

# **REPORT OF THE CHILD MARRIAGE PREVENTION PROGRAMME**

**HAQ: Centre for Child Rights in partnership  
with Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti and Jabala  
Action Research Organisation**

**2017 TO 2019**

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# FOREWORD

In 2012, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights ventured into a child marriage prevention initiative which was a cross over between our Children and Governance and Child Protection programmes because it combined strengthening governance systems while protecting children and adolescents from child marriages.

We decided to adopt this approach because HAQ's strength lies in working on children and governance and child protection. The focus and strength of this initiative lay in its systems approach to preventing a social evil. The key strategy was to focus on the governance system and work towards the strengthening of the existing state mechanisms, structures and institutions through training and monitoring of their functions, holding them accountable in implementation of the law on child marriage. Simultaneously, the project focused on, sensitizing, supporting and mobilizing the communities, through women's self-help groups, religious leaders and youth groups to take action to prevent child marriages. Creating and empowering adolescent girls' groups was yet another important thrust of the project.

This approach enabled communities to not just mobilise support from the concerned officials, but also hold them accountable for their inaction. The purpose was to bring together duty bearers and community to form a mechanism that responded to and prevented child marriage. At the same time, because of our work on child protection, we found that it was important to not just position child marriage as a bad social and cultural phenomenon, but also as a violation of right to protection of children, especially girls, making them even more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, as studies have shown. Hence it was important to stress on the fact that child marriage was an offence- liable to criminal action and thus the need for effective implementation of the law.

In the first phase HAQ partnered with MV Foundation in Telangana and Jabala Action Research Organisation (Jabala) in West Bengal. Without their presence and direct intervention in the communities this would not have been possible. MVF and Jabala teams in the districts were the back bone of this initiative. We have to also acknowledge Krinna Shah's deep involvement in the project in this phase. It was supported jointly by The Ford Foundation and MacArthur Foundation. HAQ is very grateful to Vanita Nayak Mukherjee and Dipa Nag Choudhury for their support and guidance.

Renu Khanna, who has undertaken the present evaluation, had also evaluated it in 2014 and represented the project in the form of a model, which was very helpful. She also helped to identify some gaps and thrust areas which enabled us to design the second phase of the project. This included addressing the other issues that impact on child marriage, without which there could be no change.

The second phase began in 2015. While the interventions in West Bengal in partnership with Jabala continued to be supported by The Ford Foundation and MacArthur Foundation, a new partnership with Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti was initiated in Ajmer District of Rajasthan with support from the American Jewish World Services (AJWS). Indira Pancholi joined in for coordinating the project. The learnings from phase 1 were included in the designing of this phase.

While phase 1 laid the foundation, phase 2 enabled us to deepen our engagement and also identify new challenges.

Because we wanted to be sure that our interventions in stopping child marriages should not have had a negative impact on the lives of the girls, in 2016, we published a follow up study on the girls whose marriages had been intervened in, successfully or unsuccessfully. It was a relief to find that the project interventions had not made the girls more vulnerable. In fact, the lives of those whose weddings could not be stopped despite all efforts, had suffered greatly. Very few had been able to negotiate a safe and happy life.

While law is an enabler, law can also create its own problems, as we saw. This is when we designed the Triple S Model for addressing child marriage, shared and evaluated by Renu Khanna in this report. This model is a result of multiple experiments and discussions between us and the partners. The final naming of the model is Indira's.

In this phase the concentration has not been so much on the number of child marriages that could be stopped, instead on creating an ecosystem in which child marriages and other such violations can be addressed. These have been described in the report.

What has been amazing is the cross learning across three teams (HAQ, MVF and Jabala in Phase 1 and HAQ, Jabala and MJAS in Phase 2). While MVF after three years was able to carry forward and take to scale the interventions on the ground on its own, Jabala is doing so now. In this too, HAQ's role as technical support and enabler has enriched HAQ in many ways.

In the last few years of implementing the project we have learnt that if child marriage is to be tackled, a holistic approach is required. It cannot be the only issue with which we can enter the community. It has to be located within the larger issues concerning patriarchy, social structures and norms, rights of children and the need for protecting children from abuse and exploitation.

