

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust

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# NEWSLETTER

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## Jagori Rural Charitable Trust



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# From Forest Trails to Justice Tales

*Two institutions, one vision – responsibility and rights go hand in hand.*

Twenty-four adolescents from Kangra district participated in an exposure visit combining environmental learning and legal awareness. At the Kotla Forest Range Office, they explored eco-initiatives such as water harvesting structures, nurseries, and wildfire mitigation, gaining insight into ongoing conservation efforts during Van Mahotsav.

An interactive session with police officials introduced them to key legal concepts including Zero FIR, POCSO, and cyber safety. Through open discussions, participants learned how to report crimes, understand their rights, and the legal protections available to minors.

The experience helped transform complex ideas into practical knowledge—encouraging young participants to ask questions, build confidence, and see themselves as responsible and informed citizens.



## A Journey Within: Letters of Love, Presence, and Self-Discovery

*In the quiet act of expressing ourselves, we begin to meet who we truly are—and learn to love them.*

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust hosted a deeply reflective workshop facilitated by Ashwini Pratap Pawar, inspired by her personal letters to her parents. Drawing from embodied and somatic practices learned under Navtej Johar, the session created a space for expression through voice, movement, art, and silence.

Held at Darbari Hall, the workshop became a gentle exploration of sensitivity, vulnerability, connection, and presence—inviting participants to reconnect with themselves and each other.

As an extension, 22 adolescents participated in a special session, “Love Letters to the Self.” Through art, writing, and sharing, they expressed their emotions with honesty—laughing, reflecting, and opening up in meaningful ways. Using symbolic exercises like connecting with a “flower friend,” they explored self-expression and self-acceptance.

Guided with care, the session became a mirror for young participants to see and appreciate themselves more fully. What emerged was not just creativity, but a quiet step toward self-love.

We are grateful to the facilitator and all participants for making this experience a part of Jagori’s collective journey—nurturing self-love, one letter at a time.



# Awareness is the First Step Toward Justice

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized an insightful legal awareness session at its campus in Block Nagrota Bagwan. The session was facilitated by Advocate Naresh from District Bilaspur and brought together a diverse and engaged group of community members, including Anganwadi and ASHA workers, the Pradhan of Malan, adolescent girls and boys, Kishori Panchayat members, Jagori's Monitoring Committee, and other active women from the area.

The discussion focused on the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, helping participants understand its key provisions, legal procedures, and the importance of awareness and vigilance at the community level. Advocate Naresh also shared important insights on the Domestic Violence Act, highlighting women's rights and available legal protections.

The session created a safe and interactive space for dialogue, encouraging participants to break the silence around sensitive issues, challenge harmful social norms, and collectively stand against violence.

Such initiatives play a crucial role in building informed, empowered, and resilient communities.



# Creating Safer Spaces



At Jagori, we are committed to fostering workplaces grounded in dignity, respect, and safety. A POSH session encouraged open dialogue and reflection, strengthening our collective responsibility to build a gender-just and inclusive environment.

Creating safe spaces is an ongoing journey—one that calls for awareness, empathy, and action.

## A Day of Hope, Dreams & Determi nation

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust hosted an inspiring session with 44 fellowship students from across Kangra district, representing diverse marginalised backgrounds.

The session featured Asha Sharma, a former Jagori Fellow, whose journey highlighted the transformative power of education. Students also engaged in “Mere Sapne”, sharing their dreams and aspirations with honesty and courage.

More than a session, it was a moment of reflection and renewed hope—where young individuals reaffirmed their commitment to build dignified, self-reliant futures.



We're excited to share that 28 members of our Monitoring Committee recently participated in a 2-day residential workshop on Climate Justice (17–18 July 2025) at Jagori Rural Charitable Trust, Rakkar. Facilitated by Soumya Dutta, the workshop brought together participants from Rait, Dharamshala, Kangra, and Nagrota Bhagwan.

