



# STEERING CHANGE

AAGAJ END LINE REPORT 2020



Jagori Rural Charitable Trust  
in collaboration with Azim Premji Philanthropy Initiatives

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Suhasini Bali, Arkina Singh, Vinayaraj V.K. and Jyoti Seth has contributed largely to the production of this report.

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# CONTENTS



PREFACE	i
INTRODUCTION	1
ACTIVITIES	4
SURVEY	30
OUTCOMES	40
CONCLUSION	59
FOOTSTEPS OF CHANGE	60



# PREFACE

The end line report has been compiled by Jagori Rural Charitable Trust (JRCT) as part of the 'Aware Adolescent Girls Actions for Justice' (AAGAJ) programme, supported by Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives (APPI). The project has been implemented for a period of 36 months from 2017 in 70 villages in Kangra and Chamba districts in Himachal Pradesh.


The end line study identified, examined and analysed the impact of the project interventions in the project locations. Reflections on the experiences and learning from the intervention were collected through a participatory process which helped in identifying opportunities, successes, best practices and challenges of the project.

The compilation of this report is significant since it tracks the course, direction and the progress of the project and attempts to understand the challenges of working with communities. It also makes for a much wider outreach that ensures the intended impact of the project. We are publishing this report with a view that it would be helpful for the direct beneficiaries and other stakeholders who work with adolescent girls.

The success of the end line study rests on the collaborative efforts of many individuals. We are indebted to adolescent girls for their participation, insights and support. The project implementation has been possible with the enthusiastic Team members of the AAGAJ project who were always eager to learn, extending themselves and made tremendous efforts to connect and reach out to the girls and each other without losing focus of the project goals. Each member of AAGAJ field team added value by accomplishing their formidable tasks efficiently and effectively. Special thanks are due to the coordinators (Team AAGAJ) Suhasini Bali, Arkina Singh and Uma Kumari who planned, managed, monitored the programme and compiled the survey for the impact evaluation. The end line analysis and report has been authored by the team composed of Suhasini Bali, Arkina Singh, Vinayaraj V.K. and Jyoti Seth.

Most importantly, our heartfelt gratitude goes to APPI for supporting this project. Special thanks to Meghna for her enormous contribution.

We gratefully acknowledge the core guidance of Abha Bhaiya, Executive Director, JRCT for her vision and continuous support.



We also thank the entire JR team, and the Finance and Administrative staff for their support. Special thanks are also due to Anupama Rawat who lead the project for the first year. We also appreciate the support extended by all resource persons who played an important role in building capacities of the adolescent girls and the project team. We would like to thank Team TARA for supporting the project in smoothly conducting the workshops and other events. We recognize the aesthetic inputs of Kokila Bhattacharya for designing the report.

It is our sincere hope that the continuation of the AAGAJ Programme will benefit from this study, measuring the intended impacts and outcomes of the project intervention among the direct beneficiary and other actors. This will also be helpful in creating a knowledge pool and generating avenues for future programming, guiding and inspiring effective actions and increased participation of peer leaders from among the adolescent girls.



# INTRODUCTION

India has the largest adolescent population in the world and every fifth person in India is an adolescent. The formative years during adolescence are characterized by rapid physical growth, hormonal changes, cognitive and analytical enhancement and assertion of independence. It is also a time for exploration, curiosity and participation in complex social spaces. Combined with these are challenges of peer pressure and parental control, along with issues related to body image and self-perceptions. However, both adolescent girls and boys, lack access to appropriate information on issues affecting their lives and have limited spaces to develop competencies crucial for active participation in society. Adolescent girls, in particular, are exposed to multiple layers of vulnerability due to pernicious social norms affecting the value of girls, which in turn impact their ability to move freely and make decisions affecting their education, work, choice of partner and other social relationships.

Young adolescent girls living in Kangra and Chamba districts of Himachal Pradesh face numerous gender vulnerabilities and challenges, both within the home and outside. Gender-based discrimination, unequal opportunities, lack of access to information on menstrual and reproductive health, lack of access to public spaces, safety and social protection along with susceptibility to abuse and violence form part of the numerous issues that thwart the young girl's potential to growth and development.

## **Genesis of AAGAJ**

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust was set up in 2003 with 12 adolescent girls from the marginalized communities of neighbouring villages, who were trained with a feminist perspective to work with the community. Initially, a youth programme, Social Architects of Tomorrow in Himachal (SATH) was started with a focus on Gender Equality, Gender Justice and building multiple skills among the youth. This programme was supported by Bread for the World (BFTW) and subsequently by the Ford Foundation. The AAGAJ programme is rooted in the foundation built by SATH programme and is, therefore, an organic continuum.

With increasing concern about the status of adolescent girls, Azim Premji Foundation supported the present AAGAJ project with Jagori Rural (JR) for a period of 3 years. While AAGAJ programme has very specific objectives, it also worked with larger public events, campaigns which were an integral part of the organization and other programmes, thereby creating an intersectionality of various constituencies.

## **AAGAJ PROJECT**

The AAGAJ project was implemented in the rural and semi-rural areas of Kangra in 70 villages including four blocks of Kanga and three blocks of Chamba districts. The project started in April 2017 and concluded in March 2020. The project envisioned two SMART goals:

- Strengthening, capacitating and nurturing 2850 adolescent girls from marginalized communities as girls and women's rights activists, selected from 70 villages of Kangra and Chamba districts and Government Schools in Himachal Pradesh.
- Bringing significant changes among adolescent girls in their perspectives towards Gender Discrimination and Health Behaviour.

The 3 years project focused on empowering adolescent girls so that they develop into confident and self-aware citizens attempting to claim their rights and entitlements. The major objective was to sensitize Adolescent Girls on Gender issues, enhance their holistic- physical, mental, emotional growth and develop their potential to make informed choices and participate in decision making processes, both at home and in the community. Multiple meetings, trainings, workshops and events were organized to provide them a platform where they could explore their potentials and break gender stereotypes and seek new horizons.

This ongoing intervention process resulted in enhanced knowledge and understanding of gender inequality and the intersectionality of gender, health and violence.



The outcomes of the project are as follows:

- Enhanced understanding of AGs on the concepts of Gender, Gender Stereotypes, Gender Discrimination, Gendered Division of Labour, Freedom of Choice, Mobility, Forms of Violence against Girls.
- Internalised knowledge and awareness on Menstrual Health and Hygiene, Sexual and Reproductive Health.
- Increased knowledge of healthy dietary practices among girls.
- AGs are made capable to demand and access equal opportunities and challenge discrimination and discriminatory practices, both inside and outside their homes.
- Enhanced cross learning among government functionaries and CSOs.
- Emerged leadership cadre of AGs with enhanced gender perspective who take on active roles in initiating to sensitize community.

## AREA OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project was implemented in 50 villages in 4 selected blocks including Dharamshala, Kangra, Rait and Nagrota Suriyan in Kangra district, and 20 villages in 3 blocks of Chamba including Salooni, Tisa, Mehala in Himachal Pradesh.

This end line report is a compilation of the work of AAGAJ project in the last 3 years.





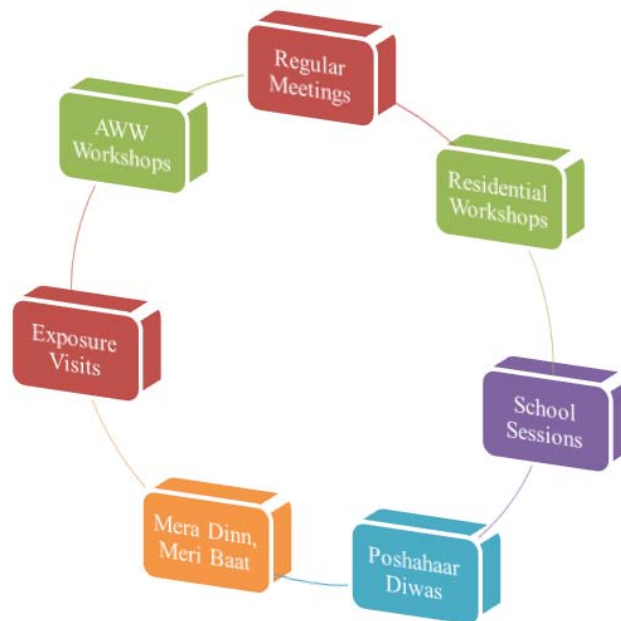
ACTIVITIES

## ACTIVITIES DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The project implementation focused on targeting **FIVE levels of intervention**:

1. **Direct Beneficiaries**, i.e., engaging with **AGs at the Individual Level**;
2. **Community**; 3. **System / State/ Duty Bearers**; 4. **Civil Society Organizations**, and
5. **Project Team**.

The following activities were undertaken during the project implementation period:



### INTENSIVE ACTIVITIES



### EXTENSIVE ACTIVITIES

## LEVELS OF CHANGE

### 1.INDIVIDUAL LEVEL



#### Foundational Activities

##### *Village Level Meetings*

As a starting point, foundational activities began by door-to-door visits, building rapport with the girls and their families and motivating them to create a shared space and evolve as a group. A lot of effort and time was spent by the team in reaching out to the girls, convincing them and their families and then bringing them together as a group. This process took a while and gradually girls started to come together for the initial participatory interaction sessions. This becomes a safe space for self and an opportunity to understand themselves, others and the underpinnings of their similarly situated issues.

Here, information on specific themes that are central to our project were taken up: Gender Equality, Gender Inequality, Gender Stereotypes; Personal Hygiene, Menstrual Cycle, Menstrual Health and Hygiene, Reproductive Health; Nutrition, Anemia; Adolescent Relationships (Consent); Saying 'No'; Gender Based Violence; Safe- Unsafe Touch; POCSO Act; Rights and Entitlements that arise out of inequality and discrimination and their ill effects on AGs. The activities ensured that AGs develop conceptual clarity and awareness on different themes, conscientization, learn negotiating strategies and gain confidence. The meetings included creative, activity-based methods which were inclusive and engaging that made for sustained interest among AG's and motivated them and their peers to keep the continuum.

2527 regular meetings were conducted with AGs over the period of three years. While 1534 meetings were conducted in Kangra district, 993 meetings were conducted in Chamba. There has been an average participation of 15 AGs in each meeting.

TABLE 1: VILLAGE LEVEL MEETINGS

YEAR	TOTAL MEETINGS	KANGRA	CHAMBA
2017-18	969	584	385
2018-19	847	529	318
2019-20	711	421	290
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2527</b>	<b>1534</b>	<b>993</b>

Regular meetings and interactions helped in building

- AGs confidence and enabled them to speak up in a group which initially they were hesitant and reticent.
- They began to understand their own issues and started sharing their concerns within the group.
- In the process, the project team began to connect and develop relationships of confidence and trust with the AGs.
- The regular village level visits extended to include family members, especially mothers of AGs who showed interest and started attending the meetings.
- The regular visits to the villages have also helped in connecting with and building better relationships with Anganwadi workers / PRIs.

## Growing Horizons

### Networking Meetings

Networking meetings were conducted at the block levels. The objective of networking meeting was to bring girls from different villages together who have varied levels of understanding and initiate interaction on learnt concepts and issues of importance. It provided an opportunity for the girls to meet their peers and be part of a shared learning process. This was also an opportunity for group discussions, question answer sessions, addressing queries and misconceptions through role plays, games, songs and similar innovative activities. The meetings also made it possible to evaluate through a feedback mechanism, of learnt knowledge and helped to build a self-supporting system through sharing experiences among AGs. This increased their confidence and self-esteem as their suggestions were valued and taken seriously during the peer learning process. The project team facilitated this process and supported the AGs in their learning and self-explorations. They also encouraged AGs to access Anganwadi Centres and approach AWWs for advice and support. 25 networking meetings have been conducted in Kangra district in 3 years.

TABLE 2: NETWORKING MEETINGS

YEAR	KANGRA	
	MEETINGS	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	9	264
2018- 2019	8	335
2019- 2020	8	262
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>861</b>



### ***District Level Kishori Meeting at Chamba***

A district level kishori meeting took place in Chamba where **409 AGs from different groups, women from 'Naari Shakti Samooh', SDM, Protection officers, College and School Principals, Zila Parishad members DPO, CWC members, DCPOs, AWWs and ASHA Workers, College Principals** took part. Child Marriage, Drug Abuse, Dowry, Sex Selective Abortions were some issues on which AGs presented through dramas, songs and poems.

The aim was to give a larger platform to the AGs, wider JR programmes and present the impact of Project work to the officials. Girls from the villages of Chamba came together in this event to share their learnings and talents which were showcased on the stage. The stage was managed by the girls themselves and was very well received.

### ***School Sessions***

Awareness sessions for adolescent girls and boys were conducted separately as well as jointly at school levels. The activity provided an opportunity to reach to both boys and girls bringing them together and motivating them in exchanging their knowledge and personal experiences regarding issues related to Gender Stereotypes, Patriarchy, Gendered Division of Labour, Body Literacy, Menstruation, Masculinity, Child Abuse and POCSO. The sessions were conducted jointly with larger JR programme's team.

