representation of women in decision making scenarios. Increased female political representation at the local level has proven to increase their participation in disaster recovery.

# Counselling, referral and rehabilitative services

Women also get a helping hand under the already existing Family Counselling Centres (FCCs), introduced in 1983. These centres provide counselling, referral and rehabilitative services to women and children who are victims of atrocities,

family maladjustment, social ostracism, natural disasters etc. The scheme is being continued in the 12th Five Year Plan (2012–2017). At present there are 787 FCCs and they are yet to cover all districts <sup>8</sup>

## Global and Asian Regional Initiatives

Despite the growing risk and economic losses, countries in the Asian region have demonstrated a high level of political commitment towards reducing disaster risks in the last ten years. A series of ministerial conferences have taken place from 2005–2015, raising the awareness and commitment towards DRR. This has resulted in a growing engagement of governments and other stakeholders such as the civil society, private sector, parliamentarians, local governments, academic and research organisations and so on.

In March 2015, representatives from 187 countries adopted the 'Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030', making it the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda during the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) held in Sendai, Japan. In order to strengthen disaster risk governance to manage disasterrisk, the framework calls on governments and stakeholders to actively engage in the Global Platform for DRR, the regional and sub-regional platforms (Asia Ministerial Conferences in the Asian region) for DRR and the thematic platforms in order to forge partnerships, periodically assess progress on implementation and share practice and knowledge on disaster risk-informed policies. programmes and investments, including on development and climate issues, as appropriate, as well as promote the integration of DRM in other relevant sectors.

At the regional level, regional platforms have been the main forum for creating and sustaining the political commitment towards implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). Regional platforms for DRR have steadily evolved over the life of the HFA. Recent regional platforms have called for a stronger recognition of the regional mechanisms to implement and oversee DRR. Risks and vulnerabilities go beyond national boundaries and hence often need to be addressed trans-boundary. Regional platforms are an opportunity to start to tackle these trans-boundary issues around disaster prevention and preparedness, provide leadership and direction, and propose solutions to address disaster risk and to build the resilience of communities and nations.

In Asia, the regional platform mainly consists of the Asia Ministerial Conferences on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) and the ISDR Asia Partnership (IAP) forum as its consultation mechanism. The AMCDRR is a biennial conference jointly organised by different Asian countries and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). The event represents a unique opportunity for

governments to reaffirm their political commitments in implementation of the HFA. The AMCDRR also serves as a forum for other stakeholders to take a shared responsibility and make actionable commitments towards implementation of DRR. At the same time the conference also provides opportunity for all governments and stakeholders to exchange experiences on successful practices and innovative approaches in reducing and managing disaster risk. So far, countries in Asia in collaboration with UNISDR have organised six AMCDRR conferences since 2005. Previous hosts were Beijing, People's Republic of China (2005); New Delhi, Republic of India (2007); Kuala Lumpur, Federation of Malaysia (2008); Incheon, Republic of Korea (2010); Yogyakarta, Republic of Indonesia (2012); and Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand (2014).

The Sendai Framework for DRR puts a focus on preventing new disaster risks, reducing existing disaster risks that also strengthen resilience: and calls various measures to prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability, increase preparedness and recovery. This requires a shift from standalone disaster management or risk management to more holistic, risk resilient development practice. This shift of thinking and action from risk management to disaster risk resilient development requires regional and international cooperation and thus needs to be incorporated in the architecture and thinking of the regional platforms/ministerial conferences.



### **SDGs**

The UN's SDGs 9 include the vulnerable and the disadvantaged within their ambit, with Goals 1 and 11 making special reference to those affected by natural disasters.



#### Goal 1: End Poverty In all its Forms Everywhere

1.5: By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

Goal 11: Make Cities and Human Settlements Everywhere Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable

11.5: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.

11.b: By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement in line with the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015–2030, holistic DRM at all levels.

The global community has taken note that women, particularly adolescent girls, have their own special needs which need to be addressed during disasters. The Sendai Declaration and Framework for DRR 2015-2030 has clearly articulated, under Priority 3, the need to 'Strengthen the design and implementation of inclusive policies and social safety-net mechanisms, including through community involvement for access to basic health care services. including maternal, newborn and child health, sexual and reproductive health to find durable solutions in the post-disaster phase and to empower and assist people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially adolescent girls, women and persons who are in reproductive age'.

The global agreement also recognises that

for any DRR plan to succeed, it needs the active participation of women, as women are the backbone of community resilience. Investing in the reproductive health of women and young people unleashes their potential to contribute to disaster mitigation and empowers them for life.

## **The Way Forward**

## **Gender Mainstreaming**

The situation and the needs before, during and after disasters and conflicts must be analysed through a gender lens. Such an analysis will allow Plan to have a comprehensive view about the full program cycle (from the disaster preparedness to disaster response and resilience building)

"Plan India recognizes that disasters and conflict are not gender blind: they have a differential impact on people and might affect girls and women disproportionately. Those who are already vulnerable such as adolescent girls and transgender people are particularly vulnerable. Giving the right opportunities for adolescent girls can be a game changer in disaster discourse."

- Dr Unni Krishnan Head of Disaster Preparedness and Response, Plan International

and adapt assistance interventions to the specific characteristic, needs, contexts and capacities of each group.

"Integrating gender equality considerations in our projects means identifying the different vulnerabilities and needs of people, especially women and girls, as well as their different aspirations, capacities and the possible contribution that they can give," notes Dr Unni Krishnan. 'Ignoring or being blind to these different needs can have serious implications for the survival, protection and recovery of people affected by emergencies", he adds.

## Girls' Rights in Emergencies: key action points

- 1. Consult adolescent girls in all stages of disaster- preparedness and response.
- 2. Train and mobilise women to work in emergency response teams.
- Provide targeted services for adolescent girls in the core areas of education, protection and sexual and reproductive (SR) health.
- 4. Include funding for protection against gender-based violence in the first phase of emergency response.

5. Collect sex and age disaggregated data, to show the needs of adolescent girls and inform programme planning.

## Design more Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation tools

Tools to include indicators to track progress on reaching gender-sensitive targets. Moreover, at the time of assessment, data and needs must be disaggregated by sex and age.

#### Allocate adequate resources

It is important to know what it is that adolescent girls require at the time of disasters and the resources that they need to overcome their conditions and situations in order to be able to move on from their vulnerabilities. Until and unless an understanding is gained of the needs of the adolescent girls themselves, it would not be possible to develop effective schemes or programmes that will truly benefit them.

Nonetheless, the annual budget for child protection within the child budget is drastically low with reductions occurring every year, and while education continues to receive priority over other aspects, the current socio-cultural situation does not benefit from the access to education that is being provided by government organisations, which is why it is important that the voices of the adolescents themselves do not continue to go unheard.

#### Build resilience in adolescent girls

It is vital to acknowledge the specific enablers that will promote the resilience of adolescent girls. The post-MDG framework must support the closer integration of the humanitarian and development sectors, recognising the importance of building resilience as a critical factor in achieving

development outcomes. Programme planning for development should integrate a thorough risk analysis which factors in the roles and capabilities of different community groups. Building resilience in a multi-risk environment can help bridge the gap between different disciplines, such as development and emergencies. The divide between humanitarian and development work is essentially artificial, but it has taken hold in the minds of practitioners who have planned and practiced their work over many decades largely in isolation.

#### Develop locally-led Disaster Risk Management Policies

Global and national communities should seek a shift in power towards locally-led DRM policies and practices where children, with their families and communities, are at the centre of the risk reduction interventions, including their planning and implementation. This will help create the necessary conditions in which children and youth grow up in resilient communities and realise their rights to live with dignity and protection, before, during and after disasters and conflicts.

### Identify the most affected age-groups

This will help in understanding the multidimensional vulnerability that different sections of citizens, including adolescent girls suffer in the face of a disaster. Government and civil society needs to be prepared with clearer markers and standards to identify those age-groups that are adversely affected. This requires collection and collation of gender disaggregated data and statistics at local, state and national levels. Precise information will enable services to be targeted more effectively and also will be a step towards recognising that this age group can make a valuable contribution in times of disaster.

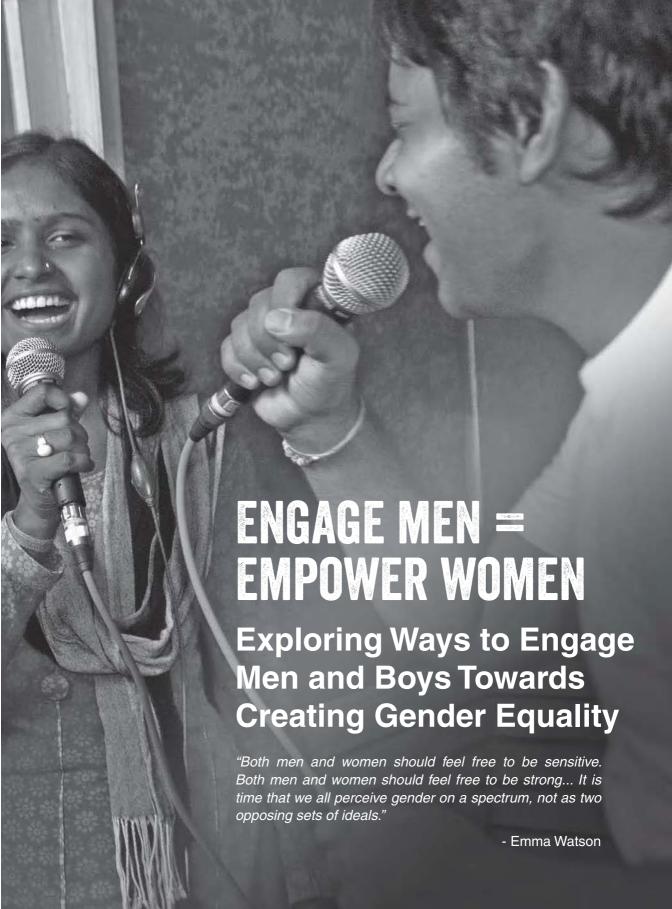
Plan proposes to have a three-pronged integrated approach to girls in emergencies: (i) Research; (ii) advocacy; and, (iii) programming framed within three levels of intervention i.e. institutional (structural), community (socio-cultural) and the individual level. Across all components, Plan aims to utilise three underpinning concepts:

- integration of sectors of protection, education and (SR) health;
- bridging the divide between development and humanitarian work; and
- building resilience, transforming communities.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has identified the following actions needed to improve programmes for adolescent girls:

- better targeting and segmenting of populations within programmes;
- understanding age-appropriate needs: creating safe spaces, and recruiting girl mentors;
- developing positive social networks with mentors; and
- working with families to establish support systems for adolescent girls.