Simultaneously, just as communities have to be convinced that child marriage cannot be a measure to protect girls from abuse, safe spaces have to be created for them in schools and in communities. For this we must work to amend the right to education law to include children beyond 14 years of age, as it currently stands. At the same time, it must be ensured that girls are not just enrolled, but also retained in school, and schools are free from abuse. It is equally important to work on implementing the law against sex selective abortion, dowry and trafficking. Simultaneously, health concerns have to be addressed.

In sharing our model of addressing child marriage and our learnings and challenges through this evaluation report, we hope we can contribute to the ongoing debates and discussions on this issue.

We fully recognise that the work HAQ and its partners have been doing is but one in thousand other efforts across the country on this issue. We also recognise that we have to be prepared that change will be slow - after all, we are dealing with a centuries old practice and while we need to be hopeful, we must also be realistic that it will take time. There are also new challenges that changing times throw up.

But we are optimists. So we must keep pushing with our fingers and digging with our nails- slowly chipping away to bring change

Enakshi Ganguly

Co-Founder and Former Director

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# **PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This document is a report of a participatory review of a child marriage and adolescent empowerment project being implemented by HAQ:Centre for Child Rights (HAQ) and its two partners Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS) in Rajasthan, and Jabala Action Research Organisation (Jabala) in West Bengal.

I had the privilege of studying the earlier phase of this work in West Bengal and Telengana and was gratified at how seriously the earlier recommendations had been considered and implemented by HAQ and the Jabala teams. It was exciting to see how the work - and the team - had matured in West Bengal and how the work had evolved at the field level with the new partner MJAS. And the special quality and passion that MJAS brings to the partnership.

I would like to thank the HAQ team for the opportunity to go back to the field areas and see the maturing of the efforts. My thanks are also for the Jabala and MJAS teams for the privilege of studying their efforts closely and learning from their different contexts and their approaches. And thanks also to the community groups that I met in the course of the review – the football teams, girls and boys groups, mothers' groups, religious leaders and the officers and functionaries of the child protection machinery in the districts and blocks.

This report has an introductory section which includes details about the project and the methodology of this review. The findings section uses content from the two organisational reports, to summarise the major findings and offers some recommendations. Each organisation is urged to use its own report for the findings and recommendations along with the introductory section.

My best wishes for the three partner teams for their ongoing struggles for gender justice and children's rights.

Renu Khanna

July 3 2019





# Section 1

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since 2012, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights has been implementing a project Strengthening Existing Systems for Prevention of Child Marriage. HAQ's strategy to work in the states on any issue, is to work in partnership with local partners with whom the entire initiative is planned and implemented.

Hence, in 2012, in West Bengal and Telangana in partnership with Jabala Action Research Organisation in West Bengal (Jabala) and MV Foundation (MVF) in Andhra Pradesh with support from Ford Foundation and Mac Arthur Foundation, HAQ initiated a project on preventing child marriages. The project primarily focussed within districts, weaving together duty bearers and the community to form a mechanism that responds to and prevents child marriage, and attempted to take up learning and findings from the field for further advocacy at the state, national and international levels. The strategy adopted was to develop a model for addressing child marriage through the strengthening of and collaboration between existing legal and governance mechanisms and mobilizing the community.

An end project evaluation of the activities undertaken showed that there was considerable progress in many of the goals. Data collated from several sources between 2011 and 2014 showed remarkable changes as a result of the initiative. There was a decline in child marriages in the project villages ranging between 61 per cent and 81 per cent in Telangana and between 50 per cent and 70 per cent in West Bengal. Improved responses from local officials at the district, block and panchayat levels in creating awareness on prevention of child marriage as well as their active participation in intervening and in stopping them was a positive outcome of this project.

Work in the field also revealed that what is needed is much greater strengthening of the village level child protection committees (VLCPC) and the multi-stake holder task forces at the block and district levels. Most importantly there is much greater work required to mobilise the adolescent girls and boys and the male youth to be able to understand legal rights, social change processes so that they can exercise their own agency, be change makers and hold the state mechanism accountable.