This promoted communication between boys and girls regarding some sensitive topics and helped removing the stigmas. A total of **100** meetings were conducted in Kangra district attended by 8786 students including 5474 girls and 3311 boys.





TABLE 3: SCHOOL SESSIONS

YEAR	MEETINGS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
2017- 2018	30	437	1709	2146
2018- 2019	42	1566	2600	4166
2019- 2020	28	1308	1166	2474
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3311</b>	<b>5475</b>	<b>8786</b>

### ***Nukkad Naataks***

Nukkad Naataks (Street Plays) were held in **26 locations with 6900 students** of Government and Private Schools and Colleges (including both girls and boys in Kangra and Chamba districts) to spread awareness on (a) **Child Sexual Abuse and POCSO Act** (b) to **Ensure Safety of Children** and (c) to **Seek Justice for Child Survivors**. This event was very well received.

### **Sessions with Child Care Institutes (CCI), Chamba**

Sessions on Gender and Body Literacy with adolescent girls were conducted in CCIs in Chamba. 18 sessions were conducted with 900 adolescent girls.



## Exploring Multiple Strategies

### HEALTH EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

#### *Kishori Swasthya Evam Poshahaar Diwas*

*Kishori Swasthya Evam Poshahaar Diwas* (Adolescent Girls Health and Nutrition Day) is an event inspired from the Village Health and Nutrition Day (VHND), a National programme introduced by the National Rural Health Mission and is a platform for providing essential Reproductive and Child Health services at the village level. The Project team also organized the day event every month focusing on Menstrual Health and Hygiene and Nutrition in each block.



The event reinforced AGs learnings about the importance of nutrition and scientific information to ensure their physical and overall well-being. Various games and short films such as 'Hello Periods' were shown. Awareness on effective home remedies for anemia and yoga asanas/ exercises for menstruation and agility; good hygiene practices, the importance of changing and disposal of sanitary pads or cloths so as to avoid infections were also shared.

This activity continued for a period of one and half years into the project cycle. In some places, the project collaborated with Anganwadis.

TABLE 4: KISHORI SWASTHYA EVAM POSHAHAAR DIWAS

YEAR	KANGRA	PARTICIPANTS	CHAMBA	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	18	329	5	288
2018- 2019	17	239	8	287
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>575</b>

### ***Hb and BMI Testing Camps***

Health camps were organised to check the BMI and Haemoglobin of the adolescent girls for better monitoring and evaluation of health indicators. The camps also identified cases of anaemia and provided them with appropriate Health and Nutrition education. In cases of severe anaemia or menstrual health issues, the Project team members took the girls to the nearby health facilities and monitored their progress.

TABLE 5: HB AND BMI TESTING CAMPS

YEAR	KANGRA	PARTICIPANTS	CHAMBA	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	52	910	--	--
2018- 2019	41	688	3	108
2019- 2020	20	558	3	92
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>2156</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>200</b>

### ***Mera Din, Meri Baat***

Keeping in line with the evolving stream of work, *Mera Din, Meri Baat* was introduced across selected blocks with AGs to explore issues of inclusion such as Casteism, Communalism, Social Religious Identities and Violence. **55 Mera Din, Meri Baat** events were conducted under the aegis of the project in Kangra and Chamba districts.

TABLE 6: MERA-DIN MERI BAAT

YEAR	KANGRA	PARTICIPANTS	CHAMBA	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	21	498	--	--
2018- 2019	26	669	8	254
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>254</b>

### ***Workshops and Trainings***

Residential workshops remain an integral part of the project intervention and focused on increasing the mobility of girls and provided them with a safe space to openly share and discuss their experiential journeys. Workshops and trainings with AGs on themes including Gender, Menstrual Health, Nutrition, Anemia, Adolescent Sexuality and POCSO Act, Violence and Consent, Rights and Entitlements, Peer leadership, and Community Action were conducted.

These workshops were facilitated by experienced trainers along with JRCT team members. Using the methods of Group Exercises, Games, Films, Songs and Role Plays participants were explained about the above themes.

A total of **68 workshops** which include 53 in Kangra and 15 in Chamba districts were conducted over the period of 3 years. While each workshop in Kangra witnessed an average participation of 34 AGs, it was 31 in Chamba district.

TABLE 7: WORKSHOPS & TRAININGS

YEAR	KANGRA		CHAMBA	
	WORKSHOP/ TRAINING	PARTICIPANTS	WORKSHOP / TRAINING	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	13	244	2	65
2018- 2019	15	629	7	226
2019- 2020	23	916	6	180
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1789</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>471</b>





## WORKSHOP WITH PEER LEADERS

### *Training with peer leaders*

Towards the end of the second year of the project, the team began to invest in identifying and building leadership among adolescent girls in their respective blocks who had taken active initiatives and demonstrated involvement both within their families and communities.

The idea of *peer leadership* then evolved through a collaborative process of dialogue and engagement with each other. In this exchange, the roles of the peer group, community leadership, issues concerning AGs, strategies and actions were discussed. Following this, initial action plans for the community (mobilising new AGs to the meetings and workshops; facilitating meetings; taking new roles alongside the project team; collective actions in community) were developed.

2 residential trainings were conducted with the peer groups in order to orient them on their role in the community and take social action. Along with this, block level networking meetings with the group were also conducted.

TABLE 8 : TRAINING WITH PEER LEADERS

YEAR	TRAINING / WORKSHOP THEME	PARTICIPANTS
2018- 2019	LEADERSHIP - ROLE AND SKILLS	35
2019- 2020	LEADERSHIP - ROLE AND COMMUNITY ACTION	14

### ***Block level Follow-up Workshop/ Training with AGs***

Keeping the continuity of the learning process, block level regular follow-ups were conducted with AGs. Project team revisited conceptual and other informative knowledge shared with AGs. This also became a platform to share action-based strategies and become a support group for each other.

TABLE 9 : BLOCK LEVEL FOLLOW UP

YEAR	KANGRA		CHAMBA	
	MEETINGS	PARTICIPANTS	MEETINGS	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	3	67	1	40
2018- 2019	22	140	7	592
2019- 2020	8	245	4	68
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>700</b>

### ***Sakhi Saheli Camps***

156 AGs along with the entire JR team participated in two *Sakhi-Saheli* camps in Kangra organised by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The major objective of these camps was to provide information on Nutrition, Life Skills and Reproductive Health for the girls.

### ***Skill Building Workshop for AG's***

An exciting event conducted on JR campus, full of laughter and hard work, the credit goes to the dynamic and innovative tool trainer and expert Ingrid Gerber of Rothenberger Company, Frankfurt, Germany. She taught the AGs about working with metals, electric wires and plugs along with using different repair tools and making bamboo lamps.

The workshop helped in building confidence among the AGs. 2 such workshops were conducted over three years which were attended by 44 AGs.





### ***Exposure visits***

Exposure visits were conducted as part of the project with an objective to educate and familiarize adolescents to the functioning of Police Station, SP Office, Women Police Station, Courts, Hospitals, Printing Press, etc. Exposure visits ensured that the AGs learn about various public services and are able to access them independently. In this process, the AGs have learned how to file a complaint and became aware of an array of cybercrimes.

TABLE 10: EXPOSURE VISITS

YEAR	KANGRA	PARTICIPANTS	CHAMBA	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	3	88	--	--
2018- 2019	10	277	2	112
2019- 2020	7	192	1	37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>149</b>

“

“We, in our families, are taught that we should not enter temples and kitchen during our periods. When we asked them the reason behind it, we were told not to ask too many questions and follow the traditions. However, the sessions taught me that these are all social constructs and therefore, I started talking to my sisters about it. I also made them aware that how we are forced to do it. Now, me and my sisters go to temple even while we are menstruating.”

“

“I have now learnt that the most basic and simplest way to fight anemia is to cook our food in iron vessels every day. It is affordable and effective. When I went home one day after a meeting, I told my mother about it and now my mother and I always cook in an iron vessel.”



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### 2. COMMUNITY LEVEL

Project events are focused on reaching out to the larger community. This is a projection of the work of AAGAJ project and JR in the public domain.



#### ***Maa-Beti Mela***

Communication gap is often a big deterrent in the relationship between mothers and growing AGs. Improving inter-generational relationships and changing perspectives within families by improving mother-daughter relationships has been identified as an important element. Mother daughter relationship plays a crucial role in the overall well-being and growth of AGs.

The project initiated activities that ensured engagement of mothers and communities. The project team focused on integrating and reaching out to mothers regularly through village meetings, informal dialogues or larger events. Mothers along with the community were sensitized on issues of Gender Discrimination, Patriarchy within households, Gender Division of Labour, Rights and Entitlements of girls along with the need to support young girls emotionally and mentally in their pursuits.





Through sharing of experiences and insights of the mothers in the learning and sharing process, mothers have become increasingly motivated to send their daughters to regular meetings and events. The project implementation helped in improving bonding, relationships and communication among mothers and daughters from the communities.

In order to build a shared space for mothers and daughters to learn more about each other, share their experiences and understand each other better, *Maa-Beti Mela* is conceptualized. A total of 6 fairs including 3 in Kangra and 3 in Chamba have been conducted with an average participation of around 200 in each fair. The events brought mothers and daughters together where they not only participated enthusiastically in the stall activities on themes such as Gender Discrimination, Health and Nutrition, Menstrual Health, Nonviolent Communication, etc. but also came together for various sports activities. The events also witnessed many emotional exchanges between mothers and daughters through activities like letter writing. The activities enabled perceptual changes and improved bonding in mother-daughter relationship.

TABLE 11 : MAA-BETI MELA

YEAR	KANGRA		CHAMBA	
	NO OF MELAS	PARTICIPANTS	NO OF MELAS	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	2	928	1	284
2018- 2019	--	--	1	282
2019- 2020	1	150	1	372
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1078</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>938</b>



### ***Baap-Beti Mela***

*Baap-Beti Mela*, is focused on strengthening the relationship between fathers and daughters by giving them a platform to come together and become part of conversations which they would otherwise not have given the distantness in the relationship that is often experienced. Recognizing the centrality of the father-daughter relationship in the growth and development of the AGs, JR evolved the concept of father-daughter fair. One such mela was organized where 165 adolescent girls and few fathers participated while mothers and other community members also joined in. The event began on an enthusiastic note since a large group of girls were excited to share a platform with their fathers in the public domain. The event also became a space to express various emotions experienced by daughters and fathers.



### ***Kishori Utsav***

*Kishori Utsav* is conceptualized as a shared space where learning and fun goes hand in hand. The *utsav* is held in the form of a fair where AGs have the opportunity to learn through various informative and engaging stall activities and also participate in taking on the stage to showcase their talents like singing, dancing, reading poetry, etc. *Kishori Utsavs* not only helped AGs in socializing and developing peer networks but it also enhanced their self-esteem. Over the years, *Kishori Utsavs* explored various themes like Gender and Health; Privilege and Opportunity; and Rights and Citizenship.

TABLE 12 : KISHORI UTSAV

YEAR	KANGRA		CHAMBA	
	NO OF UTSAVS	PARTICIPANTS	NO OF UTSAVS	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	3	1161	1	190
2018- 2019	2	833	1	208
2019- 2020	2	846	1	227
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2840</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>625</b>



*Kishori-Kishor Utsav* was celebrated in one school and was attended by 92 boys and girls along with the teaching staff. PRI representatives, mothers of some adolescent girls as well as a large number of young men from surrounding villages also participated in the *utsav*. Interactive stalls were set up to provide information in an engaging manner to students about various issues such as Gender Based Discrimination, Reproductive health, Menstrual Health, Nutrition and Violence. Both boys and girls took part in various activities.



### **Sports Tournaments**

Sports are an important means of physical and mental development. Often understood as the realm of boys, JR has worked on encouraging AGs to engage in sports, giving AGs the opportunity to reclaim what has been traditionally understood as boy's domain. Cricket as a sport was specifically chosen since it is considered a "boy's" game. Along with learning the game, the process has instilled values of team work, coordination and fair play. At times, girls also faced resistance from their villagers including boys who would not give up the playground for the girls to play. *Kishori Samoohs* were mobilized for the sports events through a host of meetings with AGs and interactions with their parents, AWWs and community leaders. First, the interested girls were trained and then teams were formed at village level. The village level teams were brought together to form block level teams. Thereby, District level tournaments were held where all the block level teams came together to compete. This was a refreshing experience for the AGs.



5 tournaments (district and block) were organized in Kangra district during the project tenure. More than 100 AGs participated in each of these events.

TABLE 13: SPORTS TOURNAMENTS

YEAR	KANGRA	
	NO OF TOURNAMENTS	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	1	220
2018- 2019	3	236
2019- 2020	1	112
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>568</b>

“

Jagori made it possible for young girls like us to step out of our homes. Earlier, we were not allowed to go anywhere except to our relatives' places. I got to play cricket for the first time and participated in the cricket tournament organized by Jagori. I also attended one of the Kishori Utsav. I saw so many girls performing on the stage and their enthusiasm and fearlessness gave me the courage to do a dance performance too.”





### Local to National to International Outreach

Outreach activities are an important means to reach out to the community. AAGAJ along with other JR Programmes organized many such activities in the form of Campaigns, Rallies, Candle Light Marches.