Life of Indian women is full of challenges. In the transitional society, Indian women are expected to keep pace with modernisation without asking for breaking down of traditional patriarchal structures. Even though more women are speaking up for egual human rights and making their voices heard, sustained progress still seems miles away as deeply entrenched societal stubbornly persist in several facets of women's life

In 2011 Plan India, commissioned a study as part of BIAAG campaign. The study assessed perception of men and women aged 15-35 years and boys and girls aged 10 years, about gender equality, Entitled. "Engaging Men and Boys", it elicited views of men and women and girls and boys on issues related to girl child's survival, development, economic independence and gender stereotyped roles. The study brings

In all 30 percent of girls aged 15-19 globally have experienced violence from an intimate partner1



Overall, 54 percent of women and 51 percent of men believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife<sup>3</sup>

8455 total incidence of dowry deaths in India4

21938 total incidence of sexual harassment cases against women reported across India5

Only two-fifths of men reportedly shared the responsibility of child care with their partner in India<sup>7</sup>

A 2011 study found that 65 percent of surveyed children from India and Rwanda totally or partially agreed with the statement: 'A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together.' A further 43 percent agreed with the statement: 'There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten'2

Nearly 33 percent of women experience physical violence in India as per NFHS 3. There has been a 29.6 percent increase in the number of crimes between 2006 and 2010 as per data of the National Crime Records Bureau

Cruelty by husband or relatives' accounted for 43.6 percent of the number of crimes committed against women in 2012<sup>6</sup>

Girls outperform boys in educational achievement in 70 percent of countries regardless of the level of gender, political, economic or social equality.8

to the fore, how deep rooted mind sets, act as barrier for physical, mental and emotional development of girls and women. Perception of self by women, promotes gender stereotyping and dominant masculine traits among men and boys in society. The sociocultural fabric permeates the behaviour and stops healthy and equitable relation among girls and boys.

Frederika Meijer, renowned Health Speacialitst and country representative, UNFPA, India explains, 'A lot of the institutions are masculine and promote unequal norms and discriminatory values." She further adds, UNFPA efforts, through research, project interventions and symposium are directed at promoting men's role in gender equality and sexual and reproductive health. The symposium "Men Engage Global Symposium" brings together researchers, practitioners. government representatives, and the donor community to share experiences, evidence and insights, and seek directions on how men and boys can creatively contribute to gender equality. UNFPA provided technical and financial support as key partner in organising second Men Engage Global Symposium (Men and Boys for Gender Justice) in 2014.

The imbalance in power, in Indian women's life starts from womb and carries on till tomb. She throughout her life is swallowed up by vicious cycle of under nourished mothers, morbid or low birth weight babies, under nourished less aware and vulnerable adolescent girls and young mothers.

Women's inability to break free from vicious cycle is bane for Indian society. This has resulted in high maternal and child mortality, skewed sex ratio in favour of males and increased violence against women. The spread of HIV/AIDS among women makes them more vulnerable to violence and puts

them in a disadvantageous position. A fact highlighted by Plan India's report on The State of the Girl Child in India, 2011, it states men perceive violence as a means to control women and those men who commit and justify violence engage in high risk behaviour.

## Protecting Indian women from gender-based violence

- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act,2006
- Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956
- The Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Work Place Bill, 2010

Is stringent law for violence against women a solution, perhaps not, as Frederika Meijer observes "Having a law enables us to have an option to exercise in asking for the rights of women and girls, in case other routes do not succeed. It is the last resort". "There are many good laws,' she points "but their implementation is limited". "What's most needed", she observes, "is to effect a change in the patriarchal behaviour. And this includes bringing a change in women who harbour patriarchal beliefs.'

A collabative study by UNFPA and International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) findings, substantiate the societal mind set in India. The study finds links between masculinities, son preference, and intimate partner violence." Conducted across seven states in India, found that a large proportion of men show rigid gender inequitable attitudes and behaviours. Further, a small yet significant men showed

moderate to high gender equitable attitudes and behaviour.

Research studies conducted on gender equitability reveals that most fathers and fathers-to-be, find happiness in time spent in interacting with their children. These research perhaps indicate, that the best way to engage with men and make them drivers of change for gender equitability, is to connect them with their children.

Education is an important tool for congnitive, emotional, mental and overall personality development of a person. Male participants of Plan India study engaging with men and boys, feel education for girls is more important and they, the girls should have freedom of choice when it comes to level up to she wishes to study as they have equal right to be educated. Sharing of her experience of having, MBA degree holder women as PRI leader from Rajasthan, Frederika says, " Every day she goes from house to house to make sure that all the girls are in school." Applauding her efforts, she further says, 'It helps if you push from a position of power. Gender sensitisation of those in charge really helps. IAS officers are also being

trained in it". This is indicative of recognition and acceptance of gender disparity in education.

Girls and women's inability to make rights based choice is not limited to education. When have no or limited choice to freedom in all the other aspects of life. The study engaging with men and boys points out in women's life Fathers continue to remain the key decision makers in the family while, in the 15-35 years age-group and Women also need to take permission to consult or visit a doctor, and work outside of homes. Where as men have the final say in deciding the ideal family size and spending money, and very few married men interviewed for the study had wives who worked outside home

About one-third of children (10–14 years) reported having freedom to spend money. The freedom to spend money without permission is seen less among girls. This childhood trend continues in adulthood as well with overall 40 percent women having the freedom to spend money as compared to 61 percent young men. Young women also hold less bank accounts, property or vehicles as compared to young men.



#### A comparison of political freedom between Indian men and women

- Amongst 1,677 males eligible to vote, 76 percent voted in the last election
- Amongst 1,679 females eligible to vote, 68 percent voted in the last election
- 85 percent men reported that they were not influenced by anyone in their decision to cast votes
- 33 percent women reported to be influenced by a family member or friends while casting their votes

#### A comparison of economic freedom between Indian men and women

- Overall 31 percent reported that they would want their wives to work
- Amongst married men, only 28 percent have wives who work outside home.
- Amongst married young men, nearly half of them confirmed having received dowry in cash or kind. Amongst unmarried young men, a little over one fourth of them expect to receive dowry in cash or kind.
- More women were engaged as agricultural labourers (28 percent) and daily wage workers (27 percent) in comparison to men. This implies that women work more in the unorganised sector than men.
- More young men (20 percent) were self-employed in comparison to young women (11 percent).
- Just 20 percent young women reported having a bank account as compared to 37
  percent young men. Amongst the young women holding a bank account, 55 percent
  reported that they could withdraw money without permission as compared to 78
  percent young men.
- 18 percent young men and women reported ownership of any asset (21 percent young men and 16 percent young women).
- 51 percent young men owned land compared to 26 percent young women.
- 41 percent young men owned a house as compared to 22 percent young women.
- 18 percent young men owned a vehicle as compared to 4 percent young women.
- Interestingly, 57 percent young women reported owning jewellery as compared to 23 percent young men.

Source: Engaging Men and Boys towards Gender Equality, The State of the Girl Child in India 2011

Despite controlling the decisions related to marriage, dowry, family planning and young women's access to medical care, men however, are not forthcoming in taking responsibility on reproductive and child health (RCH) issues. This is according to UNFPA country representative, India, is because. 'In India, the number of vasectomies is extremely low because men believe reproductive health is the woman's responsibility". She further informs "in some communities even today, menstruating women have to stay outside the village as the village elders believe that they pollute the environment and therefore. " If men do not know about the reproductive cycle of a woman, then it will cause problems in their ability to take responsibility for reproductive health." She added.

"Maybe it's important to work on the men than on women"

Gender relations and norms still continue to be governed by age-old traditions. Boys tend to look up to their fathers due to the status, position and power that fathers hold within the family when they are growing up. Reiterating the truth, Ms. Meijer says, 'Don't we all know that children imitate what they see? They copy what parents do, how they act. So we can all keep saying that gender equality is important but if the father is slapping the wife or abusing her, then that's the kind of message the children get. How then do we work towards gender equality? If we hope to build an equitable society, we need to start at pre-school age with the kids. And we need to work on the behaviour of parents. Their behaviour needs to be consistent with what they say.' Therefore, she emphasises.

