

JAGRITI FACT SHEET

What is “JAGRITI”?

JAGRITI means ‘Awakening’. Launched in June 2011 to Stop Child Marriage and to generate awareness about provisions of the *Child Marriage Prohibition Act, 2006*, JAGRITI is a youth led and youth centric social change campaign to reach 1 million youth in Bihar. JAGRITI uses 2 key strategies: mobilize and capacitate young people to LEAD the efforts to stop child marriage and, concurrently ADVOCATE for stricter enforcement of legal provisions and accountability.

How did it come into existence?

Child marriage severely limits the social and educational opportunities for both girls and boys. It violates basic human rights and legal provisions to protect children. For girls, early marriage often followed by immediate childbearing at short intervals, further increases lifetime risk for both mother and baby. According to India’s National Family Health Survey (NFHS III, 2005-06) 58 percent of the Indian women are married before the legal age of marriage (before 18 years). Bihar has the highest percentage, with 69 percent of women married before they are 18 years, followed by Rajasthan at 65 percent. Median age of marriage for women is **16.3** for Bihar & **16.5** for Rajasthan.

The evidence from PRACHAR clearly showed that a significant percentage of trained unmarried adolescents delayed their marriage to beyond 18 years. When a group of PRACHAR graduates showed interest in further efforts to stop child marriages, Pathfinder decided to establish JAGRITI as a volunteer led movement on the issue. The JAGRITI leadership council leads Behavior Change Communication campaigns to Stop Child Marriage through a range of activities; including creating village level youth groups in areas with high prevalence of child marriage and the formation of vigilance network to report instances of underage or coerced marriage. In keeping with the spirit of supporting voluntary leadership, JAGRITI receives support from community leaders to organize meetings and events.

What are JAGRITI’s goal and objectives?

JAGRITI’s goal is to eliminate child marriage in India by encouraging norm changes, upholding human rights, and by supporting stricter enforcement of *The Child Marriage Prohibition Act 2006*. JAGRITI is presently active in Bihar and will expand to Rajasthan by the end of 2012; a national alliance will be launched in February 2012. JAGRITI’s vision is to remove the scourge of child marriage from India, and to serve as a supportive resource for other countries facing similar challenges.

Objectives

- Motivate, engage and support youth to stop the practice of child marriage.
- Build the capacity of youth to lead by example; engage their efforts to promote changes in norms and customs that support the cessation of child marriage and promotion of child rights.
- Collaborate with state nodal agencies with child protection mandates to identify and use mechanism for holding local officials and community governance bodies accountable.
- Educate law enforcement, religious leaders, and other officials about their roles and responsibilities to stop child marriages, reporting, and enforcement of legal provisions.
- Promote community-based activities such as the signature campaign, rallies and street theater as a means to broaden voluntary youth leadership.

How will “JAGRITI” achieve its goal?

JAGRITI Leadership Council (consisting of 12 potential youth leaders) will support the following activities:-

- Identify and train youth leaders to lead the campaign voluntarily and independently with a focus on human rights, legal rights, and gender equality.
- Organize “Stop Child Marriage” bicycle rallies to sensitize the community and promote broader norm change (bicycles have become symbolic of girls empowerment in Bihar).
- Conduct signature campaigns to make parents/youths pledge that they will not marry their child/get married before the legal age of marriage (18 for girls and 21 for boys).
- Form ‘JAGRITI MANCH’ (youth groups) in various districts of Bihar. These ‘JAGRITI MANCH’ will act as a resource center for youth for conducting and facilitating meetings, discussion, planning, and further action plans to reach the masses.
- Foster dialogue and discussion between youth leaders and officials at all levels of the state to secure their support and specific actions for the JAGRITI campaign.
- Find forums to continuously engage with the public and with officials to ensure the issue remains in the spotlight and to demonstrate youth support to stop child marriage.
- Build local accountability and awareness of violations of laws and human rights.
- Highlight the issues and consequences of early marriage in the media and other platforms.

How will “JAGRITI” remain active?

JAGRITI is a youth led social change campaign, and once Pathfinder builds their core leadership capacity, and community level groups, youth leaders will themselves take this project forward. Involvement of youth volunteers, policymakers, and influential people in this project will keep the commitment alive and spread awareness to stop child marriage throughout the states of Bihar and Rajasthan. Local donors are encouraged to support JAGRITI as a means to promote local ownership and lead societal change. The Karuna Fund is one such donor that presently supports the youth directly. Once the JAGRITI Leadership Council finalizes it’s plan of action, Pathfinder will provide pro bono assistance to raise additional funds. However, the emphasis will remain on voluntary youth leadership and social change.

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Progress to date.....

21,000 people have pledged through “Signature Campaign” to stop child marriage.

1,250 youth volunteers have joined JAGRITI groups.

JAGRITI Leadership Council of 12 Youth Leaders implements state and district level initiatives.

18 JAGRITI MANCH at the district level will take the campaign to the village level.

Approximately 53 thousand people have participated in JAGRITI’s public activities.

A mid media campaign has been launched to raise general awareness about rights and laws to stop child marriage.