**One Billion Rising (OBR)** is a global campaign which advocates mass action to end violence against women. JR is the National Secretariat for the campaign. For the last 8 years, JR has conducted numerous creative activities and public events under the banner of OBR to show solidarity for the cause of VAW and create awareness among the community.

JR has also been organizing **Sixteen Days of International Campaign for the Elimination of Violence against Women' campaign (UN)** - a campaign to challenge violence against women and girls.

JR has actively protested and stood in solidarity against incidences of sexual violence with girls and women. Around 100 women and girls from different villages gathered together to protest against sexual harassment with girls in a hostel of Chamba district. Candle March and other collective protests were organized by JR against the brutal rape incidents of Kathua, Hathras, Delhi Gangrape, Rape in Shimla etc.

### **Take Back the Night – Aao Andhere Ko Jeetein**

The event witnessed the presence of a large number of adolescent girls and women walking on the streets of Dharamshala at night, forsaking their fears. The walk was organized to reclaim spaces exclusively held by men. **Two** such events were organized and attended by 600 and 500 participants respectively.



“

“It was for the first time that we got to walk the streets during the night time and it felt so liberating. The presence of so many girls, women and even boys supporting us made us feel so confident about ourselves. We felt a great sense of freedom!”



### 3. SYSTEM/ STATE/ DUTY BEARERS LEVEL

The project activities focused on enhancing Gender, Health and Violence perspectives among functionaries by training a group of AWWs, ASHA workers, CDPOs and others in the project locations.

#### AWW WORKSHOPS

Anganwadi workers are important nodal persons who work closely with the adolescent girls at the village level. Residential trainings were conducted to build their conceptual clarity on issues of Gender, Health and Violence. With enhanced learnings, AWWs have taken initiatives to conduct meetings with AGs in the project locations. The intervention also witnessed the emergence of a cadre of Anganwadi workers as *'ambassadors of women's and girl's rights'*, who have taken concrete actions on forms of injustice.

TABLE 14: ANGANWADI WORKERS' WORKSHOP

YEAR	KANGRA		CHAMBA	
	NO OF WORKSHOPS	PARTICIPANTS	NO OF WORKSHOPS	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	4	98	1	27
2018- 2019	4	99	1	28
2019- 2020	2	62	1	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>70</b>

Apart from the residential workshops, follow-up and networking meetings were also conducted with AWWs to build a network of support among themselves

TABLE 15: AWW FOLLOW UP & NETWORKING MEETINGS

YEAR	KANGRA	PARTICIPANTS	CHAMBA	PARTICIPANTS
2017- 2018	2	37	--	--
2018- 2019	4	57	1	30
2019- 2020	2	86	--	--
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30</b>

## MEETINGS WITH ASHA WORKERS

The project team of Chamba collaborated with ASHA workers in the process of gender and health awareness in the communities. This increased their interaction with the AGs on issues of health. In few cases, AGs also reached out to ASHA workers to provide them with sanitary pads and iron tablets. The project reached out to 68 ASHA workers through trainings and follow-ups.



## 4. JAGORI AND PROJECT TEAM

### *Capacity Building – Jagori and AAGAJ Project Team*

Capacity building of the project team has been an ongoing process and there were many opportunities of learning and knowledge building within the organization and exposure to other NGOs.

### *Team Training on Intersectionality*

A process of orientation of AAGAJ team was held in a phased manner to extend their understanding on themes that interconnect with the issues of adolescent girls. 11-days training was conducted in two phases in the month of July and August 2018 for this purpose. Intersectionality, Caste and its crucial role in identity formation; Toxic masculinity and formation of nation as an idea and Understanding Sexuality and Gender as a cross-cutting issue, were the themes covered. This process helped the team to begin comprehending an intersectional approach and deepen their work with the AGs.

***Team Training on Gender and Patriarchy***

The Entire JR team training on Gender and Patriarchy was anchored by Kamala Bhasin, a Developmental Feminist Activist in June 2019.

***Team Training on Approaches to working with Youth***

One day training was conducted by the team of NGO, Patang in June 2019 on different methods and activities to engage with youth along with monitoring individual growth techniques of AGs.

***Team Training on Reporting and Documentation***

A two-day training session was facilitated by Shubhangi Sharma, Development Sector Professional on Reporting and effective Documentation..

***Training at Nirantar Trust***

One of the project team member's participated in two trainings conducted by Nirantar Trust on Gender and Sexuality.

***Participation at Youth Festival 2020***

Two team members participated in a week-long festival held at Churu (Rajasthan) in February 2020 which was an opportunity to interact and network with young people from different parts of the country. The team members undertook reflective journeys of their own in the process while learning about self, coordination and communication. The festival also gave them a platform to hold sessions with the participants in areas of their expertise and share their work.

***Team Exposure to other Organizations***

Capacity building of the project team has been an ongoing process. In the month of April 2019, JR organized exposure visits for the project team to three organizations working with the youth and adolescent girls. The visits focused on Cross-learning, Intervention strategies and Adopting Best Practices into the project implementation.

1. Seven team members visited Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association in Hyderabad working primarily on building livelihood for young girls and women of Muslim and Dalit communities in the urban slums in Hyderabad.
2. Seven team members visited NGO-Patang in Sambhalpur, Orissa which works on capacity building of youth, tribal and migrant population.
3. Seven team members visited Doosra Dashak in Ajmer, Rajasthan and learnt about the organization's intervention with the girls in life skills building, bridging gaps in formal education through Bridge Centers.

Exposure visits provided opportunities for the team members to learn about different Training Methods, Modules, Strategies, Monitoring, Documentation and Best Practices, as well as structure and functions of these organizations.



SURVEY

## END LINE SURVEY ANALYSIS

This end line survey is based on both Quantitative and Qualitative research methods. The quantitative method used structured closed-ended questionnaires for collecting data from AGs. Data was collected at **two levels**.

- a) **Basic Conceptual Level** learning of all AGs – this pertained to the comprehension and understanding of our interventions across all AGs in the collectives. The questions attempted to assess the understanding of AGs on themes of **Gender, Menstrual Health, Personal Hygiene** and **Child Abuse**.
- b) **Advanced Learning Levels** – The Advanced level survey was conducted with a select sample group of AGs who have been educated on issues beyond the basic level. The questions pertained to **Violence** and **Adolescent Sexuality**.

In order to **compare the baseline**, all questions used in the initial survey were reviewed and the end line survey was structured accordingly. In addition, a few more questions were added for impact assessment. The survey used **Random sampling method** since each sample had an equal probability of being chosen. The survey has been conducted in **66 villages** which include 46 villages in Kangra and 20 villages in Chamba districts. **427 AGs were randomly selected - 367 respondents from Kangra and 60 from Chamba** for the basic level survey.

An **Advanced level survey was conducted with 105 AGs** and comprised of peer group and other active girls. The participants were interviewed and observed for both surveys. In order to substantiate the survey findings and to minimize the errors, **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** were conducted with the AGs. This **qualitative approach** with open ended questions helped in steering discussions with the selected group of AGs to explore and understand their knowledge on each theme. The group discussions provided an open space for AGs to share their views freely. **6 Focus Group Discussions** were held with 55 adolescent girls from 20 villages in Kangra district.

The end line survey tools were developed to mirror the baseline tools and specifically evaluate the impact of project. Moreover, the end line surveys gathered quantitative information through close-ended questions, and FGDs collected qualitative information through open-ended questions. The end line report also collated all the *Half-Yearly Reports, Case Studies and Change Stories of AGs and other key stakeholders* which were used to triangulate the results of the end line study.

## BASIC LEVEL SURVEY RESULTS

This section describes the results of the surveys conducted in measuring the achievement of Project Goals. This evaluation lays emphasis on changes and attitudinal shifts towards ***Gender Norms and Discriminatory Practices, Myths and Taboos around Menstruation, shifts in Dietary and Nutritional practices, Personal Hygiene, Initiatives among AGs, Awareness on POCSO Act, knowledge on Childline*** among the AGs at the basic level. The survey was conducted with 427 AGs including 367 in Kangra, Dharamshala, Rait and Nagrota Suriya blocks of Kangra district, and 60 in Salooni, Mehala and Tisa blocks of Chamba districts.

### BASIC LEVEL AG SURVEY

The end line survey questions were designed by considering socio-economic status and basic as well as advanced understanding on themes. While the former included information on age, category, educational qualifications, the later centered around questions attempting to collate information on attitudinal shifts, behavioural change and increased knowledge among AGs. Adolescent girls between the age group of 12 to 18 years and above from the intervention villages were surveyed.

TABLE 16: BASIC LEVEL SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

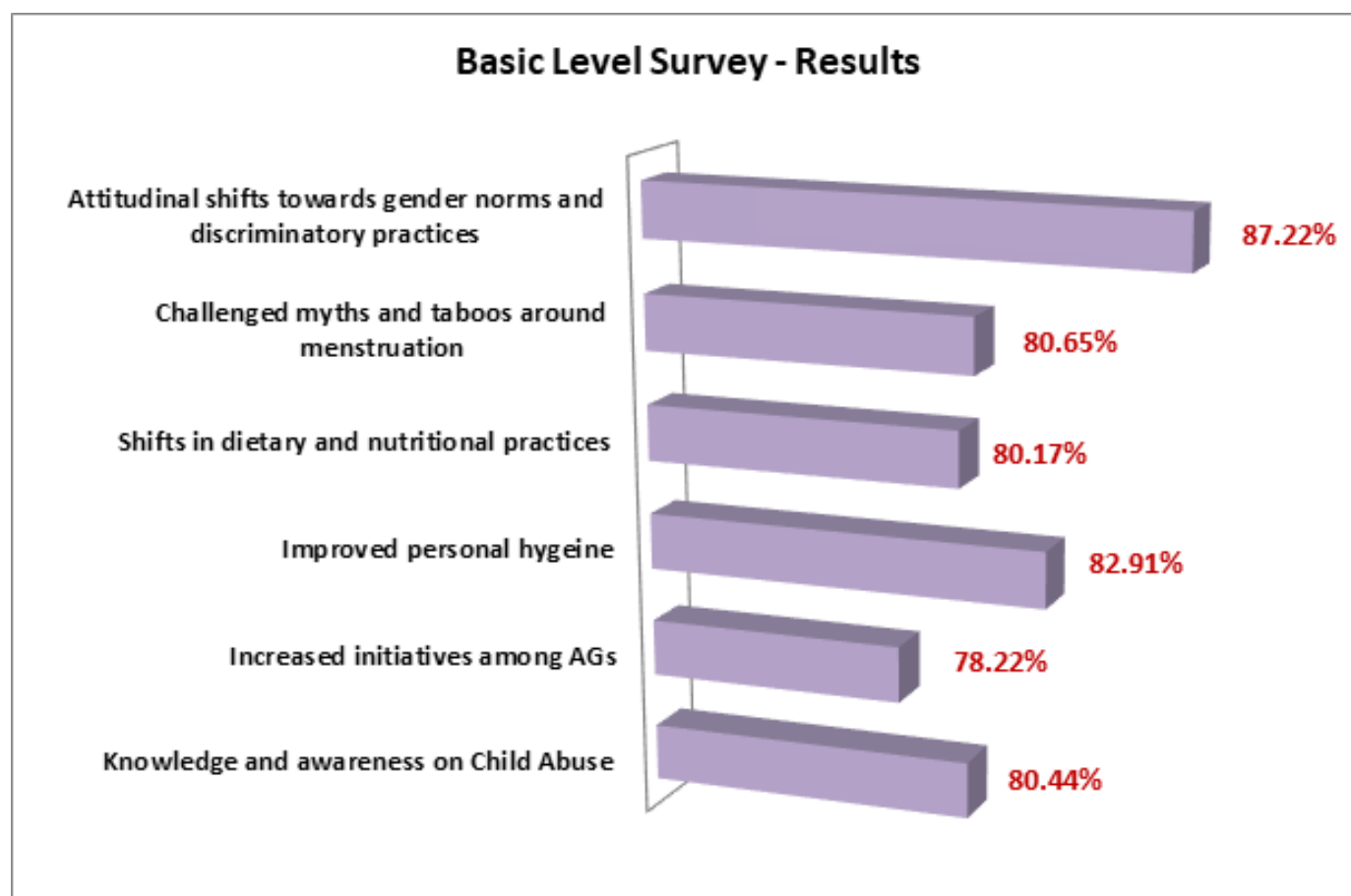
KANGRA - 367	CHAMBA - 60
KANGRA - 93	SALOONI - 15
DHARAMSHALA - 64	TISA - 15
RAIT - 171	MEHALA - 30
NAGROTA SURIYAN - 39	

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF SURVEY SAMPLE

	KANGRA		CHAMBA	
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
<b>Age of Respondent AGs</b>				
12 TO 13 YEARS	38	10.3 %	3	0.5%
14 TO 17 YEARS	238	65.8 %	39	65%
18 YEARS AND ABOVE	91	24.7 %	18	30%
<b>Category wise distribution of AGs</b>				
General Category	49	13.4%	22	36.7%
Scheduled Castes (SC)	112	30.5%	38	63.3%
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	31	8.4%	--	--
Other Backward Category (OBC)	175	47.7%	--	--

<b>Educational Qualifications of Respondent AGs</b>				
CLASS 6 TO CLASS 8	49	13.4%	3	0.5%
CLASS 9 TO CLASS 12	265	72.2%	45	75%
GRADUATION	42	11.4%	12	20%
ITI/COMPUTER & OTHER CERTIFICATE COURSES	11	2.9%	--	--

The project worked with adolescent girls whose access to information and knowledge were limited and have lesser opportunities to acquire and develop skills that constrained them from exercising their social rights and choices. AGs from different age groups were surveyed. While 65 % of the respondent AGs consist of 14 to 17 years age category, it was 28 % in the age group of 18 years and above, and 10 % in the age group of 12 to 13 respectively. The category wise distribution of AGs also shows a significant number of girls in **scheduled castes and other backward categories** in the project locations. While 63 % respondents (AGs) from Chamba belong to scheduled castes, it is 30 % in Kangra. The majority of the respondents, 74 % were educated up to higher secondary level.