"Maybe it's more important to work on the men than on women"

Shobhana Boyle, National Programme Officer-Gender at UNFPA, India, expressing her views on prevalent gender stereotypes

among men and boys, she says "For a programme to be effective it is important to recognise the points where masculinity is reinforced. It may be the family, community, or laws relating to inheritance and dowry. Media is another strong instrument in perpetuating social norms and gender stereotypes."

To bring about change in attitudes towards gender sterotype roles, UNFPA is supporting Centre for Health and Social Justice in three districts of Maharashtra (Sholapur, Pune, and Beed). With a group of NGO partners to work with groups of men and boys to encourage participation in reproductive health, reduce violence against women and lessen discriminatory practices at the family and community level.

The groups comprise men from the community who have a more liberal mindset and they engage with other men and boys in the community to share experiences and explain why they changed their behaviour and attitude. Their roles are similar to that of peer educators. Initial evidence and response from the field are encouraging and indicates that village animators are gradually acting as champions for change and have triggered the adoption of many positive practices such as celebrating the birth of girl child, sharing household chores, advocating against child marriage, and recognising women's share in family property.

UNFPA simultaneously, working with the medical community in Maharashtra to promote gender sensitivity in the way the curriculum is transacted by the pedagogy and aspects in the curriculum that may be discriminatory in approaching patients and conducting investigations.

"Media is a strong instrument in perpetuating social norms and gender stereotypes."

## Roles in households and role models

- Girls and women serve food and 39 percent eat food after serving all the family members. More than three-fourths of all young women (77 percent) did so at home.
- Amongst married young men, nearly one-half confirmed having received dowry in cash or in kind.
- More than two-thirds (70 percent) of the children reported their father as the main decision-maker in the family.
- In the 10–14 age-group 45 percent feel father is the ideal person. Amongst those in the 15–35 year age-group fewer (32 percent) feel the same.
- While 42 percent children (10–14 years) regard their mother as ideal,
   22 percent in the 15–35 regard their mother as ideal.

The past two decades have seen a shift in the understanding of addressing and challenging inequities related to gender roles dictated by patriarchy. There is now a growing realisation and interest in engaging men and boys in achieving gender equality, thus making them part of the 'solution', as opposed to when they were seen as part of the 'problem'.

Under the Beijing+20 campaign, UN Women took part in the 2nd Men Engage Global Symposium in November, 2014 in Delhi which involved sharing of experiences, evidence, and insights to find ways in which men and boys can contribute to

gender equality and women's empowerment. Farhan Akhtar was appointed as its South Asia Goodwill Ambassador, the first man selected by the organisation as a Goodwill Ambassador, to serve as an advocate for UN Women's HeForShe initiative and advocate for gender equality.

Raising awareness among men and boys on gender issues have a discernible effect. Frederika Meijer is quick to dismiss the notion. She says 'creating awareness is important, but it's not enough. It is also difficult to measure. For example, people know about HIV/AIDS but does that lead to higher condom use?' She continues, 'creating awareness should not be confused with bringing about behaviour change." She further adds, "for behaviours to change, people need a reward. If they perceive a reward intrinsic or extrinsic for themselves, their family, or society, or if families perceive positive values in changing behaviour, then it will initiate the process of behaviour change' She cites the example of Shivani, an adolescent football player who was encouraged to play football by her father and made it to the India Girls'Under-13 national team and was part of the final 18 who travelled to Sri Lanka, she also adds, 'If fathers feel they can become inspirational figures and role models in the community, they will start supporting daughters. This can lead to girls getting better education and also their overall development. When others in the community see this, they change too.'

In formulating strategies to engage men and boys, it is important to ensure their participation in social mobilisation on key issues that affect gender outcomes. According to Frederika Meijer, 'What we are realising is that men so far have been

"As far as changing the mindset goes, I don't believe laws alone can achieve that. I believe in engaging and sensitising. And you need to have role models. Programmes like Aamir Khan's Satyamev Jayate where he engages with people and makes them understand how change can happen (to create more social impact) as opposed to simply imposing laws."

completely left out while addressing the issue of women's empowerment. This causes friction. To create more space for women, we need absolute support from men. If we leave men behind, there cannot be equality.' Both participatory and technology-based tools and options should be utilised to create awareness, build capacities and monitor change over time. Participatory tools are likely to have a greater efficacy in addressing oppressive norms that promote gender inequality. The approaches could include engaging in collective bargaining and social dialogue to build community linkages to empower women and sensitise men. ICT tools could be used in the local or regional language to aid comprehension.

Frederika Meijer feels the corporate entities should also do their bit in creating spaces for dialogue and opportunities to promote gender equality. "We should check with the corporates to see where they can invest and how they can contribute to gender issues. But they need to work internally also. For example, can better spaces and a conducive environment be created for girls working in, say, a textile company where a large number of women and girls work alongside men and boys? Can there be better facilities for menstrual hygiene? Can a dialogue be initiated on topics like genderbiased sex selection?'Taking internal steps towards gender equality will be a strong statement and validate their commitment to corporate social responsibility." says Frederika

Efforts also need to be made to change health seeking behaviour of men and their wives in order to promote men's involvement in reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.

The State of the Girl Child in India, 2011 report also presented recommendations at the programme, policy, and behavioural levels based on strategies and initiatives that have been effective in bringing about tangible change in terms of gender-equitable attitudes.



### **Recommendations at Programme level**

The following considerations may be taken into account overall while designing programmes that engage men and boys.

### Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

To ensure healthy development and to foster more gender-equitable attitudes, it is important to implement early development programmes to engage both fathers and mothers in the development of their child. These include training programmes for parents to openly discuss gender roles and participation of men in child development. Men as positive role models for their children need to exemplify equitable behaviour with their wives and women in the family.

### Working with Men and Boys

Specifically engaging men and boys is crucial to help them change their own perceptions of being fathers, brothers, and partners. Whether it is decision making in household matters, family planning, or sexuality issues; improving the status of women and girls in the family through better inheritance and ownership, choices of education, career and marriage; or women's and girls' economic and political rights including the right to information and mobility men and boys need to be worked with on each of these areas.

## Within the programmes, the following recommendations may be incorporated for an outcome-oriented approach that involves men and boys.

- Embed engagement with boys and men from the inception of the programme with clear strategies, implementation plan and monitoring mechanisms.
- Track and record long-term qualitative changes in attitudes and behaviours of men and boys through developing sensitive and innovative qualitative indicators.
- Create and sustain safe and trustworthy spaces in schools to sensitise boys early in the education system by designating time slots in the school on issues of gender discrimination and why discrimination should not happen.
- Sensitise young men (fathers and fathers to-be) on the understanding of 'son preference' and 'value of girls' and the discrimination-violence that gets perpetuated through such views. This will help them to play a positive role in improving the condition of girls and women in their families.
- Promote breaking of gender stereotypes and create positive images of young men and boys who lead by example. Encourage men and boys to lead such efforts. Celebrate and honour them publicly.
- Campaign to build positive images of men who are sensitive fathers, brothers, grandfathers, and husbands, and publicly acknowledge those who demonstrate such behaviours.
- Create and sustain platforms for young parents and parents to-be to discuss the roles and responsibilities of parenting, household chores and development of their children.

- Support small groups of men and boys to learn and change the management of common spaces and language both in private as well as in public through collective dialogue.
- Create and sustain safe spaces to educate, sensitise and promote men's involvement in reproductive health of women.
- Campaign on the issues of all forms of violence against women and how this violence can be reduced and stopped by the efforts of men and boys.
- Work with schools teachers and parents to challenge stereotypes in school and honour efforts of such parents and teachers.
- Design models of non-stereotypical extra-curricular activities for girls in school and encourage teachers and parents for promotion of such activities.
- Support adolescents in understanding sexual and reproductive health issues by supporting inclusion of education on these issues in school curricula as well as, creating safe spaces outside the school system.
- Encourage and help build collective leadership of men and women as well as boys and girls at community level on variety of common activities.
- Support counselling for young men and boys to cope up with changing attitudes and behaviours and breaking stereotypes.
- Create safe public and private spaces for boys and men to explore the concept of 'masculinity, power, and man-hood' and how it relates to inequality and violence.
- Engage to sensitise men on the issues of women's education, nutrition, health, information, mobility, economic rights, marriage, inheritance and decision-making.
- Mobilise community to take collective action to challenge some of the most dominant anti-women beliefs and practices prevalent in the area.
- Campaign through mass media to build a collective image on the attitudinal change in men from their negative masculine behaviour to equitable and sensitive behaviours within their families and communities.

"A considerable degree of patriarchal behaviour emanates from religion, which is a major perpetrator of patriarchal values. Therefore if religion approves, the community will tend to be receptive to change. And so religion can play an important role in changing things. This change can be led by religious leaders or community leaders."

### **Recommendations for Policy and Advocacy**

A review of several policies are required to garner men's engagement for genderequality including education, health, human rights, sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS as well as, policies and laws addressing violence against women.

Facilitating the participation of girls and boys in creating policies on sexual and reproductive health

All policies that aim to address adolescent issues, especially relating to HIV and AIDS, need to incorporate youth participation as an integral part of the process. When girls who are at greater risk of infection and boys, who hold more power over sexual decision-making and are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour, are involved in creating prevention strategies, there are more chances of achieving behavioural change.

The Government of India is a signatory to various international instruments relating to women's rights including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The 45th session of the Commission on Population and Development on "Adolescents & Youth" (April 2012) promotes gender equality in the Resolution on "Adolescents & Youth" and urges governments to take measures to encourage boys & young men to participate in all actions for gender equality.