Over two days, participants explored the concept of climate justice, reflected on local climate challenges, and developed strategies for community-led action. The sessions created a space for dialogue, learning, and collective visioning.

## Empowering Communities for Climate Action



This workshop marks an important step towards building a more just and sustainable future. By strengthening the capacities of local leaders and communities, we aim to promote resilience, support sustainable practices, and drive meaningful grassroots action.



The insights and learnings from the workshop will guide future community initiatives and advocacy efforts—creating a ripple effect of positive change.

We remain committed to supporting community-led climate action. Join us in this journey—share your thoughts, ideas, and experiences in the comments below. Let's work together towards a climate-just future.



Our young changemakers embarked on an enriching exposure visit to the Agriculture University and Science Centre—an experience filled with learning, curiosity, and inspiration.

At the university, an engaging session with Sri Lav Bhushan, Director of Extension Education, introduced students to key themes like soil health, hydroponics, organic farming, and climate-smart agriculture. A guided visit to the Education Museum by Dr. Parmar, along with practical demonstrations at the Agriculture Technology Information Centre (ATIC), offered hands-on insights into modern agricultural practices.

## Exploring Roots & Reimagining Futures

The day continued at the Science Centre, where students explored interactive exhibits, museums, and an immersive 3D show—bringing science to life.

More than just a visit, it was a transformative experience—encouraging students to think sustainably, explore new possibilities, and envision greener futures.



# Connecting Women to Livelihood Through Skill Training

*When skills meet opportunity, empowerment follows.*

From July 13–15, Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized a 3-day bag-making workshop at its campus, bringing together 25 women from 10 Self-Help Groups across Rait, Kangra, Dharamshala, and Nagrota Bagwan. The training focused on building practical skills for self-employment. Beginning with simple bags made from reused fabric, participants gradually learned advanced stitching and design techniques, strengthening both creativity and craftsmanship.



The workshop culminated in a small exhibition where participants proudly showcased their work—six bags were sold on the spot, marking an encouraging step toward income generation.

More than a skill-building exercise, the training created a space for confidence, peer learning, and new possibilities. With enhanced skills and renewed motivation, these women are now better equipped to explore sustainable livelihood opportunities.



# 3-Day Workshop on Gender Sensitivity & Legal Awareness

Hosted at Jagori Rural Charitable Trust, Rakkar, this three-day workshop brought together 21 police officers for an intensive and reflective learning experience.

The sessions were facilitated by Mr. Milind, a social worker with over 30 years of experience, and Advocate Nitika, a human rights lawyer.

Key focus areas included:

- Understanding gender and patriarchy
- Exploring power structures and social roles
- Legal provisions and different forms of violence
- The critical role of police in ensuring justice

Through role plays, group discussions, and interactive exercises, participants examined how gender inequality operates in everyday contexts—and how they can actively challenge it within their roles.

Officers engaged openly, shared real-life experiences, asked difficult questions, and left with a renewed commitment to act as agents of change.

The workshop concluded in the presence of Dr. IPS Khushal Sharma and Abha Bhaiya, whose words encouraged participants to carry this learning forward into their daily work.



## Seeds of Change Are Sprouting

A 2-day residential workshop on organic farming was held at Jagori Rural Charitable Trust, Rakkar, led by Gurpreet Singh Dabrikhana. Bringing together 27 farmers and community members from Kangra, Rait, Dharamshala, and Nagrota Bagwan, the workshop focused on soil health, water conservation, and sustainable farming practices.

The sessions encouraged farmers to adopt organic methods while strengthening their role in building climate-resilient communities. We thank Gurpreet ji and all participants for their valuable contributions.



# Maa-Beti Mela Aangan Se Aasman Tak

Jagori Rural successfully organised vibrant Maa-Beti Melas across Kangra and Jawali blocks, bringing together mothers and daughters in spaces of trust, dialogue, and celebration.

In Kangra block, 172 mothers and daughters from six villages—Kandrehar, Tiara, Icchi, Ghana, Sahoda, and Nandher—came together to celebrate the bond of care, respect, and shared strength.