## 1. ATTITUDINAL SHIFTS TOWARDS GENDER NORMS AND DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES

The survey revealed that AGs show a positive growth from baseline to end line in terms of their perceptions and decision-making abilities. A significant majority of the AGs responded that the work of household should be divided among the family members irrespective of gender. **While 84 % of the respondents stated that work should be divided, it was only 14 % who mentioned that girls should do household chores and boys should work outside.**

On the issue of equal property rights, which is contrary to the prevalent societal notion that once a daughter is married, she ceases her claim to ancestral property; the end line results show that **80 % of the respondents were of the opinion that daughters, like sons, have an equal right to inherit family property.**

The survey assessed the attitudes of the girls regarding their decision to choose partners. Since conventional norms deny them this right, it is largely the prerogative of family members and relatives to choose spouses for their adult children. **88 % of the AGs responded that they should have the freedom of choice when it comes to choosing their partner and navigate such choices.** The baseline survey identified that the majority of families foster traditional and orthodox practices – accepting the father as the head of the family and accepting all his decisions as final. Having learnt about shared responsibilities, as well as in matters of communication and decision making due to the project intervention, the AGs show a marked change in their attitude. **82 % of the respondents said that the decision of the father is important, but not final, 17 % feel that father's decision is most important and final in the family.** When asked whether girls are weaker than boys and parents should be stricter with girls, **91 % of the AGs responded that it is not true and 87 % AGs said that parents should not be stricter with girls and treat both boys and girls equally.** The survey also asked questions pertaining to AGs right to choose what they wear. **The overwhelming majority of the AGs, i.e., 94 % of the AGs responded that they should be able to wear clothes of their choice and it was merely 6 % who thought otherwise.**

There has been a positive shift in the understanding on gender perceptions and decision-making power among AGs due to the project intervention. **The end line survey analysis on understanding gender perspectives shows an overall 87 % of positive response from the AGs** and it has been qualitatively substantiated further by the FGDs with AGs where a majority of girls admitted that their perceptions relating to gender issues have changed and evolved. Girls also spoke about the small steps taken by them within their houses to make their homes more equitable.



## 2. CHALLENGED MYTHS AND TABOOS AROUND MENSTRUATION

The taboos about menstruation existing in the community impact AGs overall wellbeing including their mental and emotional health. The project activities worked on addressing the socio-cultural taboos and beliefs on menstruation, as well as on AGs knowledge and understandings of menstrual and reproductive health. AGs were asked questions on myths, misconception and taboos around menstruation including whether menstrual blood is impure- how they manage it, use of cloth/pad, is it correct if a girl goes to any religious place while menstruating, whether girls avoid eating certain food items during menstruation, whether certain things get rotten and impure when girls touch them during menstruation, and have they started talking openly about menstruation to others.

In the findings of end line survey, **86 % of the AGs believed that menstrual blood is not impure, and 81 % AGs were of the opinion that going to religious places is not a wrong practice while menstruating.** Questions on barriers and restrictions levied upon AGs because of menstrual cycle and impurity were also asked. **While 56 % AGs responded that girls should not avoid eating certain food items during menstruation, 89 % mentioned that certain things would not get rotten and impure when girls touch them during menstruation. 84 % AGs reported discussing openly about menstruation with their peers and family members including few fathers and brothers.** Overall, the project interventions have had impacted AGs understanding about menstrual and reproductive health and **81 % AGs reported a significant impact on their understanding in challenging myths and taboos.** While the girls showed a positive shift in their understanding on menstruation and taboos related to it, what was observed was that there needs to be more awareness regarding the specific myth of consumption of certain foods during menstruation.

During the FGDs, it was observed that the majority of girls have successfully understood and actively challenged the taboos of menstruation. Girls spoke about the initial misinformation on the process of menstruation and many girls shared their experiences of going to temples during menstruation, touching pickles and passing this information to their peers. A positive outcome has been the breaking of silence on menstruation.

## 3. SHIFTS IN DIETARY AND NUTRITIONAL PRACTICES

Improving the nutrition of AGs is important because it consequently affects their overall wellbeing. The baseline study revealed that AGs in the project locations did not eat breakfast regularly and many skipped three meals a day. The baseline analysis also indicated that nutritional knowledge and consuming optimal nutrients among AGs were limited or completely absent.

Taking regular meals is important as adolescence is a period of high energy requirement. Adequate intake of protein, vitamins and minerals such as calcium, iron, and iodine is vital for adolescent girls. The project intervention focused on dietary and nutritional practices. The end line survey substantiated the fact that there has been an increase in the knowledge relating to Health and Dietary Practices among the AGs.

**79 % of the AG respondents stated that they have started taking three meals a day, whereas 84 % started consuming breakfast regularly. The survey results also revealed that 78 % have started cooking food using iron vessels.**

AGs showed substantial positive shift in their level of knowledge regarding nutrition. The respondent's attitude in most cases was very positive and **80.2 % of respondents improved their understanding on nutritional knowledge, practice, and dietary habits by following healthy eating behaviours.**

During the Focus Group Discussions, it was seen that many AGs have developed awareness on healthy eating habits. Few girls also narrated their experiences of eating regular breakfast and iron rich food to improve their HB levels.

#### **4. IMPROVED PERSONAL HYGIENE**

Poor hygiene habits affect the health and wellness of the AGs. Despite the fact that basic personal hygiene practices can go a long way in preventing many diseases, the issue has been neglected largely in their daily lives. Baseline study found that AGs needed to improve their personal hygiene practices- how to clean and dry the underwear to avoid infections as they were wearing unclean underwear for longer hours. **The end line survey asked questions on personal hygiene practises to which 82.9 % AGs responded positively.**

During FGDs, AGs spoke about how shy they were earlier to dry their undergarments directly in the sun. They interestingly recognised that this is also a gendered practice and only women follow this. Girls also spoke about changing their period cloth regularly, washing and drying it in a sanitized manner. The qualitative results substantiate the enhanced knowledge on hygiene practices among AGs.

#### **5. INCREASED INITIATIVES AMONG AGS**

The project intervention enabled AGs to reflect and take initiatives. AGs stated that they share knowledge and information with their peers and with family. **88 % AGs stated that they share and discuss what they learn in workshops and meetings, whereas 68 % AGs said they raise their voice against gender-based discrimination that they face at home. It was observed that 78% of AGs were able to challenge discrimination at home and share their awareness further with peers and family.**

It was seen that girls took initiatives at various levels where they sometimes challenged what they felt was wrong and at other times internalized the learnings which in itself challenged many things. While speaking to peers was comparatively easier, challenging discrimination at home was more difficult.

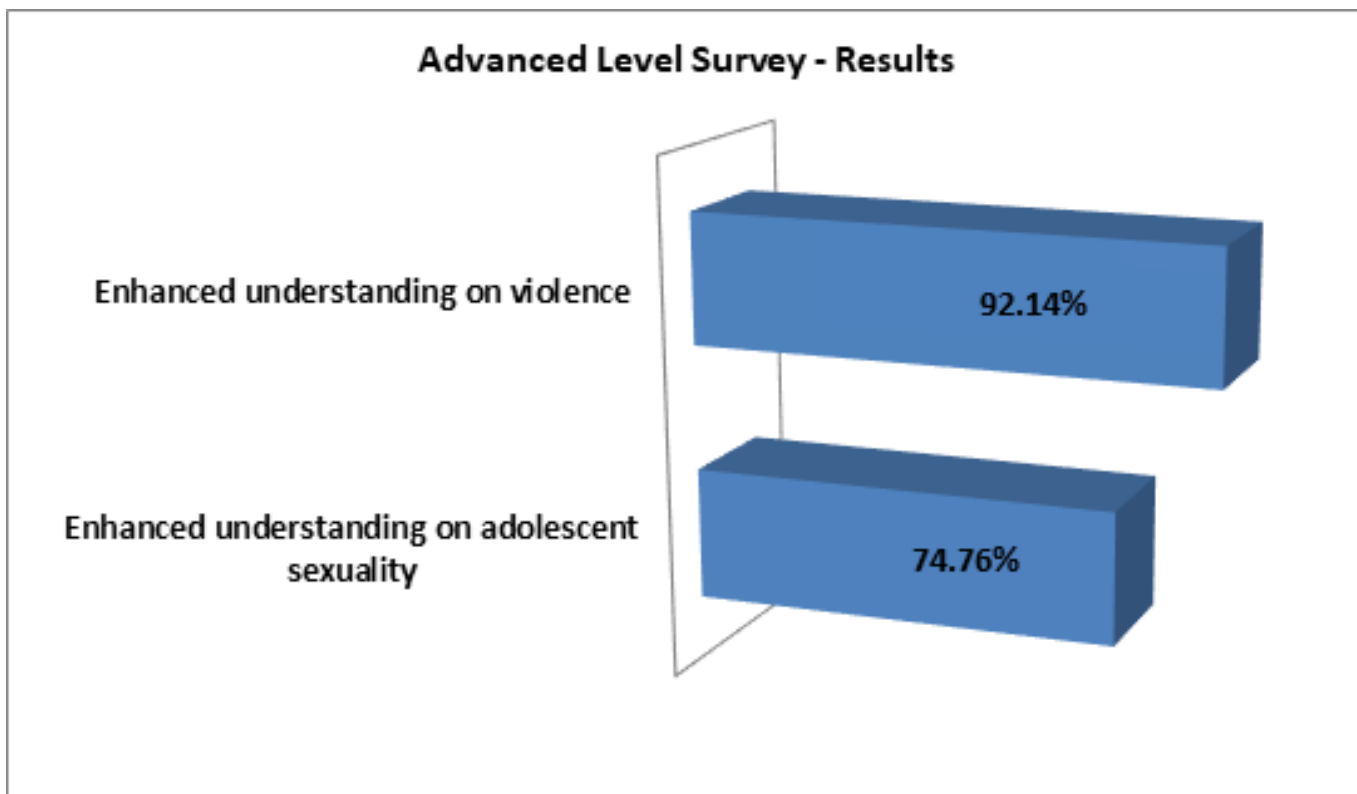
## 6. AWARENESS ON CHILD ABUSE

The Project team educated AGs on how to recognize abuse, various forms of abuse and how to reach out for help. The team built awareness on Child Help line and POCSO Act. **79 % of the AGs respondents answered that they are aware of POCSO Act, whereas 82 % responded that they are familiar with the Child Helpline Number.**

During the FGDs, it was observed that many AGs remember the helpline number. Though many were familiar with POCSO Act, their knowledge on the same was comparatively low. Girls also said that they recognized safe and unsafe touch and felt that incase of need, they can reach out to Jagori.

## ADVANCED LEVEL AG SURVEY

This section describes the advanced level survey conducted to assess changes in AGs regarding their understanding on violence and adolescent sexuality. The project has managed to contribute substantially in supporting AGs so that they were better informed on these sensitive issues. **105 AGs** from Kangra district were surveyed as part of the advanced level analysis.



## 1. ENHANCED UNDERSTANDING ON VIOLENCE

Girls often experience violence in both tangible and intangible ways. The factors that contribute to violent responses, whether they are factors of attitude and behavior or related to larger social, economic, political and cultural conditions need to be addressed. During the course of the project, it was found that girls often did not recognize various forms of violence. Recognizing the gap, the project worked towards improving awareness on different forms of violence.

When asked, **89 % of AGs responded that violence is not only physical in nature.** They were not only familiar with other forms of violence including verbal abuse, ill-treatment and child abuse, but developed the understanding that threats, abuse and harassment are criminal offences. The enhanced understanding among AGs also made **92 % of survey respondents to state that stalking and using abusive language also comes under the ambit of violence, while 90 % AGs responded that discrimination on the basis of caste is also a form of violence.**

Media influences the lifestyle and behavior of the consumers, both, positively and negatively. The project intervention attempted to create awareness on the patriarchal and sexist nature of content in media which sometimes encourages violence. The end line assessment revealed that **95 % of AGs recognized that media has violent and problematic portrayals. 91 % respondents also pointed out that restricting girls from studying and going to school is also a form of violence, and 93 % AGs responded that forcing marriage without the consent of a girl is also violence. 94 % of AGs said that one should voice their support and challenge violence, if they witness it.**

On the whole, it was observed that **92 % AGs demonstrated an understanding on violence and its various forms.**

During FGDs, AGs stated that movie songs objectify women as they are demeaning to women. They spoke in detail about the various forms of violence they witness around them.