Ensuring that schools are safe spaces for both girls and boys by promoting genderequitable attitudes and through gender-equitable curricula

Schools need to acquire the role of institutions that provide adequate platform for boys and girls to engage in discussions and explorations of roles and challenge stereotypes to understand, respect differences, and support each others' human rights. The curricula, too, needs to address issues of gender-based violence.

"Sexuality in India is rather complicated. People object, saying when you give young people sexuality education they get more involved in sex. But we have seen from international experience – and studies corroborate it- that if you give proper sex education, they delay the first experiences. The more they know, the wiser decision they take."

#### Build creative avenues to question inequitable and sexist views

Creating media campaigns that aim at promoting collective attitudinal change are an important route to challenge negative masculine behaviour and promoting equitable attitudes and reading a large audience. The 'medium' of engagement also plays an important role. In a society with rigid gender roles and notions of what constitutes mardangi (masculinity), it is especially important to pay attention to creating the right platforms and right messages that offer incentives to all. This will encourage boys who care about gender-equality issues without feeling emasculated or being ridiculed. Any message initiated through mass media must be reinforced with small social groups,

which make it easier for boys, who essentially become positive deviants, to have their behaviour approved by their peers.

Consciously working on socialisation of boys early in life while they are still developing their understanding of power structures and relationships between the sexes will help prepare them as men to accept the human rights of girls and women and to work with their sisters and mothers to champion work for the survival and development of the girl child. Alternatives need to be considered on how communities of men can be formed and engaged to address issues of violence, gender equality and the unequal power structures that need to be stabilised for positive growth and social change to take place.

"It is time that men and boys recognise the part they must play in gender equality and join with the voices and actions of the women and girls who are trying to reshape society in the interest of us all."

- Jimmy Carter former US President

Furthermore, following recommendations are proposed at the advocacy level to integrate the engagement of men and boys into programmes.

- Engage with concerned government departments to review and revamp programmes and schemes for youth and make appropriate recommendations for promotion of equality of gender, with the participation of youth.
- Work with the government to incorporate youth participation in deliberations to determine sexual health issues in relevant policies.
- Work with the school system and education department to incorporate sex education and to create a safe environment for adolescents to participate in, and respect each other.
- Work with schools and education system to create space for incorporating aspects of gender-based violence in their curricula.
- Work with the government machinery to implement laws that address the issues of violence against women.



## Parivartan uses cricket to help boys become gentlemen

Parivartan, which means 'change', aims to bring about a positive change by addressing gender-based violence in an innovative and engaging fashion. The programme helps boys and young men view women and girls as equals, and treat them with respect. Launched in March 2010, Parivartan uses cricket, a hugely popular sport in India to bring together cricket players, coaches and community mentors to serve as positive role models for school-age boys in more than 100 Mumbai schools.

Drawing a parallel between real masculinity and the 'gentleman's game', the programme teaches that aggressive, violent behaviour does not make anyone a 'real man', nor does it help win cricket matches.

'I've learned how to be polite, how to talk, how to be respectful towards girls and women,' said Rajesh Jadhav, a 20 year-old Parivartan mentor. 'I've learnt that to control is not the way to love a girl. You need to give her space in life,' he continued.

Leena Joshi, director of Apnalaya, one of the main local partners in the Parivartan programme, shared her belief that the effort is timely, if not overdue. 'We have all worked NGOs, governments on women's issues very specifically,' Joshi says, 'and I think in the whole process, the men have been left behind.'

Parivartan is an initiative of ICRW in collaboration with Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF), Mumbai School Sports Association (MSSA), Apanalya and Breakthrough.





### Indian cities: A snapshot<sup>1</sup>

### **Most Urbanised States:**

Tamil Nadu 43.9%; Maharashtra 42.4%; Gujarat 37.4%

## 3 out of World's 21 Mega Cities (population in Millions):

Mumbai (19); Delhi (15); Kolkata (14)

### **Large Cities:**

68 cities with 1 million+ population

### **Urban Population:**

28% at 1,030 million in 2002

**Estimated Urban Population by 2030:** 586 million

Percentage of Urban Poor Residents: About 25%

### **Slum Population:**

About 41 million in 2001

**Estimated Slum Population by 2030:** 69 million

## Disempowered, Disadvantaged and Vulnerable

According to the Crime Statistics of India 2008, of the total 195,856 reported crimes against women, 24,756 (8%) were reported from 35 cities each with a million plus population.

Similarly of the 21,467 registered rapes in India during 2008, 1768 rapes were reported to police in 35 cities with a million plus population. Of the 81,344 cases of cruelty by husbands registered in India during 2008, 11,409 cases were reported to the police in 35 cities with a million plus population.

Unprecedented urbanisation has also resulted in a significant increase in urban poverty, slum living and homelessness. An estimated total of 33,510 slums existed in the urban areas of India as of 2012, with total 8.8 million households in the slums.2 Further there are at least 18 million street children in India.3 Those who find themselves unable to rent or buy a home are forced to take to the streets. It is the street children, especially girls, who are the most vulnerable and who often fall through the cracks in the system. They are more vulnerable to being trafficked into forced labour or sex work. They reportedly face sexual harassment and abuse and do not receive much support from the civil authorities or the police. The police too have exploited their vulnerable situation. The judicial system and prisons also treat them harshly, sometimes imprisoning them because they are on the street rather than because they have committed a crime.

Urbanisation has resulted in many benefits as well. India has witnessed the rapid growth of the Information Technology (IT) sector. A number of girls and young women now have access to mobile phones and the internet, putting them in touch not only with their friends but with their peers within India and in different parts of the world. However these technologies have not touched the lives of a large number of girls and young women especially those from the most marginalised groups.

While the internet and mobile telephony have obvious benefits for users, they can also potentially create problems particularly for children, girls and women. Cybercrimes such as child pornography, cyber bullying, indecent and inappropriate text or multimedia messages (SMS or MMS), stalking, online harassment, are some of the more common problems that girls and women users of the internet and mobile telephones are increasingly facing.

## **Expanding Urban and Digital Frontiers: The Consequences**

Plan India's Report on the State of Girl Child in India-2010 focused on 'Girls in a Changing Landscape: Urban and Digital Frontiers.'

The study elicited the views and perceptions of 10,000 adolescent girls and young women between 14–21 years of age, on city life and new communication modes such as mobile phones and internet. The cities covered for the survey were Bengaluru, Bhubaneshwar, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Patna, Pune, Ranchi and Varanasi. The primary objectives of the study were to:

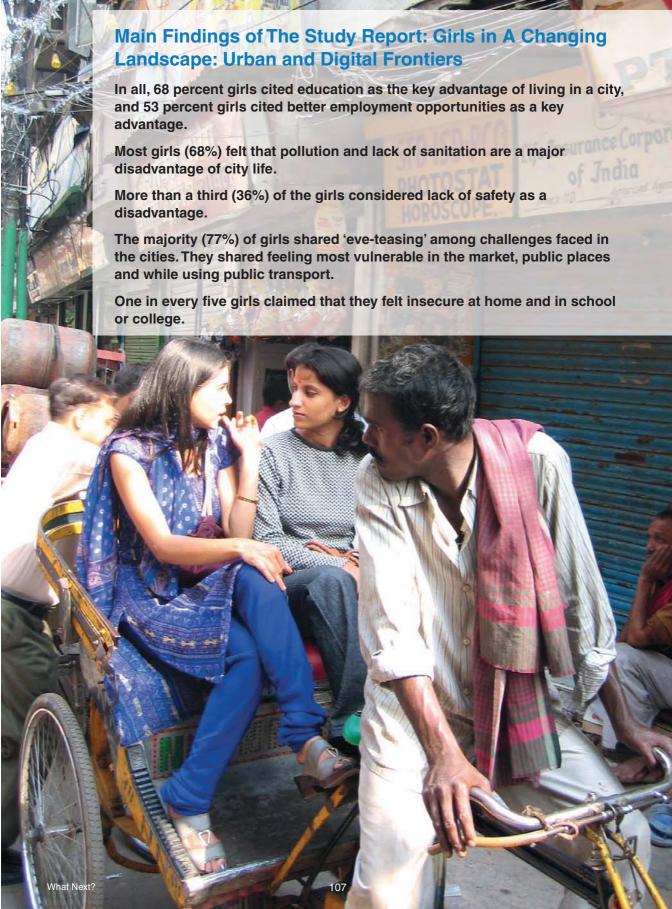
- document the views of adolescent girls on cities and cyberspace, analyse it and amplify their voice so that it was heard by policy makers and city administrators; and
- analyse the similarities and differences in experiences among adolescent girls namely those from the middle classes, not-so-poor families, and the most vulnerable girls, particularly street girls and living in urban slums with regard to cities and cyberspace.

## City Life: Opportunities and Challenges

While it is believed by some that the cities are more progressive in that there is less gender- and caste-based discrimination and more freedom, challenges like harassment faced by girls in the city, are significantly high. The disadvantaged group in particular is further pressured by unhygienic living conditions and insecurity, coupled with an expensive health care system. Girls across the cities suffer harassment by men; eveteasing being the biggest challenge. This when coupled with lack of infrastructure like adequate toilets, street lights, water, proper

housing and electricity further aggravates their ordeal. The patriarchal system, adds woes to women facing challenges of inefficient administrative machinery. The patriarchal system, suffocates home, school and college as result they are in all institutions. In a society where only a very few approach the police to seek assistance, when harassed, it is not surprising, that ignoring" is most common coping mechanism adopted. The common perception of the policeman is far from being a protector or someone who inspires trust. It is indeed a sad commentary on the lives of young girls in the cities that many do not feel secure anywhere. However, despite the gloom, the cities are seen as place full of greater and newer opportunities.