To take the work forward, HAQ sought support from Mac Arthur Foundation (2015-2017) and Ford Foundation (2017-2019) for the next phase of the project in West Bengal in the same districts as in the last phase (2 blocks each in Murshidabad and Birbhum). While the work has continued in the same blocks of Birbhum (Rampurhat and Mohammad Bazar), it was decided that instead of Beladanga in Murshidabad, a new Block – Murshidabad Jiagunj (MJ) Block would be selected along with Hariharpara.

While Murshidabad was a district in which HAQ's partner organisation Jabala had a long engagement, and was well-known and accepted, the interventions in Birbhum were initiated for the first time in 2012 when Phase 1 of the project started. In terms of model creation, the two areas offered completely different opportunities.

When the project began, given that the model was new, it made sense to work and introduce new initiative in areas where there is already some acceptance from the community. This was especially important since Birbhum was completely new to the project and to Jabala.

In the evaluation of Phase 1 more results were visible in Murshidabad than in Birbhum. But it was difficult to attribute all results only to project initiatives (as Jabala had other activities going on in Murshidabad). An important outcome from this project was to see if this model is replicable, whether lessons learnt from the HAQ-Jabala initiative on child marriage prevention could be tested in a new area. With this in mind, MJ (Murshidabad – Jiagunj) block was selected and Hariharpara block retained as a reference to measure impacts.

It was decided not to completely exit Beldanga. Efforts put in so far in the Block were to be sustained by regular follow up and technical support by the project team by clubbing it with other programmes in the block and with provision of other support. This phasing out of Beldanga with some handholding, was meant to demonstrate if this model can work and be sustained without the intense implementation initiatives by the project team.

HAQ also wanted to collaborate with Mahila Jan Adhilar Samiti (MJAS) in Rajasthan in an initiative called “Creating a support system for legal interventions to prevent and annul child marriage” through building on MJAS’s own work in the villages and through the work undertaken by the HAQ–MJAS team with support from American Jewish World Service (AJWS). Unlike with Jabala, where HAQ works through a sub grant, staff members were directly placed in MJAS to undertake the project work. It was decided that HAQ along with the MJAS team would directly implement the project interventions in select villages where MJAS has worked for several years.

The activities supported by the Ford Foundation aimed at disseminating information and building capacities of adolescent girls, parents and other stakeholders to positively use the information and law. Documentation of social and legal processes to critically understand the workings and responses of the system in cases where girls and parents want to prevent/annul child marriage, was also sought to be undertaken.

Through a separate grant from American Jewish World Service (AJWS), HAQ-MJAS proposed to work with rural communities around the concerns of girl children and adolescent girls with the purpose of addressing child marriages. They identified adolescent groups as the target group for addressing sexual and gender based violence through interventions on health, education and livelihood issues of adolescents.

This evaluation focusses on the Ford Foundation supported activities in West Bengal and Rajasthan. It also evaluates the activities in Rajasthan being implemented with support from AJWS as they complement each other.

For purposes of this report, the project implementation team in Jabala will be referred to as Jabala team, those in MJAS will be referred to as HAQ- MJAS team or as MJAS team and the third is the HAQ team (although HAQ is also the project holder).

## Geographical Area of Interventions

Name of District	Name of Block	Name of GP
West Bengal		
Birbhum	Mahammad Bazar	Bhutura
		Angarguria
		Mahammad Bazar
	Rampurhut II	Bishnupur
		Margram I
		Margram II
Murshidabad	Hariharpara	Khidirpur
		Rukunpur
		Choa
	MJ (Murshidabad – Jiagunj) Block	Natungram
		Prasadpur
		Tentulia
Rajasthan		
Ajmer	Cases of annulment received from the entire district (Ford Foundation grant)	
	Srinagar	Gram Panchayat-Ajaysar Village - Ajaysar, Kharekhari Gram Panchayat Chachiyawas Village: Chachiyawas, Padampura Gram Panchayat: Babaicha Village - Hasiyawas
	Kekadi	Gram Panchayat - Gulgawn Village - Sankaria Gram Panchayat - Mevdakala Village - Mevda Punarwas colony Gram Panchayat- Bharai Village - Birvada Gram Panchayat: Krishna Gopal Kalera Village - Meeno ka NayaGawn

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FORD FOUNDATION AND AJWS GRANTS

The stated Goal of the Ford Foundation project is ‘The TRIPLE **S** Model to prevent Child Marriages will be tested and strengthened in the 4 identified blocks of West Bengal’. And of the AJWS project the stated Goal is to ‘Create a support system for legal interventions to prevent and annul child marriage in Ajmer District of Rajasthan’.