## 2. ENHANCED UNDERSTANDING ON ADOLESCENT SEXUALITY

During course of the project, it was seen that issues of Healthy and Unhealthy Romantic Relationship, Consent and Violence in romantic relationship needed to be addressed for the emotional and social wellbeing of the AGs. The project worked on enhancing AGs understanding on these issues since this is the phase in an individual's life where different changes occurs that puts them under stress. This may result in adverse physical and psychological consequences. 71 % of the AGs responded that romantic relationship between two girls is normal depicting their understanding on same sex relationships.

**50 % of the AGs responded that it is not acceptable for our partner to slap us/ be violent with us on the pretext of being concerned. 94 % AG respondents were against the idea that the partner has the right to constantly track and monitor the daily activities of the other. 97 % of the AGs were of the opinion that consent is important for having physical intimacy, whereas 76 %AGs stated that they have taken some initiatives in making their relationship equal. 60 % of the AGs said that they have shared their understanding of healthy relationship with their peers.**

**74.76 % AGs showed a positive understanding on the issues of adolescent sexuality.** Girls were able to identify restrictive behaviors of partners and unhealthy relationships. 50 % girls affirmed the idea of partner slapping them for their good, which depicts the need to work more deeply on the issue of violence in romantic relationship.





# OUTCOMES

## PROJECT OUTCOMES

In 70 villages of Kangra and Chamba districts of Himachal Pradesh, AAGAJ programme began the process of transformation in the lives of nearly 3000 adolescent girls, especially from the socio-economic and geographically disadvantaged communities.

**Changes can be viewed at 5 levels :**

**Individual, Community, System / State / Duty bearers, CSOs and Organizational Level.**

### 1. OUTCOMES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Regular activities conducted as part of the project significantly impacted the lives of adolescent girls from Kangra and Chamba districts and led to an enhanced understanding of the following:

#### **A (i) Gender Perspectives:**

- Enhanced understanding on the Concept of Gender, Gender Discrimination at the socio-cultural levels, Gender Stereotypes, Masculinity, Femininity, Gendered Division of Labour, Patriarchy.
- With increased knowledge and understanding, many AGs are able to identify and challenge discriminatory practices at individual, family and community level, thereby moving towards more equity-oriented relationships.

“Both boys and girls can go out and work. It’s very difficult for girls to follow their choices, but I have started discussing about my goals with my parents and I think I’ll be able to do what I want”

“Boys wear whatever they want, they are never questioned. Then why does the society have problems with our dressing? They just want to control us. We should wear whatever we want.”

“Earlier, I would do all the household chores alone and thought it is only my responsibility. After attending the meetings and listening to Jagori Didi and other girls, I started to engage my brothers in cleaning and washing clothes. Earlier they were a little hesitant but gradually they have started doing house work.”

“I used to think girls can never be as powerful as boys because everyone around us tells us this. With continuous discussions with Jagori didi, I now understand that if given an opportunity, girls can do whatever they want. We can go out and work, play sports and do everything that a boy can do.”



**(ii) Menstrual health**

- Enhanced Scientific understanding of Menstruation, Menstrual Cycle, Personal hygiene, Deconstructing myths around menstruation and De-stigmatizing menstruation, Menstrual Hygiene and Management.
- AGs have broken silence on taboos related to menstruation.

“When I started having periods, I did not understand what was happening in my body. I asked my mother but she did not give me a clear answer. I was confused. After attending JR health workshop, I understood the process of menstruation and realize that this is a natural process”.

“I haven’t started menstruating yet but with acquired knowledge from JR’s workshops, I am prepared for it. One of my friends got her period and spoke to me about it. I told her about the process of menstruation and how to use and change pads.”

“During menstruation, I used to restrain myself from any intense physical activity or going out, but since I have started doing yoga asanas for period pain and eating healthy - it makes me feel better.”

“When I heard that one can go to the temple during menstruation in one of the trainings, I did not agree with it because I believed that if I would do so, I would be cursed. I was scared. After listening to experiences of some girls, I thought I should give a try. When I went to the temple one day during my periods, nothing wrong happened. I was thrilled. These are all just myths.”

**(iii) Sexual and reproductive health**

- Built understanding on different sexualities, Body literacy and Reproductive Health issues (white discharge/UTI etc.)

“I used to change my cloth pad only once in the day. Only after listening to Jagori Didi, I came to know that it is important to change the pad regularly. I also started to wash and dry the cloth in the Sun. I encourage all the girls in my family also do the same.”

“I used to hide my soiled underwear deep in the cupboard. After washing it, I used to dry it under the other clothes. In the personal hygiene session, Jagori didi explained everything in detail and I realized why I was having itching. Now I wash my underclothes and dry them in the Sun.”

“If a girl likes a girl romantically, our society does not approve of the relationship. There is nothing unusual in getting attracted towards the same sex.”

**(iv) Nutrition, Health and Wellness**

- Improved knowledge and information on Holistic Health - Physical, Mental and Emotional health and wellbeing.
- Improved Dietary practices among AGs- the strategies adopted by the Project team brought changes in choice of nutrient rich foods, methods of cooking, eating three meals a day especially taking breakfast.
- Adopted home methods to increase HB levels
- Some girls asked for iron/folic acid tablets from the Anganwadi workers

“My mother took me to a faith healer since I was feeling weak. Once I was in the health camp held by Jagori in our village where I came to know that my HB is 7 gms. This was the actual reason for feeling exhausted and low all the time. I began to eat black channa/ protein rich foods/ cooking in iron utensil which I learnt in the Jagori meetings. My HB has improved now and I go to the local dispensary to get my HB checked.”

**(v) Gender Based Violence**

- Enhanced understanding on Gender based Violence and its forms – Physical, Mental, Emotional, Sexual, Economic and Education
- Increased awareness on Child Sexual Abuse, Safe and Unsafe touch and POCSO Act.
- After acquiring awareness on Childline, few girls have called the helpline in situations they or others need help.
- Few girls were able to identify and raise their voice against violence in their romantic relationships.
- **Enhanced understanding of consent and saying 'no'** has reassured a few girls to negotiate their relationships.

“A man was sexually harassing me on a bus and I complained to the conductor who immediately threw him out of the bus”

“I can differentiate between safe and unsafe touch. I have shared this learning with my sisters and peers as well”.

In a relationship, if a girl has no space to speak her mind and the boy forces her to get into physical relations, then it's not an equal relationship.”

“After my parents left for the temple every day, my uncle used to forcibly show me porn. In a meeting, while we were discussing violence, I shared it with my group - they and Jagori Didi gave me courage to talk about it with my mother”

“Media shows violence as normal. When the boyfriend blackmails, forcefully checks our phone, pressurizes us to make physical relations, then it's a sign of danger. We should be clear if we want such a relationship or not. If you are not sure, you should come out of it.”

“It is wrong when boys blackmail girls. Boys threaten girls that they would die or do something horrible to themselves. This is not love. They are not giving importance to their own lives, nor do they really care about us.”

## B. Augmenting Self Esteem and Confidence

- Regular interactions helped in building AGs's confidence through reflection with peers on shared lived experiences.
- The process, enabled them to speak up in the groups, which initially they were hesitant and reticent about.
- Learnings enabled AGs to understand their own issues - *issues they had been struggling with and found affirmation of their concerns through sharings* within the group, finding support in each other, as well as from the Project team
- *Reclaiming spaces and increased visibility* in Sports and other Public events is another outcome of the Project intervention.
- Networks of Friendship and Peer support contributed in building self-esteem of AGs.

"This is for the first time that I am holding a mic and getting to speak in front of so many people. I am so happy."

"One girl has joined a cricket coaching academy and she is the only girl there playing along with boys."

"We can change the definition of a girl given by the society. Even girls can keep short hair and wear jeans. Good Girl and Bad Girl are just words- a girl is just a girl!"

"I went to Kishori Utsav organized by JR. The utsav had so many girls performing on the stage and their enthusiasm and fearlessness gave me the courage to give a dance performance"

"I had always wanted to play cricket but I couldn't as no other girl in my village played cricket. I was elated when I got to know that JR was going to organize a cricket tournament for girls and I spoke to my father, who encouraged me to play. He was the happiest when my team won".

"JR has made it possible for girls like us to step out of our homes, earlier we weren't allowed to go anywhere except to our relatives place - now we go for meetings and residential workshops at JR. I got to play cricket for the first time in the cricket matches conducted by JR - it was such a good feeling - I felt so free"

### C. Project Team and AGs

- *Increased rapport between the AGs and the Project team* helped the AGs to connect and develop relationships of trust.
- The regular village level visits, door to door visits also alleviated linking with family members, especially *some mothers of AGs and other key stakeholders* including Anganwadi workers and PRI officials, resulting in changes in their perspective.
- Adolescent girls have availed opportunities and used the JR platform effectively in *Breaking their Silence, Overcoming Fears, Expressing themselves openly, Asserting their choices and Challenging Discriminatory Practices* that they face *within and outside* their homes.

JR Team member: “ Often some mothers approach us to talk to their daughters about sensitive issues and become a bridge between their conversations.

Mothers also feel that we have a positive influence on the girls”.

Another team member: “ The girls share their learnt knowledge with their mothers which is heartening. Girls also begin to understand their mothers better, value their mother’s role and contribution to the family and support them in family decisions. Sometimes they even prod them to participate and voice their opinions more often.”

## 2. OUTCOMES AT COMMUNITY LEVEL

### (i) Family

A number of girls shared their learnt knowledge from workshops with their mothers on Gender roles, Menstrual Health and Hygiene, Nutrition and Violence. Some of them also began dialogues with their fathers and brothers and other family members.

- **Increased openness and communication** among some mothers and daughters was a major outcome of the work of the Project Team. Some of mothers have begun to have more trust and faith in their daughter's opinions and actions. Mothers have reported that their daughters have become their strength especially in decision making in the family. Mothers themselves have started encouraging their daughters to attend JR's meetings, workshops, campaign and other activities which in itself is an acknowledgement of the work of the Project team.
- Improved relationship between daughters and fathers- Some of the fathers have started acknowledging their daughters, their opinions and choices and there has been an openness in communication especially on taboo issues. (A few girls have asked their fathers to purchase pads and join in household chores)
- Some girls have reported that their brothers have started doing household chores.
- Few fathers and brothers have encouraged and taught cricket to girls - a step towards improved relationships within the family and a major achievement of the intervention process.
- A few brothers of AGs also acted as umpires for the cricket matches.
- Girls have also taken their learnings forward to other girls in their family and community.

“At JR, I learnt about gender division of work and discrimination. I began to discuss about this with my father. Initially, he resisted but has gradually started helping in the household work. My mother is so happy to see this change.” AG

Deepa has been a regular participant in the meetings and events along with her mother Seema, who is a single mother. Deepa contacted ‘Childline’ regarding the harassment faced by both of them at the hands of her relatives regarding property. Previously, Deepa had also taken on a group of boys harassing her by threatening to register a complaint under POCSO.

“Earlier my daughters used to quietly listen to whatever I would say. But now whenever I say something wrong or restrict them from anything, they reply saying that I am controlling them. This changed behavior often makes me scared but helps me to reflect on my attitudes.”  
( AG’s Father)

“Why don’t you do butterfly and other yoga asanas as you have abdominal pain during menstruation, said my daughter. I was surprised as she has not started menstruating and I have never discussed about it with her.” AG’s mother

“Once we were discussing how daughters don’t have a right over the property of their father. To this, Pinky reacted and shared that girls do have a right but they don’t claim it because either they are not aware of it or due to social norms related to it. I felt weird and amused to see her talking like this to me. But her firm and convincing talk did hit me and I told her that she is entitled to the share of the family property.” (AGs Father)



**MOTHERS WHO ATTEND PROJECT MEETINGS REGULARLY SHARED:**

“In my community, the girls are still struggling to find equality but I have changed things starting from my home and tried to give equal treatment to both sons as well as daughters.”

“I used to put a lot of restrictions on my daughter, especially during menstruation. The meetings have however, changed my perspective on the whole process of menstruation. We were taught the whole menstrual cycle through educational aprons and how it is a natural process and that it is not impure. I have ever since started encouraging my daughter to follow her heart and even allowed her to start visiting temples and touching pickle during that time.

**(ii.) Peer Leaders**

- Emergence of a group of girls who are finding a strong grip over the concepts and issues discussed in the meetings and workshops conducted by AAGAJ team. This Cohort of peer leaders coming together created a space for peer support and inter-learning. This led to building of Self-supporting system.
- The Project team worked closely with this cohort of peer leaders, who gradually developed self-expression, practicing empathy and abilities to negotiate their own personal relationships and raise their voice against various forms of discrimination in the community.
- Peer Group took on Leadership roles and designed social action projects which they implemented in their respective communities and mobilized more young girls from their communities to become a part of JR's learning and leadership journeys.
- Collective Action is the mainstay of this Cohort.