### **Digital World: The Dark Side**

Access to information technology and media has exposed girls to new ideas, ways of thinking and various learning possibilities, their families consider this against their traditions.

New communication technologies have also created negative consequences. Online patterns of behaviour are often a reflection of the way that society operates offline, and adolescent girls are vulnerable to online exploitation for the same reasons that cause their vulnerability to offline harm.

The internet creates new intimacies that seem safe to invite strangers in and increasingly provide strangers with access to a girl's personal space. This has resulted in adolescent girls becoming prime targets for new methods of harassment and allows for exploitative practices that can harm girls in faster and more immediate ways than ever before.

Thus, the widespread use of digital technology across urban India often becomes one more area these young girls and women are vulnerable to.

Exploitation and sexual harassment of girls and young women is easy, via internet, as perpetrator remains invisible.

Plan India, undertook a study in 2010 to know how digitisation impacts lives of girls and women in urban areas, It found that technology, especially the internet not touched the lives of many girls, particularly, among the disadvantaged groups. About four percent of girls from the disadvantaged groups had heard of the internet. In comparision, girls in formal education institutions, i.e. schools and colleges were more aware of the internet and use it regularly.

Further, the dossier states, mobile phones,



## Date rape recorded on mobile phone; used to blackmail teen

Pooja, the teenage daughter of a street vendor in Pune led a simple but happy existence, until Raja came into her locality and became a good friend.

Pooja recounts, 'One day he asked me to go to a hotel with him. We had snacks then he ordered cold drinks.' After a while Pooja felt sleepy and eventually awoke to find herself alone. Shocked she came home. Two days later, Raja showed up with a, porn recording he had made on his mobile phone when she was unconscious at the hotel.

Raja demanded a physical relationship in return for keeping quiet. Terrified, Pooja agreed. Her trauma continued until a social worker on a routine visit to her locality, learnt about it.

When Raja called Pooja next and asked her to meet him at a hotel, Pooja informed the social worker. When Raja tried to take advantage, the social worker came into the room as planned with two policemen who arrested the boy and deleted the recording from his mobile phone.

Pooja says, 'I am out of that hell thanks to the social worker. I am very grateful to her.'

along with the internet, are being used to carry out crimes such as pornography including child pornography, indecent and inappropriate representation of women, cyber bullving, indecent text or multi-media (SMS or MMS) messaging, and stalking, against girls and women. One-third of the girl respondents, across the study cities informed receiving obscene calls or messages. Two-thirds of the girls mentioned receiving unwanted called and messages as big nuisance of using the mobile phone. Nearly 75 and 65 percent girls from Bhubaneswar and Hyderabad respectively, mentioned being victim to it.

Significantly, when it comes to reporting about the crime to appropriate authority, findings reveals, only hand ful of respondents, knew where to lodge a complaint. Victims mostly as the research found, bring out crime to the notice of police, cyber cafe owners, cyber crime cells and parents. Complaint against cyber crimes are also registered with heads of the educational institution authorities and workplace management.

### **Street Children**

"Because we are poor and look dirty, people think we are dangerous. Those who have the security of homes should be more sensitive to us."

### - A girl living on the streets in Delhi

For disadvantage or marginalised community children life in cities are both advantage and a disadvantage. The urban areas provide better prospects to alleviate themselves out of poverty and equal opportunity to earn without facing discrimination due to their gender or social category. However, as the Plan India study observed, girls and women are worst sufferers of the migration. For they are

forced to spent more time shelter less, thus making them vulnerable to sexual harassment and abuse. When faced with such situtations, being close and with family, offers very little safety and security.

Additionally, study reveals that the girls, women and young children spending life on streets lose out on education opportunities and consequently better employable opportunities.

The number of street children is estimated to grow exponentially due to rapid growth and urbanisation. India is projected to be the country with one of the largest numbers of street children.

About 95 percent of the girls could not recall any situation where police had come to the aid of street children or lent them a helping hand.

Girls therefore do not see the police as an institution responsible for ensuring their safety in public places and streets.

Other coping mechanisms actively used to avoid trouble are: ignoring teasing and harassment (43%); not going out alone (10%); telling parents and teachers (17%); and, abusing and shouting to draw attention (20%).

These girls living on the streets aspire to live in an ideal city that comprises of:

- An alert and effective police force (35%)
- Better housing (41%)
- Stringent and speedy punishment for offenders (23%)
- Well-lit lanes (20%)
- Better training and educational facilities (27%)

- Better access to cheap and effective health care (16%)
- Better sanitation and hygiene facilities (25%)

### Plan's Focus on Urban Girls

### Call to Action on Girl's Rights

In view of all of the above Plan has developed an eight point 'Call to Action on Girl's Rights' in the city as a way to create a new normative framework of rights for girls in urban spaces. This builds on the United Nations' articulation of the Right to the City which emphasises the goals of liberty, freedom, participation and diversity and also upon the voices and perspectives of the adolescent girls themselves.

- 1. All girls should have the right to access safe education in the city
- 2. All girls should have the right to be free from violence in the city
- 3. All girls should have the right to secure and decent housing
- 4. All girls should have the right to move safely in the city
- 5. All girls should have the right to affordable and accessible services in the city
- 6. All girls should have the right to age-appropriate and decent work in a healthy urban environment
- 7. All girls should have the right to safe spaces in the city
- 8. All girls should have the right to participate in making cities safer, more inclusive and more accessible

## Plan's Programmes for Street Children

Plan India, has initiated two projects with children at railway stations, Dreams on Wheels and Dhoop Chaon. The target group includes children who stay at the railway station and those who stay close to the railway station and spend their day at the station. This is a three-pronged approach of working directly with children, engaging with the stakeholders at the railway stations and capacity building of duty bearers.

Badte Kadam, a children's group led by youth who were associated to the Dreams on Wheels project, plays a significant role in the direct intervention with children on railway stations. This project intervenes: (i)

To ensure that children have access to development opportunities through awareness, education, health, life skills, etc. (ii) To ensure children are reintegrated with their families and communities. (iii) To sensitise and engage key stakeholders to achieve the rights and aspirations of the children living or working on railway platforms.

Plan India, with the support of the Canada national office (CNO) for a year and now local funds, is supporting two homes in Delhi for girls in need of care and protection. The Girls Shelter Home project reaches out to approximately 90 girls in the age group of 5–18 years annually. The interventions include shelter, clothing and nutrition, education, health, counselling, life skills,

vocational training, recreational and sports activities. These homes are recognised by the Child Welfare Committee (under the Juvenile Justice Act) and have two to three cases from this committee almost every day. The approach towards the issue is to contribute to overall growth and development of the girls by providing them opportunities for education, vocational training and income generation; and information about health issues, life skills, child rights etc.

### Plan's Programmes in Urban Slums

Plan's first programme was initiated in 1980 in partnership with Community Aid and Sponsorship Programme (CASP) in the slums of Mumbai. Subsequently more programmes were initiated in Pune, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Bhopal, and Delhi and more recently in Hyderabad, with communities and parents, community leaders, teachers and neighbours to change attitudes towards the girl child.

In partnership with local NGOs, Plan India's programmes use a lifecycle approach, to engage with children with a special focus on girl children and their rights. Key subjects tackled through these sensitisation, awareness and knowledge-building programmes include addressing gender discrimination, access and reach to education by girls, the problems and legal implications of female foeticide and infanticide, age at marriage, lifelong learning and skill development, and importance of information about reproductive and sexual health.

Plan India uses many means to achieve these ends. For instance, Children's Clubs provide an opportunity for girls to come together, connect with their peers, learn, discuss and enjoy growing as girls. Club





Roma was a sponsored child from Yerawada slum in Pune and she gives credit to Plan India, in helping her build a sound future for herself.

'I'm now pursuing studies to be a sports teacher. It is all because of my involvement in Children's Clubs and various activities which gave me the confidence to be unique and do things differently,' she says

members act as the representatives of the girls of community. They are trained in leadership skills and use various media tools to express themselves and their concerns. Engagement with parents across all interventions plays a very important role.

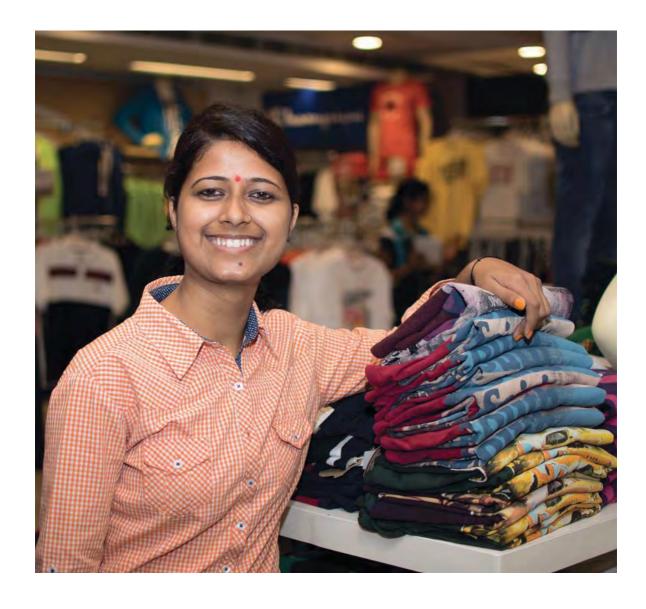
Another key area is to ensure girls' access to formal schooling in government-run schools. Generally, girls in slums either do not go to school or do not continue education after Class 3. The most common reasons are the workload at home, safety issues, lack of facilities, need for additional earning by the family, poor quality education, or a lack of vision regarding future use of education.