While there were no clearly stated Objectives of the two projects in the proposal documents, the Activities and Strategies and the understanding of the three teams seem to suggest that the Objectives were as follows:

- **Leadership development among young girls and boys** - to enhance understanding of equality, equity and own rights
- **Empowerment of girls** - to feel confident of their capacities, to negotiate with families and community, to decide on their futures.

- **Creating Safe Spaces** - To give space to adolescent girls and boys so they can share their own issues and things. They should feel comfortable in that space.
- **Creating enabling environment by for gender justice** - Working with different stakeholders including mothers, fathers, brothers, religious leaders, caste leaders and others
- **Strengthening the existing government and panchayat system** - Connecting and networking with government providers

Another important activity mentioned in the Ford Foundation proposal was Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.

The Statement of Objectives is important because these help to define the Expected Outcomes and therefore the indicators to be monitored. The following boxes gives the Results and Indicators of Success as mentioned in the Ford Foundation proposal

### **Box 1: Results**

1. Increased birth registration (for age verification), identity proof for children so that they can be connected to existing entitlements, activation of village level child protection committees (VLCPC) for identification, reporting and prevention of child marriages leading to reduction in child marriages in the project area as a result of community action and intelligence.
2. Institutionalisation of mechanisms for child protection leading to improved response from government through designated roles and responsibilities to be able to pin accountability; convergence of services leading to greater participation of government officials in child protection and prevention of child marriage; and the creation of support systems for children who wish to use the law to annul their marriages.
3. Increased agency and self confidence amongst girls/ boys to take informed decisions on their own behalf and on behalf of others, emerge as change makers and peer leaders, thereby being able to address child marriage – their own as well as that of others, and the availability of a support network for them.
4. A community that takes on the responsibility of protection children does not conduct child marriages; is engaged.
5. An impact study and a replicable model for addressing child marriage through the strengthening of governance systems and community mechanisms for prevention of child marriage and implementation of law through creation of evidence which will be disseminated widely.

*(Source: Ford Foundation Proposal)*

### **Box 2: Indicators of Success (Ford Foundation Proposal)**

1. Increased number of girls continuing in education, able to access their entitlements and participation in public action
2. Responsive and institutionalised action from functionaries
3. Increased birth and marriage registration; identity proofs to connect to existing schemes and entitlements
4. Increased community action led by VLCPCs for reporting and prevention of child marriages

5. Systematic process of child marriage annulment in place for those seeking it
6. Replicable model of intervention based on TRIPLE S model

**Changes are sought to be accomplished (AJWS Proposal)**

7. Girls and young women are educated and capacitated to strengthen their agency to make life decisions, stop violence and assert their autonomy over their bodies and life.
8. Young women and men take leadership of bringing about change in gender norms in the community.
9. Traditional community leadership sensitized to respect young leadership.
10. Girls and women have full access to education, health services and entitlements. Government and administration sensitized to respect the rights of citizens, particularly of girls and young women.

## **THE THEORY AND CHANGE AND THE TRIPLE S MODEL**

As an outcome of the end evaluation of the earlier phase of the Child Marriage project, HAQ with its partners MJAS and Jabala (and earlier MV Foundation) developed a model for addressing the issue of Child Marriage. Over the last couple of years they further refined the model as well as their Theory of Change, and for this project period (2015 to 2019) articulated the Theory of Change as shown in Box 4.