For example: **(a) Filed an RTI for road construction in the village (b) Demanded for a College in a Public Hearing (c) Filed FIRs on various issues (d) Demanded for a sanitary disposal mechanism in the school (e) Complained in the school against harassment by boys and male teachers** - Action was taken in each of these cases which is a positive outcome of the project's intervention.

“A woman near my house was facing continuous harassment by her husband and her mother-in-law for bearing only daughters, after she gave birth to a third daughter. I could not stand the exploitation and intervened in the matter. I gave them the scientific explanation on XX and XY chromosomes that determines the sex of the baby that I had learnt during one of the workshops of the project. I also told them that the daughter-in-law can file a complaint against them, if they continue to do so”

**(iii.) Teachers**

- Project team's process of continuous engagement with schools resulted in sensitizing teachers on Gender Discriminatory Practices, Gender based violence and POCSO Act.
- Teachers took active role in initiating as well as partnering with AGs and JR to redress the grievances of AGs.

### 3. OUTCOMES AT SYSTEM / STATE / DUTY BEARER LEVEL

There has been a continuous engagement with different stakeholders in the community resulting in building mutual trust and affirmation for consistent work with AGs in the community. The stakeholders include, AWW, PRIs, ASHA workers, ICDS workers, Police department, etc.

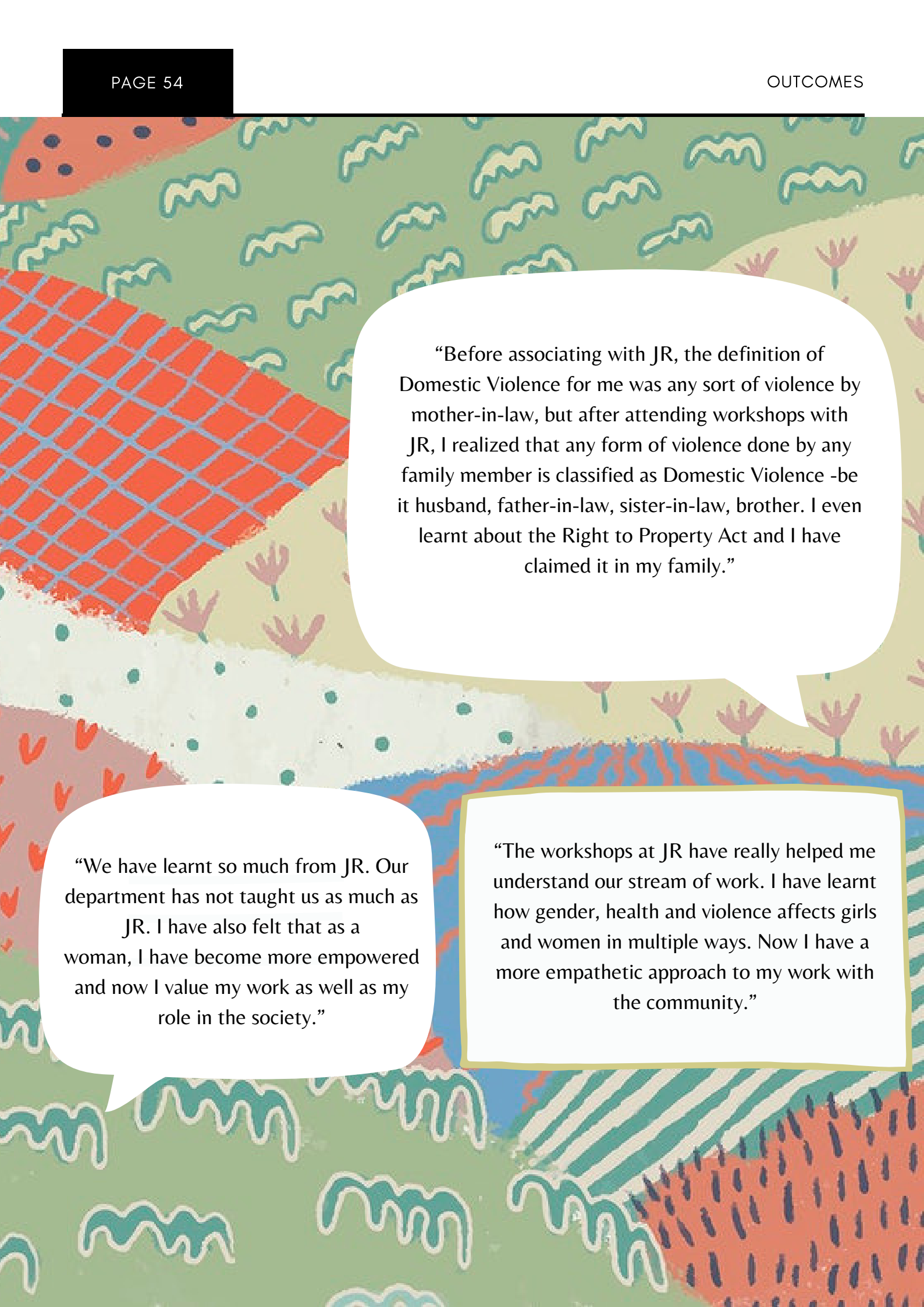
#### (i) Anganwadi Workers

- The project witnessed the emergence of a cadre of Anganwadi workers as ***'ambassadors of women's and girl's rights'***, who act as agents of change in the community.
- Some AWW have taken significant initiatives in addressing the issues of Gender Equality, Health and Well-being of adolescent girls. The mainstay of change amongst these AWWs has been the development of a strong sense of self and understanding gender discrimination starting from their homes.
- AWWs have actively come forward and held meetings on issues Health and POCSO Act.
- Cross-learnings among AWWs and the larger group is another positive consequence of the project intervention

(ii) Good relationships established with CDPOs and DPO and Project team. In recognition of JR's work, they often reached out and connected more functionaries to our workshops and trainings.

(iii) Through JR's organizational intervention programs, several other levels of functionaries, such as Protection Officers, Police Officials, Child Welfare Committee Officers have been sensitized over a period of time. This has benefitted AAGAJ project indirectly since we found support in many ways from these functionaries as well.

There have also been instances of AGs meeting duty bearers to demand their rights, entitlements and raising their voices against other local concerns.



“Before associating with JR, the definition of Domestic Violence for me was any sort of violence by mother-in-law, but after attending workshops with JR, I realized that any form of violence done by any family member is classified as Domestic Violence -be it husband, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother. I even learnt about the Right to Property Act and I have claimed it in my family.”

“We have learnt so much from JR. Our department has not taught us as much as JR. I have also felt that as a woman, I have become more empowered and now I value my work as well as my role in the society.”

“The workshops at JR have really helped me understand our stream of work. I have learnt how gender, health and violence affects girls and women in multiple ways. Now I have a more empathetic approach to my work with the community.”

#### 4. OUTCOMES AT CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSO) LEVEL

- APPI proposed JR as a model agency to bring other NGOs working in the same area. A three-day Dialogue with NGOs working with Adolescent Girls from different parts of the country was organized by JR in Dharamshala. This was a very intensive sharing and learning process.

**(a) This improved cross-learning, sharing of methodology, resource material and building synergies; (b) It also helped to understand the sustainability models being used by others; (c) Built strategies to overcome challenges like dealing with resistance from the micro and macro environment of the adolescents; (d) Built a network of the professionals; and (e) Convergence of alliance building strategies (f) Way forward while working alone and together were a major outcome.**

- NGOs decided to adopt Best Practices discussed by other NGOs
- Collaborations on specific areas among NGOs emerged as a positive result.

“A lot of organizational and personal reflection made it very meaningful. Why am I doing this work? Why am I with this organization? Am I aligned with the organization’s mission and vision? All these confusions got cleared with mutual dialogue.” - Aanandi, Gujrat

“Great to meet like-minded organizations. We are a relatively new project and we have gotten many new ideas. We do different work but we all have the same goal, the same passion. We will adopt few training materials in our work.” - Preeti, Lucknow

“When I started working on adolescent girl issues, I hardly found any other people working in this area. I really appreciate Jagori’s work with AGs.”  
- Nari Gunjan, Bihar

## 5. OUTCOMES AT THE ORGANISATION LEVEL

### *Capacity Building of Team*

- When the Project team accompanied the AGs for Exposure Visits to different NGOs, they also enhanced their own capacities on (a) strategies of engaging with youth, (b) monitoring methods, (c) use of IEC materials.
- Exposure visits of Project team members to NGOs outside Himachal provided them an opportunity to learn about (a) training methods and modules, (b) documentation, (c) monitoring and evaluation, (d) organizational behavior, and (e) structure and functions of the three organizations they visited.
- Training within JR through workshops has increased the team's conceptual clarity on the themes related to the project.
- **Broadening of horizons through knowledge on intersectionality** and integrating topics of casteism, rights, religion, etc. has deepened the understanding and initiatives of the team.
- With enhanced skills, selected team members are able to (a) conduct sessions and trainings of AGs, and (b) counselling AGs.
- Project team members have been successful in including some mothers in such a manner that a group of **Aware Mothers** has emerged.

**The intervention of the project, major achievements, outcomes, and challenges have been put together in the form of a documentary movie.**

***AAGAJ project has contributed immensely to the growth of Jagori Rural as an organization.***

“I have broadened my understanding on the issues of health and sexuality. I have come to accept that there are relationships beyond heterosexual relationships. I am hopeful this knowledge will reflect in my work as well”.

(Team member)

“As a young teenager, you have so many questions and you always want someone to hear you out. I also had so many questions that I could not share with anyone. I want to be that friend to the girls which I never had at that age to share, talk and find answers”.

(Team member)

## CHALLENGES

- Difficult geographic terrain of Himachal is a challenge for all the team members. In some villages they have to walk on long, hilly paths to reach the AGs in their villages. Especially during monsoons, it is difficult to reach some villages of Kangra and Chamba districts.
- For the school sessions, permission is a major issue. A lot of time is spent in obtaining permissions from the Education Department and dates from Principals of specific schools.
- Many a times, while our sessions are going on in schools, some teachers sit inside the classrooms to keep a check on the content being discussed which is sometimes not conducive for an open dialogue with the students.
- The Project team has to work within the school calendar - exams, holidays, etc. which affects the flow of the intervention processes.
- The team members have faced challenges in some villages due to the visible caste divide. They have to constantly strategize intervention methods.
- For residential workshops in particular, it is sometimes an arduous task to mobilize girls, since their parents are overprotective and concerned.
- Sometimes, it becomes difficult to get in touch with the same group of adolescents for regular follow-ups.
- More recently, the COVID pandemic disrupted the Project's regular work and planned activities.

## COVID TIMES

The unexpected outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the social reality of migrant and daily wage workers, vulnerable groups, such as single women, the elderly and the infirm and the survivors of exploitation, cruelty, indifference, oppression and deprivation.

The regular, planned activities of JR had to be suspended but JR swung into action by initiating ***Caravan of Humanity***, a compassionate humanitarian relief work. The objective of the initiative was to ensure essential ration supply to those who have not received support from any agencies. Encouraged by the donations from like-minded and friends, JR field team members identified the most-needy in their field areas, made detailed lists, began procuring and packing rations and worked in coordination with the district administration. The administration also assisted by giving requisite permissions and sending their staff and vehicles to the block levels with the JR team for distribution of rations. JR reached out to 15635 individuals in Kangra, 2445 in Chamba and a total of 28965 individuals in 7 states of the country. The JR team worked in complete coordination, transforming most of the challenges into opportunities.

JR responded to the nutritional needs of AGs since the majority of them are anaemic. In the current crisis, it is expected to worsen with decreased household incomes and falling access to nutrition. JR distributed nutrition power packets along with a packet of sanitary pads. The packet contained nutrient rich items including raisins, pea nuts, jaggery, dates, and yellow gram, and an informative letter and a pamphlet containing essential helpline numbers for the girls owing to the increased violence on girls and women during the lockdown. The relief assistance campaign of the project team reached out to approximately 900 adolescent girls and their families. During the distribution, dialogues were held with the girls, maintaining physical distancing, on increased abuse in households.





# CONCLUSION



The three years of the project brought about a better understanding about the possibilities and limits of working with the adolescent girls. The continuation of the project has the possibility of exponentially increasing the outreach and further strengthening the peer leadership. The project along with Jagori Rural created goodwill not only with the adolescent girls, but also with the larger community and stakeholders. If the project continues for another 3 years, the overall objective of developing peer leadership and increasing ownership of the community can be achieved.

Qualitative shifts during the project period are a major achievement and a valuable resource for building accountability of the emerging leadership. Acknowledging that the youth is going to play a significant role in the future democratic process, the project has the potential to provide the base for building potential leadership to work with various state and non-state actors.

During the project implementation period, the participant Adolescent Girls have learnt the value of decision making, making of informed choices and became more aware of various options in their life. Their thought process has evolved and it has helped them to realize their own potentials and capabilities.

The scope of the project has grown substantially and the onus is increasingly being shared by various stakeholders. The project has also contributed in enhancing the value of Jagori Rural's work in significant ways.