Usually girls drop out of school, take care of younger children, do embroidery, or take up a job as a domestic worker in posh neighbouring colonies. To address this issue, the programmes prepare them to join regular schools through accelerated learning centres, facilitate their admission in regular schools, work with teachers to

create an enabling environment, and followup on their progress. Plan in India also runs preschools for younger children (3–6 years), for their optimum care and development and to relieve girls from their caretaking task and attend to their studies.

Plan India's programmes complete the empowerment process by assisting girls in enhancing their vocational skills and also improving the employability of the girls. This strategy has resulted in sustained change

processes at community-level even after the phase out of its programmes in many of the communities and slums. In the past 30 years, Plan India's programmes have directly influenced the lives of more than 100,000 girls in these cities. This is a major factor behind the delayed age at marriage and improved percentage of girl-enrolment in schools in these areas. Thousands of girls and women have become role models in their communities.



### Recommendations

### **Programmatic**

### Design and planning

- Plan a priority programme for the girls living in a changing landscape, by focusing
  on strategies to remove barriers due to disadvantages and build upon the
  opportunities presented by the new environment. The approach to this programme
  will be distinct different from programmes being implemented in a rural background.
- Programme design to focus on increased ownership by authorities and other 'duty-bearers' to make both cities and the internet safe and girl-friendly.
- Whether out in the city or online, adolescent girls need access to information, education, safe spaces, and networks. Design and implement programmes to help adolescent girls develop skills to protect themselves, and to distinguish opportunity from threat.

### Implementation of laws

- Ensure that girls know about cyber laws and also know how to effectively use them.
- Make sure that laws that are meant to protect young women are enforced.
- Ensure safety from sexual harassment at the workplace.
- Ensure that Information Communication Technologies (ICT) are safe and accessible for girls and women by the implementation of the existing cyber laws.
- Ensure that girls and women, who face problems while accessing ICTs, can gain quick redress for their grievances and that offenders are adequately punished.
- Make cities safe for girls and women by ensuring employment of women in law enforcement at all levels of the hierarchy.
- Ensure availability of police stations and outposts that are wholly managed and represented by policewomen and other female staff.

### Community mobilisation

 Help create and support neighbourhood committees with representation from youth, parents, Resident Welfare Associations, Market Traders Associations and community leaders ensuring safety of girls in the area.

### Infrastructure

- Provide better infrastructure, inclusive of separate toilets for girls and boys, separate buses for girls for free movement across the cities, and well-lit streets and public spaces to reduce incidence of harassment and aid mobility of girls.
- Support creation of safe internet-based Information and Resource Centres equipped with relevant content on health, education, sports, employment and other opportunities for girls.
- Support 'Skill and Capacity Building Centres' to train girls on self-defence, interpersonal relations and negotiation skills, English language, entrepreneurship development and the use of the computer as well as the Internet.

- Create, maintain and disseminate a range of data on girls' security, transportation, employment, basic services and violence in the area.
- Create employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for girls and women in cities, and through use of information technologies by building more Vocational Training Institutes that offer special courses to address the training and entrepreneurial needs and aspirations of young girls and women.

### **Policy and Advocacy**

### Design of urban spaces

- Provide inputs into City Master Plans by presenting evidence to the government to incorporate women-friendly, safe designs and mixed land-use pattern for urban planning of the city.
- Present evidence to the government about creating a new normative framework for rights of girls in the urban spaces building upon United Nation's articulation of Rights to the City and work with other organisations addressing similar issues as a collective force to influence policy-makers.

### Engaging with the larger community

 Work with Resident Welfare Associations, Market Traders Associations, local unions and other organisations in the area to become a responsible part of collective thinking and action on girls' security.

### Legal frameworks

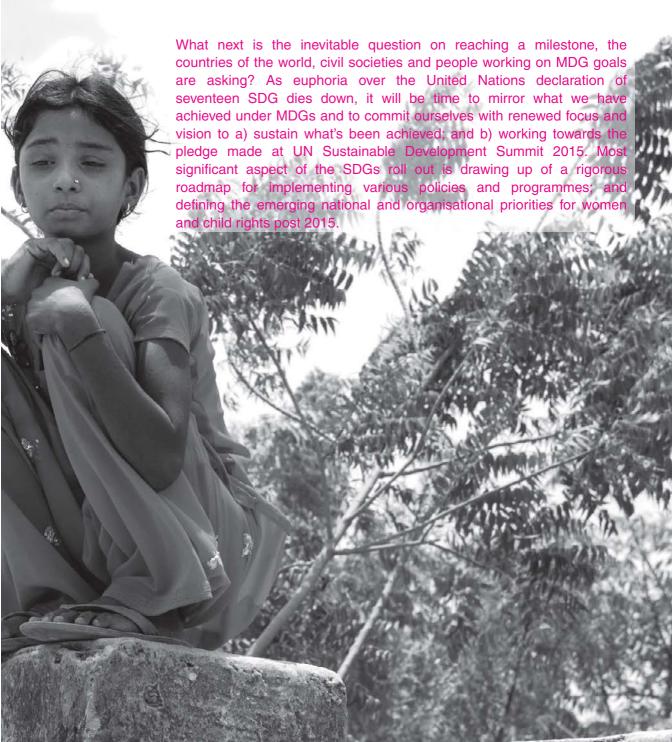
- Undertake targeted and joint advocacy with the police department for fully resourced Police Stations and Outposts that are sufficiently equipped with women officers in urban poor areas to ensure that laws are effectively implemented and grievances redressed.
- Influence and support the government in bringing out safety-security guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures mandated for market bodies and public transport authorities for the protection of girls and women.

#### Urban infrastructure

- Undertake targeted and joint advocacy with Public Works Department and Municipal Corporations for clean, lighted and ventilated toilets with water for girls and boys separately; and lighted, clean streets and public places for urban poor areas.
- Undertake sensitisation and orientation of Transport Department personnel on issues faced by girls and women while using the public transport system, and how they can become a role model by overcoming the same.
- Sensitise officials in the transport department for increased deployment of separate buses for girls and women in the city.



# BIRD'S EYE VIEW BIAAG: WHAT NEXT?



Plan International in keeping with its core values of working for children, launched a global campaign "Because I am a Girl" in 2007, to create a world that values girls, promotes girls rights and ends injustice. Through BIAAG campaign, Plan International had envisaged change at number of levels namely local, national and international with the support of number of partners.

BIAAG campaign in India (since 2009) had identified and worked around eight points for action, which were central to the campaign. BIAAG is into its eighth year and brings out a monograph annually. This report going forward, looks back to reflect on the efforts made to achieve action points, its achievement; lessons learnt and the reset goals to complete the unfinished business.

The campaign tone was set up globally in 2007 and in India in 2009, through a series of State of Girls research reports. The very first in the series looked at the status quo of girls in regard to their survival, protection, development, and participation, the core thematic few areas of Plan. The subsequent research studies, under the BIAAG campaign covered a gamut of themes that are essential for girls to grow and realise their full potential.

Engaging Men and Boys looks at how men and boys perceive women and girls participation, whether they listen to them and let them equally participate. The study found that violence is widely accepted and a common practice in many spheres of life. And abuse of women and girls continues. In patriarchal society where birth of a son is celebrated more than that of a girl. The girl child survival is still a challenge and the gender disparity from "womb to tomb" continues to hinders her development. It is important to replace patriarchy, though it is not new, but a new system is needed; a system in which, equal human rights and non-violence are promoted and accepted.

The government through legislations and schemes and Plan India through its programmes is trying to change the mind sets of men and women, working to arrest and reverse the trend.

Twenty first century is the age of digitisation. The digital revolution has shrunk the world, made communication cheaper and faster. To understand the impact of digitisation on the lives of young people, especially those living in urban areas, Plan India tried to comprehend "Urban digitisation" commissioned a study. The study assessed the opportunities and the dangers of the digital revolution. The digital revolution has opened up doors of opportunities, in terms of connect, reach and in promoting talent and hunting talent.

India, which is on the verge of digital revolution and work, is on to for 'Digitising India'. What it means is that technology is going to be increasingly accessible and affordable; and there will soon be infrastructure connecting even the most remote geographical regions. Young women urgently need the tools to enable them to use this new technology in a suitable and safe way.

Like the real world, the internet is not neutral territory, and as the report developed for the Beijing +20 conference stresses, girls and young women, while acknowledging the risks the internet poses, need also to seize the opportunities it presents. There is the potential to create new communities, gain new skills, access information, improve their self-confidence, live in safety and participate in democracy as active citizens.

Our country, being big market for digitisation and in the last one decade mobile reach in India has increased manifolds. The biggest challenge, India faces, is how to stop and deal with cyber crimes. The study finds, cyber crimes, such as child pornography,

cyber bullying, indecent and inappropriate text or multi-media messages (SMS or MMS), stalking, online harassment, against women and young girls are on rise. The government is working on giving more teeth to the existing legislations and also brings in few more laws to protect our women and girls. However, government alone cannot do anything. It's up to everyone in all walks of life, from the rural to the urban, in the virtual and the physical world, to create a real equality where gender doesn't lead to exclusion but to renewed creativity, based on diversity of experience.