Fun-filled activities such as musical chairs, balloon races, and dance created a lively and inclusive atmosphere.

The melas concluded with powerful slogans for equality and the distribution of saplings—symbolising care, growth, and collective responsibility.

More than just events, these gatherings became meaningful steps towards building empathy, strengthening relationships, and nurturing conversations that challenge inequality. They also mark the beginning of deeper community engagement in newer areas like Jawali block.

In Jawali block, at Kutehar Panchayat on 3rd August 2025, 136 participants, including 46 mothers and 65 adolescent girls, joined from villages like Taknahad, Paddhar, Doll, Sirmani, Sirhundi, Kuthar, Bassa, Bhatar, Nadholi, Jangal, Kuther, and Bagga.

The melas created a safe and joyful space to reflect on relationships, challenge patriarchal norms, and explore themes of identity, dreams, and well-being.

The day unfolded with a powerful group song, “Manmani Kareng Hum”, setting the tone for open expression and connection. Through creative activities—from “Maa ki God Mein” to “Humare Sapno Ki Patang”—participants explored how mother-daughter relationships evolve across life stages.

Interactive games like Nivdaan (Generational Trees), Mere Sapne Aur Samaj Ki Dewar, Gender Bender, and Bandhan Todo made learning engaging, personal, and reflective.

Open mic sessions gave space for stories, poems, and voices often left unheard, while cultural performances by young participants like Ridhima and Divyanshi added energy and joy.



***Together, we move towards a future where women and girls have equal opportunities, dignity, and voice.***



# Towards Inclusive and Resilient Communities: Disability & Disaster Preparedness



On 23rd August 2025, 30 members of the Jagori team participated in a day-long capacity-building workshop focused on disability inclusion and disaster preparedness.

The morning session, facilitated by Surya Udaya Charitable Trust, explored the legal framework on disability in India, including the 21 recognized categories, with a focus on intellectual disabilities,

early identification, and therapeutic interventions. The discussion emphasized family awareness, child protection, and the need to shift from pity to dignity while building inclusive community spaces.

In the afternoon, Sudesh Bedi led a session on the link between disability and disasters. Through key concepts and a hands-on HVRC mapping exercise, participants reflected on vulnerability, capacity, and the importance of inclusive, community-led preparedness.

Building on this, under the Himalayan Hub: Disaster Preparedness initiative, Community Preparedness Committees (CPCs) have been formed in two villages, with trainings underway. In Boh village, an orientation on Disaster Risk Reduction and First Response led to the formation of an all-women CPC—addressing the gap in girls' access to such opportunities.

Twenty young girls, now Community Resilience Leaders, participated in a two-day residential training. Potential Rural Resilience Trainers have also been identified for advanced capacity-building. These efforts strengthen early identification, community-based support, and inclusive disaster preparedness—ensuring that no one is left behind.



## Reflections and Roadmaps with Dr. Manisha Gupte

On 16th September 2025, the Jagori team engaged in a reflective session with Dr. Manisha Gupte, Co-Founder of MASUM. The discussion focused on patriarchy, gender justice, and key challenges in Himachal Pradesh.

Through group dialogue and collective reflection, the team explored future directions for Jagori's work. The session served as a strong call to action — leaving participants inspired, focused, and committed to deepening community engagement and building collective power.

# Two-Week Residential Course on Gender, Sustainable Development & Women's Empowerment

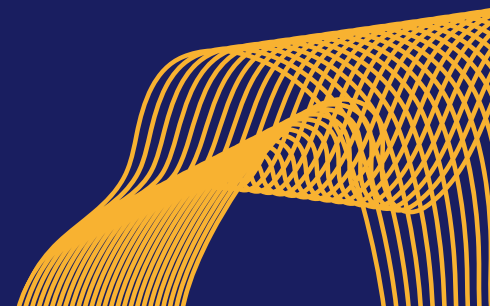
Jagori Rural, in collaboration with SANGAT-SWAYAM, organised the 15th edition of the Two-Week Residential Course on "Gender, Sustainable Development & Women's Empowerment" from 5-19 September 2025.