# FOOTSTEPS OF CHANGE

VOICES FROM THE GROUND



## ANGANWADI WORKERS' CHANGE STORIES



### **STORY OF KUSUM KUMARI, AWW**

Deeply connected to her work, Kusum is an Anganwadi worker from a village of Chamba. She helps JR to organize meetings in the village where she has made meaningful comments.

In one session, after screening a video on domestic violence, Kusum responded cynically and said that 'outside wounds are easily visible but there is no cure for inner wounds'. Worried at hearing this, the team member inquired if everything was okay with her. She broke down and narrated her story.

Kusum said that she was married when she was 18 and her husband has suspicious and doubting nature. Since the Anganwadi center is in the school, Kusum interacts with men teachers as well. Due to this, her husband often fights with her. He also does not let her talk to her family on the phone and checks her phone as well and mistrusts her all the time. With sadness in her tone, she said that since she feared that he would fight with her, she started agreeing to everything that her husband said. Narrating this to the team member, Kusum broke down again. The team member counseled Kusum to stand up for herself. But Kusum was desolate and said that there is nothing she could do!

JR team member kept in touch with Kusum and began following-up regularly about her well-being. She gradually persuaded Kusum to attend a workshop for AWWs at JR premises.

The training somehow was the beginning of change in Kusum's life. She began to comprehend her plight and decided to work towards bringing positive changes in her life. She started resisting the physical and emotional violence that she was facing and spoke up against the unfair treatment at the hands of her husband. She filed the domestic violence case and has taken divorce from that man.

Kusum has also taken this awareness to other women around her and motivates them to stand up for themselves. She persuaded two women to register their cases of domestic violence with JR Nari Adalat which enabled them to get justice.

## STORY OF UMA, AWW

*“Even if a woman is financially independent, she is not free, until she can take decisions in her family.”*

Joining work as an Anganwadi worker was my own decision and I struggled a lot with my family in the initial days of work. My in-laws used to taunt me all the time for not being at home and I had no say in the family. This made me realize how essential it is for girls and women like me to become independent, make life choices and also get support from the family.

I used to attend some of the village level meetings conducted by the JR team with the girls. Once JR organised a residential workshop for the girls and I also decided to attend it. That was the first time I got an opportunity to share my struggles regarding my family and felt that someone was listening to me and it made me feel accepted and no one was judgemental. The conversations and meetings of the team members sparked an interest in me and I started attending JR's meetings and programs more regularly.

Initially, people in my village were hesitant to send their daughters to attend night meetings and residential workshops with the JR team. As girls started pointing out discrimination at home and raised voices for higher education, people began to blame me for giving exposure to them. My husband also pushed me not to engage in any work with JR when he sensed that the community had started to question my work. I did feel bad but decided not to get affected and strengthened my resolve to work for the girls along with JR's support. I strategized and collectivized women of my village and convinced them to support their daughters. As more girls joined JR's efforts, I too evolved with them.

I belong to a joint family and I have two sons. I used to do all the household chores alone. I was impressed by JR's belief of equal division of work at home and it motivated me to push my sons and husband to contribute in household chores. I have also noticed that my father-in-law has now stopped taunting me for engaging my sons in the household chores and sometimes when no one is at home, he cooks for himself.

*“Women never think about themselves, it's a challenge for them to follow their heart. It was after attending workshops with JR, I realized how important it is to understand our needs and work towards attaining them. This has increased my confidence and now I try to choose for myself as well.”*

I had never imagined that my household environment would change in such a manner. Now my family recognizes my work and my opinions. Talking openly with the JR team members helped me in getting tuned with my feelings and I got the courage to raise my voice. Starting from changing things at my home, I encouraged other women in the village to stand for their rights and raise voice against any form of discrimination or violence. I also advocate for girls education in my village and have enrolled dropout girls in school. I made sure that I lead a life with a higher sense of purpose and inspire other girls in the village, who want to be independent and would like to work as they grow up.

## STORY OF ASHA, AWW

For more than 10 years of marriage, Sneh had asked herself why was it that her husband and her family didn't like her and kept taunting and torturing her. With no support for years, her mental health was deteriorating day by day and she was in the state of despair when she met Asha. Soon Sneh gathered courage to talk about her difficulties of everyday life with Asha who understood exactly what was happening. Asha gradually made Sneh aware of the domestic violence situation in her home and the fact that it was unfair and could be addressed. Asha started getting Sneh to the JR's meetings and programs.

Asha said, *"It takes the first step to begin any journey and it's a difficult and long one in the lives of women."* Sneh, with all the encouragement and support from Asha, started confronting her husband and in-laws. She gained confidence to fight back and gradually there was a change in her household environment.

Asha is an Anganwadi worker in a village of Rait block. Like Sneh, she has been supporting many women in and around her village to raise voice against any sort of violence. In her own family, Asha has even filed a domestic violence case against her son-in-law who was abusive towards her daughter and got her divorce. Her daughter lives with her now. **Asha admits that life has hit her hard many times but she has never given up and is always hopeful.**

She shares that though she had attended training programs on different schemes related to women but it was only after associating with JR, that she actually understood violence against women and got detailed information about Domestic Violence Act. She has been persistent in attending the JR meetings and programs with other AWWs and mothers of AGs.

*'Through JR I connected with many other women of the area and their change stories have deeply impacted me'.*

Asha keeps encouraging parents of the girls in her family to let them be independent and participate in JR's programs.

## STORY OF NEHA, AWW

*“I used to think that the life of a woman is all about doing household chores and taking care of husband and children”* said Neha. She added that she was very confused and troubled with her life before she started coming for JR trainings. With JR, she deepened her understanding of Gender inequality and worked towards changing her home environment.

Recalling one workshop, she shared,

*“I always thought I was treating my daughter and son equally. But when all other participants talked in detail about how at home, we engage our daughters in the kitchen and give all outside work to our sons, it made me reflect on my behavior. I was discriminating in some sense. From that moment I consciously started making efforts to make my home a better and equal place. Now I make sure that my son is contributing equally to household chores. He cleans the house, washes his own clothes and also cooks.”*

Neha shared that she had heard about the Right to Property for girls but never thought that a daughter could get any property since the traditional practice is that it belongs to sons. It was through discussions in JR that she learnt about this and gradually gained confidence and raised her voice in her family for property rights for herself as a daughter in the family. She said: *“My Anganwadi is in my maternal village. My parents stay there alone. I have always been taking care of them. As they are growing old, I keep visiting them every week. I have two brothers who stay in a nearby village with their families but they never reach out to our parents and are rather negligent towards their health and needs.”* Neha has been the sole support to her elderly parents, but her mother remains partial to her sons – this attitude has bothered her in life. One time, her mother was severely ill and had to be admitted to a hospital. Neha was with her mother all the time and when they returned home, it was then that her brothers came to visit. She was very angry at her brothers and that day told everyone that she needs her share in the property as she has been taking up all the responsibilities of being with parents. This provoked her brothers and even her mother. But she kept up the courage and tried to make her parents understand this. There was a strong resistance from her parents as well as brothers. Neha was very disappointed, but with determination and will, she finally got a share in the property. This was not an effortless step - it was possible with Neha’s perseverance and courageous efforts. Neha is an inspiration to many others now. She has encouraged many families to connect their daughters with higher studies and give girls, their share of property. Many girls are now attending college and some are doing their own small business to earn a living.

Neha chose to cut her hair short - *“My learning from JR gave me that courage to do something for myself and I did cut my hair. Somehow, I felt a sense of empowerment doing this”*.



## COLLECTIVE CHANGE STORIES



### **VOICING THEIR DEMANDS AT JANMANCH**

Thirty kilometers away from Shahpur, the villages in upper Rait are located far away from the main road. Very narrow stretches of roads exist and landslides occur during heavy rainfall. The houses are also very far off from one another and the villagers often walk long stretches for their daily needs.

One of the major concerns of the area is the absence of a college in the close vicinity. Students travel to Shahpur when they join college, which is very inconvenient. Most of the residents of this area are daily wagers with low household incomes. Commuting to the college and back is also something which many cannot afford. Added to this is the long commute and often they are not able to join college. Girls have long complained of the absence of a college in their area.

Ankita, Anshika, Shalini and Sawari are AGs from the upper Rait region and are a part of the JR Girls Collective. In July'19, a 'Janmanch' was organized in a School of that block. MLA, CDPO and BDO were part of the Janmanch. It was an open forum where the villagers put forward their grievances. Girls along with the JR team planned to voice their demand for college at the Janmanch and to submit a written application for the same.

Encapsulating all their experiences, these four girls from JR Girls Collective put forward their demand in Janmanch for a college so that they can pursue higher education. Listening to the complaints from the girls, the MLA assured them that their demands would address and action will be taken soon. Recently, land has been identified for a college – this is a big step forward.

## DURGELLA GIRLS COLLECTIVE

*“It was difficult to change our sanitary napkins during school hours as there were no means to dispose them. Therefore, girls would mostly end up using a single pad throughout the day”.*

The relationship of young girls with menstruation constantly changes and evolves. The onset of menstruation brings many physical and mental changes for young girls. School going girls often miss school during their periods. Changing their pad during school hours bothers many girls because of unclean toilets, no proper disposal in many schools. Added to this is the taboo around menstruation which allows no space for young girls to express their concerns on the issue. This directly affects the health and education of young girls. Keeping in mind these concerns, girls from Durgella collective came together to demand for a proper disposal system for period waste in school.

Shivani, Anita, Anju and Neelam are friends and residents of Durgella village. They are part of the Durgella Girls Collective which has been associated with JR for a while now. The girls of the collective came together and deliberated on this issue. They then spoke to their teacher and Project team and decided to give a written application to the Principal, along with the signatures of all girls of the school. A few days later, a brick structure was set up in the form of a dustbin for girls to dispose period waste. The waste is burned there from time to time.

Reflecting on menstruation and hygiene, Anita said, *“Our meetings with JR taught us the importance of hygiene during periods, regularly change our pads and proper disposal as well”.*



## CHANANI GIRLS COLLECTIVE

Far off from the main road, the way to Chanani village passes through a 'kuccha' road in the forest. It was a challenge to mobilize the girls from that village for residential training.

In one of the residential workshops, girls undertook the exercise of safety mapping of their villages. Girls from this village, talked about various problems faced by their community. Girls stressed that not having a 'puccha' road was a prominent challenge faced by everyone. Girls had to undertake long and arduous walks to school. They had to leave very early for school finishing some household chores. During monsoons, they would not be able to attend school for 4-5 days continuously since the road conditions became worse. One of the girls shared that two of her friends dropped out, as the walking distance to school was long and unpaved roads would make it more strenuous for them to travel. The girls shared with the AAGAJ team members that the plan for constructing a road had been sanctioned but the work had not begun.

The girls got very interested when the Project team discussed the importance and process of Right to Information Act (RTI). A few of them talked about filing an RTI to their families but they were all quite dismissive. However, they were determined and with guidance from the Jagori didis, Pushpa along with three other girls filed an RTI application asking for the reasons of delay in construction of the road. To their surprise a reply came within a month. The girls collectivized other community members and took that letter to the Gram Pradhan. He was surprised to read that the budget had already been already sanctioned. Then, within 6 months the road construction work started and everyone started appreciating the girls' efforts.

This was just the start. Girls are determined to work collectively on many other concerns of their village. They don't have an ATM facility in their area and they are planning to advocate for this now.

## GIRLS OF JANYA

Meena, Piya and Arshee are sisters and study in the same school in Janya village. Piya and Meena are talkative and quite vocal, Arshee on the other hand, is a little reserved. They have been regulars at JR meetings for the past two years but at one point they stopped coming to the meetings. On inquiring, it was found that Piya and Meena were spotted talking to boys by their brother. As a result, their movements outside their house began to be monitored and her brother spoke harshly to Priya. He also confronted the AAGAJ team members and expressed his concern about girls going for overnight workshops. He went to the extent of asking the AAGAJ team members to leave the village and stop conducting meetings there.

The Team members strategized to meet other boys in the community and spoke to them about the growing-up issues of adolescence and relationships and how JR try to build an understanding on the same while opening conversations. After the interaction with the boys and girls and three months of persuasion, the three sisters joined us again. This time around, the boys in the community also actively came out to support the effort of the teams.

Our relationships with the mothers of AGs also improved with continuous interactions with them. Mothers gradually began to appreciate their association with JR, spoke in detail about their own experiences as mothers and the transformations in their daughters, as well as their hopes for them.

Seema Devi, Punam's mother, said: "Punam has started drying her undergarments in the Sun, something that she learnt from trainings. I also do the same. My daughter is more confident in going out now".

Sonu Kumari, Arshee's mother said, "My daughter taught me that there is nothing wrong in going to the temple during menstruation. You are not dirty- didi has told us. Arshee speaks less and I keep pushing her to speak more. I attended the Maa Beti Mela and then I told her that even if you don't want to attend any meeting, I will definitely go". Arshee's mother has been extremely interested and eager to understand and gather factual information from us. She encourages her daughter to join JR's programmes and engage in dialogues and conversations.