What is more important is not to settle for being 'cyber victims', women must become 'cybernauts' and the hostility of the internet, instead of intimidating, it should make more space for women on the web. Seizing ownership of technology is an important way to come out of struggle and become empowered. Digital media can be about communication, solidarity, diversity, advocacy and defending girls' and women's rights. The world today and tomorrow are being built by zeros and ones and at this decisive point, women, and especially girls, can play an active and creative role in the present and future.

Education is an important development tool as part of the research studies under BIAAG campaign, Plan India looked at the existing educational opportunities for girl. The, study, "Learning for life" also brings out how vulnerable our girls are in educational institutions, on streets and at home.

A lot still has to be done in educating and empowering girls through formal education and in life skills while sensitising them on their rights and make them available the legal instruments needed to seek redress. However, there is still the big question on how safe a school can be if the community is not safe. Most important, is to think of laws

that will lesson for perpetrators and deterrent for others.

The invisible work force is apt for women and girls. The study, "adolescent girls in disaster situations" shows, how more often than not the girls give up education and contribute to provide for family during disaster situation. Living in unsafe, unhygienic and vulnerable conditions, the girls sacrifice their development and do not get second chance to realise their full potential.

Further, it tells how the contributions of the girls go unnoticed. We need a new economic order, one that stresses the need for change without ignoring the economic contributions women and girls make. Girls and women are not an untapped economic resource in the world; their work is the invisible structure that keeps societies and economies together. But they haven't freely chosen this role. And they are not being paid, compensated or acknowledged for it.

Widespread, systematic changes must be made to structures and attitudes, so that children in general and girls in particular are recognised as legitimate actors and as change makers today; and not simply passive beneficiaries of tomorrow. The study "Pathways to Power-Creating Sustainable Change for Adolescent Girls" points out for need for effective and focused communication with key influencer in the lives of adolescent girls and young women. It is imperative to have a dialogue with families and communities; and bring about attitudinal change with regard to women and girls development and empowerment; there by paving way for breaking down of traditional patriarchal structures. Through harmonised action involving all stakeholders. including traditional leaders, we can strengthen practice, policy and legislation to build a violent free world where all girls and boys may develop to their full potential

### Plan India's Commitment

In continuation to Plan India's CSP III (2011-2015), the Country Strategy Plan IV (2016-2020) builds on the key learning's from CSP III, and integrates gender and social inclusion and citizenship and local governance as important principles across its six strategic objectives on child survival, growth and optimal development, water sanitation and hygiene, holistic and quality education; skill development and economic empowerment; protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation; and disaster risk reduction. It also commits to specific programmes to address the issue of gender based discrimination and inequalities, especially among the vulnerable and excluded communities. Plan India, recognizes a stronger effort to work in coordination with civil society, government provisions, legal, policies and programmes and the private sector to realize its goal of being "the leading child development organisation in India. known for its credibility and the lasting impact we create in the lives of the vulnerable and excluded children and their communities."

### Why girls? Call for Action



Increased GDP: If 10% more girls go to school, the national GDP will

increase with 3%

Girls would increase global GDP by 5.4% if empowered with

the job skills they need.

**Increased Family** 

Income:

One year of extended school means

10-20% increase in income

**Delayed Marriage:** If a girl finished high school, marriage is delayed by 4.4

vears

**Adolescent** If adolescent pregnancy was delayed in India it would add

**Pregnancy:** USD 767 billion in potential lifetime income.

**Health:** 50% of all first births in the developing world are to

adolescent girls, but with access to information and

services, this will change.

**Perception change:** For girls to thrive, we need to tackle the entrenched beliefs

and social norms that hold girls back. They need to be seen

as equals. By everyone.

Voice & rights: Every day, 37,000 child marriages happen. Give girls their

rights and this will stop.

Source: http://www.girleffect.org/why-girls/

What Nevt? 119

## Plan's reports since 2009-2014, specifically highlight the following towards ensuring gender equality:

## 1. Invest in girls and young women, will listening to them and providing increased opportunities for participation

For girls to grow and realize their full potential, it is very important they are provided with an environment in all spheres of life so that they can learn and blossom.

### At home

## Involving men in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

Early development programmes are effective way to engage would be parents, in their child development. All the ECCD programmes organized for young married women and expectant mothers, to include their husbands and partners as well. Husbands and male family members should be encouraged to review and keep track of the ANC records and accompany expectant women for checkups.

## Changing the status of girls and women within the family

By ensuring fathers participate in the upbringing of the girls and ensure equitable treatment for daughters and sons. Whether it is play time or leisure; girls are encouraged to do and same things as boys of their age. Father as role model, need to demonstrate gender equality in daily lives.

### At Educational institutions

## Ensure that schools are promoting gender equitable attitudes and through gender equitable curricula

Teachers practice gender sensitive approaches in schools and proactively make attempts to involve all children, esp girls, and curricula that abjures gender based violence and reinforcement of gender stereotypes. The sessions need to be structured within the gender equality paradigm that not only talks of engaging girls and women but also identifies key points on which men and boys can engage. Teachers should encourage girls' participation in sports, hitherto considered "only for boys".

## Providing platforms and enabling participation

Schools should have platforms such as morning assembly, dance-drama Balsansad, Meena Manch etc. for girls to participate. The schools to create enabling environment for participation of girls, by ensuring, girls are part of committee members.

### At work place

## Promoting Gender Equality at in Corporate Culture

The recent CSR act relates to the

"Communities and countries should ensure that their girls and women are safe and secure, have equal opportunities for well-being and high self-esteem. The call for commitment is from all stakeholders at various levels and in a position to encourage gender equality in the spirit as articulated in the SDGs. Corporates are significant player in this context. Gender transformative work cultures and CSR programmes and policies will have a dual impact: one on their own efficiencies and work environment and second on the value for investments made in community development programs. Investing in girls is indeed the smartest investment in advancing generations to a path of sustained development."

> - Arti Kirloskar Chair, Plan India Governing Board

continuing commitment of a company to be responsible towards the society and the environment within which it operates. It is a valuable tool to create gender equality at the place where you work. Immediate concerns stem from the shortage of skilled labour and a growth in the participation of women in the workforce in corporates and manufacturing units.

The inclusion of gender perspective in within Corporates can play a dynamic role in achieving gender equality in the workplace through activities, initiatives, strategies and policies that provide equal access to job opportunities to female employees and provide for equality of the treatment of women in the workplace. Equality in nature of jobs and decision making powers, salaries, enabling environment at the workplace are some areas, each Corporate should review and take required measures.

As companies commit to CSR programs, they should incorporate addressing the gender equality within their CSR portfoliosintegrated in the programming focus areas. With the right CSR strategy and gender balance in the workplace, companies can reflect 'walk the talk' brand image. This will not only contribute both Corporates and their CSR portfolio.

### 2. Creating safety net for girls, change and enforce the law

Girls and women do not have safe place, is the series of research monographs has brought to light, be it home, educational institutions, work place, streets or cyber space, women is subjected to violence and abuse. Therefore, it is important to make all these spaces safe for her.

#### At home

Home environment to be made conducive for girl child survival.

#### **PCPNDT Act**

The existing provisions and current implementation mechanisms have failed to make any significant impact on the rising trend of female feticide. The Act therefore needs to be reviewed and if need changed to make it more effective.

## Nationwide Awareness Campaign against Female Feticide

The campaign would need to be multipronged involving the services of multimedia as well other BCC tools to bring about attitudinal change.

### Scheme to provide support against female infanticide

Ensuring schemes for survival of girl child are effectively implemented.

### Health and Nutrition for the girl child

An intensive social mobilization of communities especially, women's group and adolescent groups to focus on health and nutrition of the girl child.

### Protection against Girl Child Abuse, exploitation and violence

Efforts to prevent girl child abuse and violence call for strengthening and strict enforcement of laws for rape, sexual harassment, trafficking, domestic violence; and dowry. Capacity building and training for important functionaries and stake holders like police, judiciary, civil societies and PRIs.

#### At Schools

Patriarchal family environment and prevalent safety and security situation which exists in our cities, many parents do not encourage their girls to travel long distances for educational purposes.

Create better access to girls in schools and institutions for higher education by Setting up special public transport services

for girls and women, so that they are able to access their educational institutions without fear and harassment. Creating more educational institutions only for girls so that they are able to make the most of the opportunity for learning in particular higher learning that urban environment offers. Appointing more women teachers in schools and colleges would ensure that the special needs of girls. This enables the girls to build trust and confidence in the institutions ensuring continuation of her studies for more number of years.

### At work place

Ensure implementation of the guidelines given by the Supreme Court of India to tackle the problem of sexual harassment at work places. Also, city administrators would need to expand the ambit of the anti-sexual harassment law to include medium and small business and informal labour wherein young girls and women are employed in large numbers and experience high levels of sexual harassment.

## Making cities and living in cities and public transports safer

Ensuring that more women are employed in law enforcement at all levels of the hierarchy and that urban areas have Police Stations and Outposts that are wholly managed Policewomen and girls and women residing in slum populations are aware and effectively supported by law enforcement. Safety and security guidelines and standard operating procedures are mandated for market bodies, chambers of commerce and public transport authorities so that girls and women accessing them are effectively protected from incidents of eve-teasing and molestation, and those who perpetuate such criminal acts are effectively prosecuted.