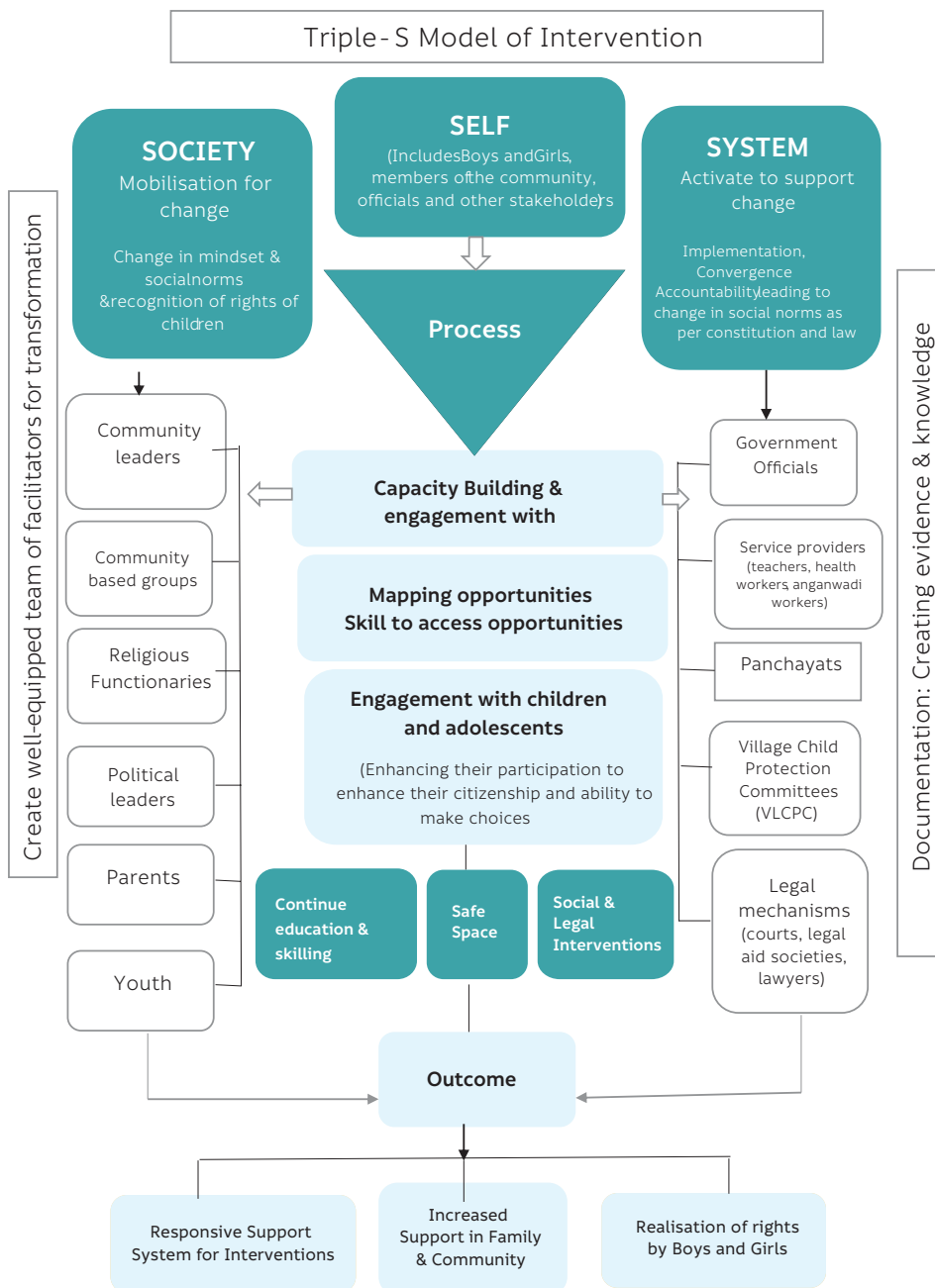
The Triple **S** Model/ or the **3S** model states that transformation can occur only when change happens at three levels: Self, Society and System.

**Self:** through focus on the individual, the self; changing attitudes and empowerment for all members of the community, children as well as adults, as well as the functionaries who are also bogged down by the same cultural mores;

**Society:** through changing attitudes and practice in all societal institutions – religious institutions women’s groups, youth groups or even caste panchayats (that continue to exist) cultural groups.

**System:** The system includes a wide range of actors from across fields – Panchayati Raj System, education system, health system, child protection system etc.