## INDIVIDUAL CHANGE STORIES

### STORY OF NINA

“You are not fair. You are dark skinned”- these were the words that Nina grew up hearing (like many girls in our society). Her grandmother’s comments about her colour made her upset. She was so conscious of her skin colour that she would not even want to get photographs clicked with her friends. During school programmes, she would be made to stand at the back. Nina shared that it was only after she started visiting JR meetings that she began to gain some confidence. She has slowly come to accept her skin colour and is not bogged down by comments any longer.

It has been gratifying for the AAGAJ team that Nina and her peers have understood the prejudices around colour and begun to value themselves. Nina now knows that skin colour does not define a person and has gained much confidence. Nina discussed her learning on gender and gendered division of labor with her family. Her father has gradually begun to contribute to household chores and Nina’s relationship with her father has also improved.

Nina has also impacted many around her in a positive manner. She encouraged her older sister who was facing violence in her marriage to seek help. Nina initiated a discussion regarding this with the family, took support from JR and encouraged her sister to register a police complaint.

### STARTING OF GETTING HEALTHIER

In the initial AAGAJ meetings on nutrition in a village of Kangra, it was found that some girls in the village would get up at midnight to eat soil and kacha (raw) rice. AAGAJ team members consulted a doctor and recognized that this risky habit results in poor nutrition levels impacting HB levels of girls. The team consulted ASHA worker and all girls were given iron and calcium tablets regularly for 6 months. In the Project meetings, team members stress on adopting healthy dietary practices, taking iron supplements and harmful effects of eating wrong things. Owing to the supplements and changed dietary practices, the habit of eating uncooked rice and soil slowly faded away.

## **GROWING AND LEARNING**

Shikha is one of the youngest from the kishori samoohs. She always has many questions to ask and is full of enthusiasm and is willing to learn. Even before Shikha started menstruating, she would speak openly about it and educate girls in the JR meetings. She would go and buy sanitary napkin for her cousin sister from her uncle's shop since her sister felt shy. She would keep the money on the counter and pick up the pad herself. She would argue with her aunt who did not visit the temple on menstruating days. When Shikha started menstruating, she did not feel surprised or threatened and asked her mother to give her a sanitary pad. Her experience of her first period is unlike many girls who simply are unaware of periods as a biological process. Shikha has also negotiated and promoted equal sharing of household chores between siblings. Due to this, her brother undertakes household chores seriously even though he is younger than her. Shikha also sensitize girls in her community and has helped many girls to connect with JR. She has immense potential to take on a very active role in her community.

## **COMING INTO ONE'S OWN**

Nisha was always a conscious of her identity of being a girl in a family which wished for a boy child. Born after her sister, Neha's father always made her aware that she was not loved by him. When Nisha's brother was born some years later, she thought things would change. But that did not happen. Her father's attitude remained the same over the years and their relationship became tenser.

As Nisha started coming regularly to JR meetings, she shared that she would have fights with her father over the way he was treating her. As she started attending village level meetings, she started questioning the discriminatory behavior at home. Soon her father forbade her to join any JR meetings. Nisha was unhappy on this account but began to meet JR members when her father was not home.

As her relationship with her father worsened, her relationship with herself became stronger. She now feels more confident and continues to question discrimination against her by her father. Nisha's mother gradually began to support her too. She has gathered all this courage through the Girls Collective in her village which is a safe space for her, to share and learn.

Recently, Nisha's sister was being sexually harassed on the phone. Anita took matters into her own hand and tried to speak to the harasser to him, but it was futile. Nisha, then reached out to the JR team and with their help, got in touch with the police. Nisha spoke to the police personnel and they took immediate action.

From being a quiet and shy girl, Nisha has now become bold and assertive. She has attended two residential trainings with us and learnt Wendlido, which is a feminist self-defense technique. She shares that the Jagori trainings have given her a lot of confidence and she has connected with many other girls who have stood by her. Support from her mother and Jagori team keeps her spirits strong. She wants to become an independent working woman and take care of her mother.

## **NASEEM BANO**

Coming from the community of Gujjar Muslims in Chamba, Naseem said that her family had very traditional beliefs when it came to girls. Much like girls around her, she wasn't allowed to go alone anywhere. Naseem always used to cover her head with a dupatta and was strictly prohibited from interacting with Hindu boys.

Naseem's dream is to complete her education and find her own calling. After she finished her tenth standard, her parents told her that she shouldn't study further since Gujjar households do not have very educated boys and if she studies further, finding a suitable match for her would be tough.

Stepping out of her home wasn't an easy task for her. She had heard about JR workshops and wanted to join them but it took her quite a while to convince her family. When Naseem finally attended the workshop on gender, she was very quiet, like some other girls. Though unable to speak much, at the end of the meeting she shared, "There is something happening in her home which is not right. This keeps bothering me."

Meeting after meeting that she attended made her resolve stronger. She started resisting the restrictions at home. She began with the duppatta. When she first stopped covering her head, her family did not like it and many villagers said that she is becoming notorious and amoral. Due to this, her mother would scold her and fight with her and was unhappy with Naseem's changing attitude. Naseem began to discuss this with her mother and overtime made her realize that incorrect and orthodox beliefs are a hindrance.

Naseem is now among the few girls in the community who are continuing their education and continues to be associated with JR. She is more confident than before and is not afraid to go out of her house alone.

# को किया जागरूक



कार्यक्रम में किशोरियों को जानकारी देती जागोरी की संस्थापक आभा भैया • जागरण

**धर्मशाला :** जागोरी ग्रामीण संस्था ने नगरटा सूरिया की जांगल पंचायत में किशोरी दिवस का आयोजन किया गया। इसमें अलग-अलग किशोरी समूहों में किशोरियों ने भाग लिया। जागोरी ग्रामीण की ओर से आशा, चंद्रकांता, नवनीत, अनुपमा व ममता ने बताया कि कार्यक्रम का उद्देश्य युवतियों को एक ऐसा मंच प्रदान करना है, जहां पर वे अपने बारे में खुलकर बात कर सकें। समाज में

लड़कियों को परिस्थितियों से लड़ने व स्वास्थ्य से संबंधित समस्याओं पर बोलने के लिए प्रेरित किया

के खिलाफ आवाज उठाकर वे हिंसा मुक्त व सुंदर समाज का निर्माण कर सकें। कार्यक्रम के दौरान जागोरी ग्रामीण की संस्थापक आभा भैया ने लड़कियों को सामाजिक परिस्थितियों से लड़ने व स्वास्थ्य संबंधित समस्याओं पर खुलकर



**धर्मशाला (आशा) :** जागोरी ग्रामीणों द्वारा 3 से 5 नवंबर को रैत ब्लॉक के 8 आंगनबाड़ी केंद्रों की 55 किशोरियों के साथ दो दिवसीय क्षमतावर्धन कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया गया। कार्यशाला का उद्देश्य किशोरियों की अपने शरीर के प्रति समझ बनाते हुए कैसे एक सकारात्मक सोच का विकास करना और एक अलग पहचान बनाना था। कार्यशाला के दौरान किशोरियों को शारीरिक, मानसिक व यौनिक हिंसा से संबंधित फिल्में भी दिखाई गईं, ताकि वे इन सब बातों के विरुद्ध आवाज उठा सकें। कार्यशाला के दौरान बहुत सी किशोरियों ने अपनी कहानियां भी एक-दूसरे के साथ साझा की।

## ब्रॉफ न्यूज

### जागोरी ग्रामीण संस्था की कार्यशाला आयोजित



धर्मशाला : जागोरी ग्रामीण संस्था द्वारा आयोजित 4 दिवसीय कार्यशाला के दौरान सामूहिक चित्र में पीयर लीडर किशोरियां। (ब्यूरो)

धर्मशाला, 28 दिसम्बर (ब्यूरो): जागोरी ग्रामीण संस्था द्वारा रकड़ के तारा परिसर में 4 दिवसीय कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया गया, जिसमें कांगड़ा जिला की लगभग 14 पीयर लीडर किशोरियों ने भाग लिया। जागोरी ग्रामीण संस्था की सदस्य पूजा ने बताया कि संस्था द्वारा हर माह किशोरियों को जागरूक करने के लिए 4 दिवसीय कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया जाता है। उन्होंने कहा कि बैठक के माध्यम से आपसी रिश्ते को मजबूत करना व किशोरियों की जरूरतों के अनुसार एक विषय पर उनसे बात करना है, ताकि किशोरियां किसी भी विषय के ऊपर खुल कर अपने विचार सबके साथ साझा कर सकें। इस मौके पर संस्था के अन्य सदस्य मुख्य रूप से उपस्थित रहे।

हरचक्रियां में क्रिकेट व कबड्डी स्पर्धा में किशोरियों ने दिखाया दमखम



धर्मशाला, (आपका फेसल) : प्रथम प्रथम समाज में खेल को प्रोत्साहित करने लगे। इस पर शेरवत (हरचक्रियां) ने कहा कि जागोरी द्वारा हरचक्रियां में दो दिवसीय क्रिकेट व कबड्डी खेल प्रतियोगिता का आयोजन किया गया, जिसमें आठ नर्सों की 112 किशोरियों ने हिस्सा लिया। वेबे ही खेल शुरू हुआ तो यहां देखने व खेलने वाले व्यंथियों को उत्साह बढ़ गया और वे उनको प्रोत्साहित करने लगे। इस पर शेरवत (हरचक्रियां) ने कहा कि जागोरी द्वारा हरचक्रियां का निर्माण का मग में सुकड़ आया है। महिला का कला का कि हमें आगे बढ़ने के लिए इलाका नहीं करना चाहिए और सुकड़ मीकें खोलने होंगे और खेल को खेल को पार लेला जाना चाहिए।

## जागोरी ने शाहपुर-मटौर में लगाया मां-बेटी मेला

धर्मशाला। मां और बेटी के रिश्ते दोस्ती का अहसास भरने और उन शोषण के खिलाफ एकजुटता लाने उद्देश्य से मां-बेटी मेले का आयोजन हुआ। जागोरी ग्रामीण की ओर से दो दिन तक शाहपुर और मटौर में मां-बेटी मेला का आयोजन किया गया जिसमें लगभग 1000 मां-बेटियों का भाग लिया। मेले में माताओं और किशोरियों को खेल-खेल में प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य, जेंडर आधारित भेदभाव, पोषाहार, हिंसा जैसे विषयों पर विभिन्न गतिविधियों के साथ साथ आगे बढ़ने का संदेश दिया गया।



प्रतिभागी जागोरी टीम सदस्यों के साथ।

## सुकड़ की लड़कियों ने जीती क्रिकेट प्रतियोगिता

धर्मशाला, 13 नवंबर (ब्यूरो) : जागोरी ग्रामीण ने आईटीआई शाहपुर ग्राउंड में दो दिवसीय जिला स्तरीय क्रिकेट टूर्नामेंट का आयोजन किया, जिसमें कांगड़ा जिले की 16 किशोरी क्रिकेट टीमों ने भाग लिया। फाइनल मैच धर्मशाला ब्लाक की सुकड़ टीम और रैत ब्लाक की लाहड़ी टीम के बीच हुआ, जिसमें सुकड़ टीम विजेता रही। कार्यक्रम की मुख्यातिथि, धर्मशाला की मेयर रजनी ने किशोरियों का उत्साह वर्धन करते हुए विजेता टीम और रनर्स अप टीम को पुरस्कार से सम्मानित किया।



धर्मशाला (ब्यूरो) : जागोरी ग्रामीण ने गांव खटेहड़, पंचायत चैतडू में रविवार को किशोरी स्वास्थ्य पोषाहार दिवस का आयोजन किया, जिसमें 26 किशोरियों और उनकी माताओं ने भाग लिया। पंचायत के दौरान किशोरियों को सरल पहेलियों और खेलों द्वारा स्वास्थ्य पर जानकारी दी गई। पंचायत के दौरान किशोरियों और उनकी माताओं ने खान-पान और महिला स्वास्थ्य से जुड़े मुद्दों पर खुलकर बात की और जाना कि किस प्रकार उन्हें अपने खान-पान और स्वास्थ्य पर ध्यान देना पड़ेगा।

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इच्छी में आयोजित किशोरी उत्सव के दौरान बच्चियों को जानकारी देती जागोरी की सदस्य • जागरण

## इच्छी में किशोरियों को किया जागरूक

जागोरी ग्रामीण संस्था ने गांव में मनाया किशोरी उत्सव

गलत : जागोरी ग्रामीण संस्था ने इच्छी में किशोरी उत्सव मनाया। संस्था की वरिष्ठ प्रवक्ता चंद्रकांता व नवनीत ने बताया कि किशोरी उत्सव का उद्देश्य युवतियों को एक ऐसा मंच प्रदान करना है, जहां वे अपनी सामाजिक परिस्थितियों व स्वास्थ्य से संबंधित समस्याओं पर खुलकर बात कर सकें। इस दौरान स्टॉलों के जरिये किशोरियों को संतुलित आहार, प्रजनन, स्वास्थ्य व जैविक खेती की जानकारी दी गई। इस दौरान जागोरी ग्रामीण संस्था की ओर से आशा कुमारी, ममता, अनुपमा,

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