The course brought together 32 participants from across Northern, Central, and Western India, including Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh. Participants, many of whom are engaged in grassroots work on gender justice and community empowerment, contributed diverse perspectives and experiences.

Over two weeks, the programme created a space for critical reflection, dialogue, and shared learning. Key themes included patriarchy and power, intersectionality (gender, caste, class, sexuality, and disability), feminist movements, the impact of privatization on health, rising violence and resistance strategies, and issues of environment and sustainability.

Using a participatory and experiential approach, the course encouraged exchange of lived realities, collective analysis, and peer learning. It strengthened participants' understanding of social justice issues while fostering solidarity and collaboration across regions.

The course reaffirmed that empowerment is an ongoing, collective process, rooted in dialogue, trust-building, and sustained engagement for equality and justice.



# From Dreams to Determination – An Inspiring Journey Towards Change



Under the AAGAJ program, Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized an exposure visit from 12–17 September for 16 adolescent girls from remote areas of Kangra and Chamba, accompanied by four team members. The visit included learning interactions with Dusra Dasak (Ajmer), Azad Foundation (Jaipur), and Action India (Delhi), organizations known for their work in education, gender equality, and women's empowerment.

The exposure aimed to connect participants with inspiring grassroots initiatives and strengthen their role as changemakers in their communities. At Dusra Dasak, they learned how out-of-school children are supported through education, digital skills, and access to government schemes. At Azad Foundation, they met women challenging gender norms by becoming professional drivers and reclaiming public spaces. At Action India, they witnessed women-led community initiatives and local governance in action.

The visit expanded their perspectives and reinforced a simple yet powerful idea: when courage meets opportunity, change becomes possible. This initiative marks a meaningful step in nurturing confident, aware, and empowered young leaders.



## Mosaic Workshops at Jagori

In September 2025, creativity came alive at Jagori Rural Campus in Dharamshala through two inspiring Mosaic Art Workshops led by Brussels-based artist Gala Greenwood, in collaboration with Tools for Life Foundation and One Billion Rising.

Over five days, 21 participants—adolescent girls and Jagori team members—engaged in a vibrant process of creativity, learning, and collective expression. They created personal mosaics reflecting individuality and co-created a collective piece of the One Billion Rising logo, symbolizing unity and strength.

The workshop concluded with reflections on creativity, collaboration, and shared inspiration—each mosaic telling a story of resilience and women and girls rising together.



# Reviving Himachal's Food Heritage: From Local Kitchens to Young Minds



Jagori Rural Charitable Trust, in collaboration with local schools, organized a series of Traditional Food Festivals across Kangra and Chamba districts, bringing together over 500 participants including students, teachers, and community members.

At GSSS Trilokpur and GSSS Ghaniyara, community women showcased traditional dishes such as Patrode, Ragi ki Kheer, Sidu, Kulath ki Daal, and Kaddu ki Sabzi, sharing their nutritional value and preparation methods with students. Interactive sessions by Jagori and partner organizations highlighted the importance of healthy, natural, and locally sourced food, along with discussions on traditional vs. junk food.



Similar celebrations at Govt. Middle School Lech, Sunehad School, and GSSS Jamanabaad encouraged children to reconnect with local food traditions and understand the value of millets and seasonal diets. Each event concluded with folk songs, Himachali dance, and shared meals—strengthening community bonds while promoting nutrition, culture, and sustainable food practices.

These festivals also created spaces for intergenerational learning, where community knowledge was actively passed on to young learners.

They reinforced the importance of preserving local food heritage as a pathway to better health and sustainable living.

# Building a Future of Equality & Responsible Masculinity

Over the three days, 27 boys from hill districts came together to question stereotypes, rethink masculinity, and reflect on their role in building a more equal society.