### Providing better infrastructure to make the experience of living in cities less

### challenging for girls

Better sanitation facilities: Separate toilets for girls with water, lighting, not too far from their living quarters are well ventilated and are cleaned regularly. Separate transport for girls to move around freely in the cities. Well lit streets and public spaces to reduce incidence of harassment.

### Make ICTs accessible and safe for girls by

Ensuring the implementation of the existing cyber laws so that girls and women who face problems while accessing ICTs. Creating internet-based information kiosks and helplines, that have relevant and updated information about - special laws and policies for girls and women, and nearest police station and help line numbers.

### 3. Change attitude

The way forward lies in transformative change, where policy makers, various government departments and non-governmental organisations need to function synergistically. Plan, based on its programme experience and on research with communities, with young women and men, could be an agent for this transformative change.

### **Attitudinal Change**

social, family and community – transforming the public and private spaces where social norms and behaviours have become entrenched, and where gender inequality and power relations are reproduced.

### **Political Change**

Intervention at grass roots level for effective percolation of public policies and laws to reinforce and protect girls' rights. There is scope for expanding reach of guidance on gender sensitisation for local authorities and civil society organisations seeking to

advance the gender equality agenda with special focus on need of adolescents. Providing increased access to justice for girls and young women is also required.

### **Economic Change**

Equal opportunities, decent work and real choices – education and employment that works for young women.

### **Participation**

Engaging girls in collective action information, mobilisation and respect for rights. A focused approach to bringing the access of World Wide Web under the reach of adolescents and young adults, especially young women would increase their participation. Encouragement is required for young women to participate in local governance. Focused attention is required to involve young women in political decision making. Finally the involvement of women's group in local governance could channelise the "power with" in helping young women tread pathways to power and transform it to "power within". Over the years of working on gender equality we have learnt how difficult it can be to change attitudes. It is not possible for any one organisation to work in isolation and expect to bring about sustainable change. In our programmes we work closely not only with communities but also with research partners and regional and national governments. A multidimensional approach is needed to ensure girls' rights and empowerment.

### 4. Getting Specific data on girls and women

The Government must increase accountability to girls and women by strengthening data collection methods and practices. This includes a commitment to:

Increase data quality and raise standards on data collection and ensure that quantitative and qualitative data, disaggregated by sex, age, location, wealth quintile and disability, at a minimum, is used to capture nuanced and complex information, such as changes in attitudes of women and men and girls and boys, shifts in social norms and the impact of women's and girls' participation.

Invest in rigorous evaluations of interventions that work, particularly around social norm change, collective agency, gender-based violence and multi-sectoral programmes on gender equality. This is a core part of data collection, and policy based research is needed to expand the evidence of interventions that show promise in terms of innovation, results and scale ability.

Undertake a review of sector plans and budgets, including education sector plans to ensure that legislation, policies and programmes are gender-sensitive and promote equality, non-discrimination and human rights. Identify the steps necessary to implement the findings and attach adequate resources and effectively delivering progress. It is critical for gender-response budgeting to focus on allocations beyond health and education ministries — to ensure that government budgets address the specific rights and needs of girls and women.



### Arti Kirloskar (Chair, Plan India Governing Board)

Ms. Arti Kirloskar has been associated with Plan India since 2007 and has contributed extensively in fundraising and advocacy initiatives especially for girl's programmes. She is the convenor of Kirloskar Vasundhara film festival through which much work has been done to create awareness and initiate action to protect the environment. The festival now travels to more than 20 cities in and around Maharashtra. She is now a patron of Intach Pune after being its convenor for the last 10 years. Under her the copper

craft revival was established and a seminal book on Pune - the 'Queen of Deccan' was re published. She is an executive member of 'Kirloskar Foundation' where she initiated a WASH programme for creating awareness on hygiene and safe drinking water in schools in Pune through volunteers from the Kirloskar group of companies.



## Frederika Meijer (UNFPA Representative for India and Country Director for Bhutan)

Frederika Meijer was appointed UNFPA Representative for India (and Country Director for Bhutan) in May 2011. Prior to this, Frederika was the Regional Representative for an International NGO in development cooperation covering Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan and was responsible for the establishment of offices in all these countries. Earlier in her in career, she worked for the European

Commission (EC) as a Health Sector Manager. Frederika's stint at UNFPA started in 1996 in Ethiopia and Mexico where she worked as a programme officer for adolescent reproductive health and gender issues till 2000.



### Jyoti Singh (President, Sakhi Sangam Society for Social Change)

Ms. Jyoti Singh is the President of Sakhi Sangam Society for Social Change - the SHG women's federation promoted under Banking on Change project of Plan International India. She associated with a sub group there years back and today she is heading the federation which is a collective of 18000 women.

Joyti is a graduate married into a family living in re-settlement colony in Mongolpuri was engaged in the programme initiated by Plan India for economic empowerment of women for Economic security and better life for children. Under the program, Jyoti got training on stitching under micro-enterprise service program. This helped her to start her own boutique at home. Currently also pursuing Masters in Sociology and wish to study more in future. She says her aim is to work for the development of poor and deprived children and women like rag pickers, street children etc.



Prof. Shyam B. Menon (Vice Chancellor, Ambedkar University)

Prof. Menon is a well-known educationist and academician and currently the Vice-Chancellor of Ambedkar University, Delhi. He is also on the international advisory board of Comparative Education, Teaching Education and Asia Pacific Journal of Education, and on the task Force on Access and Equity in Higher Education constituted by the International Association of Universities.

Prof. Menon has held several distinguished positions in various universities and institutes in India, prior to joining. Ambedkar University in 2008. He was associated with University of Delhi, as Professor at Central Institute of Education, as Dean of faculty of Education and also as Proctor of the university. He was also Director, School of Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and Professor at Central Institute of Educational Technology, (CIET), National Council for Education Research and Training. Prof. Menon has also taught at M.S. University, Baroda. He was associated University of Wisconsin, USA as Fulbright scholar.

Much of Prof. Menon's work is in Curriculum Studies, Higher Education and Teacher Education, His doctoral work is in the area of Curriculum and Cognition and his post-doctoral research is in Higher Education. He is an alumnus of University of Kerala and M.S. University, Baroda.



### Surina Narula (Director, Difficult Dialogues and Events)

Surina Narula has devoted almost two decades to highlight the plight of street children globally and has even provided them a platform at the United Nations. An MBA and a Master's in Social Anthropology at University College London, she has raised large funds for charitable causes through numerous high profile events. Combining her commitment to street children with her passion for the arts, she also produced a play to raise money for Salaam Balak Trust, a charity for street children in India.

A recipient of several awards for her philanthropic work, she was commended for The Beacon Prize for her contribution to charitable and social causes in 2003. Surina was honoured with the Asian of the Year Award in 2005 and with an MBE in 2008.

She has held several key positions including being the President of the Consortium for Street Children (CSC) which provides voluntary consultancy to NGOs internationally to being a member of the board of directors of Plan International UK, a patron of Plan India and honorary patron of Plan International USA, to being on the Campaign Executive Committee for University College London. Surina is also an Advisor to the DSC Jaipur Literature Festival, a Trustee of 'Unlimited' which encourages enterprises in India and a Patron of several initiatives including Hope for Children, International Childcare Trust, Independent Film Makers Association, World Action Forum and Motti Rotti.



### Sumita Ghose (Founder and Managing Director, rangSutra)

Sumita Ghose, founded "rangSutra" in 2006 and is the Managing Director of rangSutra. She holds a double master's degree, one in Economics from University of Mumbai and other in "Conflict Resolution", which she earned as a Fulbright Scholar, from United States of America. She is a recipient of MacArthur fellowship for leadership. She is one of the first to receive CII-Aspen India Fellowship and Senior Fellow at Synergos Institute USA, class of 2012.

Her organisation, rangSutra is owned by about 1800 rural artisans, mostly women. It brings together people and organisations working for sustainable livelihoods for rural artisans in India. rangSutra, makes available technical and organisational know - how to make crafts and allied industries in rural India into a workable enterprise.

Sumita started her work with rural communities as a part of URMUL Trust, and therein she spent substantial time in the communities in western Rajasthan. rangSutra is seen as an organisation that works for inclusive growth of rural communities and bring about socioeconomic development through market linkages of the communities.



Dr. Unni Krishnan (Head, Disaster Preparedness and Response, Plan International)

Dr. Unni Krishnan, is currently Head of the Disaster Preparedness and Response, Plan International. He is a medical professional and an alumnus of Madras University and Central Medical University, Geneva Switzerland, from where he gained advanced training in humanitarian action and conflict management.

At Plan International, Dr. Unni Krishnan leads a team of international specialists to respond to disasters. His team has responded in disaster and conflict situations during Tsunami in Indian Ocean, Afghanistan, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, China, Haiti, Iran, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Turkey, Japan and the Horn of Africa. He has lead Plan International's Mission in Asia, Africa and Middle East.

Dr. Krishnan, along with Prof. S. Parasuraman, edited 'India Disasters Report-Towards a Policy Initiative', in the year 2000 and and 'India Disasters Report- redefining disasters' in the 2013. Both these reports have been published by Oxford University Press.

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## ABOUT PLAN INDIA

Plan India, a member of Plan International Federation, is a nationally registered independent child development organisation committed to creating a lasting impact in the lives of vulnerable and excluded children, their families and communities. For over 35 years, Plan India and its partners have improved the lives of millions of children by providing them access to protection, basic education, proper healthcare, a healthy environment, livelihood opportunities and participation in decisions which affect their lives.



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