Held from November 1–3, 2025, at D Canal Hotel, Dharamshala, the workshop brought together participants from Dharamshala and Nagrota Suriyan (Kangra), and Mehla and Tissa (Chamba). Facilitated by Byomkesh Parida from The YP Foundation and organized by Jagori Rural Charitable Trust, the sessions explored gender, patriarchy, power, and evolving ideas of masculinity.

Through discussions on “real man” stereotypes, toxic vs. positive masculinity, and digital safety, participants reflected on personal experiences—from cyberbullying to online scams—leading to deeper awareness and responsibility.

Using films, storytelling, and group activities, the workshop created a space for honest dialogue, reflection, and change.

From silence to action. From stereotypes to sensitivity. From norms to leadership.



## A CELEBRATION OF COURAGE, CREATIVITY & CHANGE!

For three inspiring days, 62 young girls came together at the Jagori Campus—learning, sharing, and discovering the power of samvaad (dialogue) as a pathway to badlaav (change).

With the theme “ACTIZENS: Samvaad se Badlaav ki Or,” the Utsav sparked meaningful conversations on identity, dreams, and sustainable futures—brought alive through drama, music, games, and reflection.

Every dialogue ignited new thinking. Every activity planted seeds of awareness, empathy, and action.

Here’s to our Actizens—the changemakers of tomorrow, shaping a better today.



## Two-Day Health Workshop with Friends of Health and Justice

A two-day workshop was conducted with Friends of Health and Justice on 24–25 November, with 21 participants. The sessions covered key aspects of health, including blood pressure and sugar management, nutrition, digestive health, mental well-being, anger management, exercise, hormones, menopause, and understanding body systems.

Participants actively engaged in body-mapping, breathing exercises, and practical demonstrations, learning simple routines for managing knee pain, gas, and backache, along with methods to monitor sugar levels. Health kits were distributed to all participants at the end of the workshop.

Feedback highlighted the workshop as practical, engaging, and easy to apply. Participants expressed their commitment to adopting healthier habits—such as regular exercise, mindful eating, and breathing practices—and to sharing this knowledge within their communities.

Healthy communities grow when women are informed, supported, and confident in caring for themselves and others.



# Strengthening Rural Health, One Step at a Time



Jagori Rural conducted follow-up health camps in Sukker and Kohala, with 50 women participating in screenings, acupuncture, physiotherapy, counselling, and medical support.

Participants openly shared challenges related to stress, ageing, workload, and the hesitation to discuss their health. Many reported conditions such as blood pressure imbalances, anemia, joint pain, diabetes, and general weakness—often overlooked or accepted as routine.



Participants committed to adopting small but meaningful lifestyle changes and to supporting one another within their communities.

*When women heal, families heal—and communities grow stronger.*

# 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Marking the global campaign, Jagori Rural Charitable Trust, in collaboration with One Billion Rising, organized an event at Sunehar Panchayat under the theme “Chup Rehna Nahi, Hinsa Sehna Nahi – We Will Not Stay Silent, We Will Not Tolerate Violence.”

Around 150 participants—including PRI women leaders, monitoring committee members, students, and community members—came together to raise their voices against gender-based violence.

Guest of Honour Ankit Sharma emphasized that silence enables violence and urged women and girls to speak up, while also highlighting the need to nurture equality at home. Panchayat Pradhan Nirmal Prashar encouraged women to seek support through Jagori’s Nari Adalats.

The event reinforced the spirit of collective action and the urgent need to end violence against women and girls.



## Engaging Men for Equality & Safer Communities

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized a three-day workshop with 25 community members from Chamba and Kangra, facilitated by Praveen from Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA).

Through interactive games, films, group activities, and open discussions, participants engaged with themes of gender, equality, sexuality and consent, transgender and intersex identities, and the social construction of masculinity.

A key focus was rethinking what it means to be a “mard” – “a man” and how positive expressions of masculinity can contribute to respectful, violence-free families and communities. The workshop encouraged honest sharing and reflection, with participants exploring their role in advancing equality in their everyday lives.