Figure 1 describes the Triple S model that HAQ and partners sought to implement. This requires a team of skilled facilitators who can bring about transformation as well as rigorous documentation for evidence creation and knowledge building, capacity building interventions and sustained engagement at the three levels specified above – the individuals, the social institutions, and the formal government and panchayat institutions – in order to produce results at the level of responsive systems that will intervene in the event of child marriages, empowered action by individuals to prevent and address the issue of child marriages, and changes in social norms and practices like delaying marriages, promoting gender justice etc.



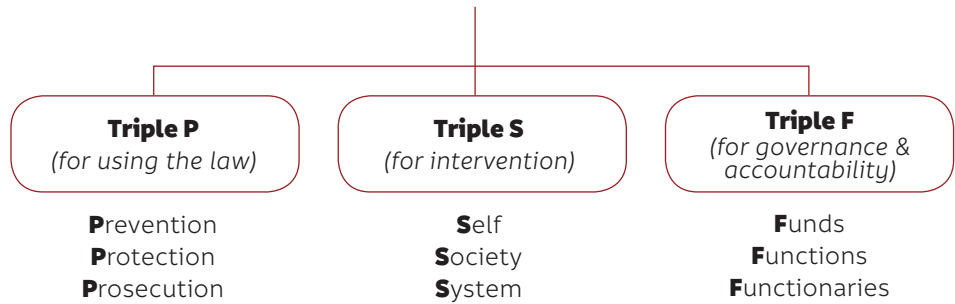
**Figure 1**  
**Triple S Model**

The Triple S model further led to some more ‘Triples’ being added.

The Triple P- focuses on using the law as a tool to prevent and protect children from child marriages by focussing on the legal age and the illegality of the practice, as well as the need for prohibition of child marriage. It also provides protection to the children who want to escape it, once they have been married and prosecutes adults who have violated the law.

The Triple F- focuses on the government functionaries who are entrusted with the duty of protecting children, ensuring child marriages do not take place through the functions or duties delegated to them. Funds or financial resources are essential for successful implementation of any initiative and prevention of child marriage is no different.

## Prevention of Child Marriage



Government functionaries and elected representative in the project areas have now been 'activated' to perform their duties as per the law, whatever their own personal beliefs may be. Officials are using funds available to them to spread awareness and also to protect children who come to them or are brought to them.

This was a brief description of the initiative to be evaluated. The next chapter describes the Methodology of the evaluation.

# **METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION**

**This evaluation was based on a participatory methodology. At every stage of the evaluation process reflection and learning of the partner teams was ensured.**

In an inception workshop spanning two days in December 2018, the implementing teams of HAQ MJAS and Jabala - met in Ajmer. They worked in their organisational teams to reflect on what they thought were the Objectives of the project under review, the Achievements and Challenges, what Strategies worked or did not work. Each team heard the other and gave feedback as well as reflected on their own work – what was similar and what was different. They went on to define their Expectations from this evaluation and the Evaluation Questions that they would like answered. Based on all of this, a detailed planning was done for the field visits to the project areas in West Bengal and Rajasthan. And an assessment was done of all the data that the teams would be required to compile and the relevant documents and materials that the evaluator would be required to study.

While planning for the field visits the teams were asked to keep the Evaluation Questions in mind and ensure that the activities planned provided the necessary data as well as fulfilled the needs of the teams. In addition to showing the evaluator ‘what worked’ and the ‘best case scenarios’, the teams were also encouraged to plan visits to ‘what did not work’ and show the challenges so that learning could be built into the evaluation process.

In the inception meeting as well as during the field visits to the two partner organisations, considerable time was spent with the teams on how they would measure ‘Achievements’. What indicators had they set for themselves and how had they tracked these indicators? In addition to the stories and case studies that team members could narrate, what data was available to substantiate the Achievements? The essentials of a Results Framework and a Logical Framework Analysis were discussed to help the teams to be able to review their own work based on documented evidence.

The field visits to each organisation were around 5 days each. Annexure 1 gives the schedule followed and Annexure 2 gives the list of persons spoken to. In addition to village visits and meeting the various stakeholders – girls, boys, mothers, religious leaders, panchayat members, officials – meetings were held with local teams to get their own assessment of the project. Tools were developed to elicit individual team members’ perceptions (Annexure 3). Each village visit and each day, debriefing sessions were held with the accompanying team members to help them reflect on new insights, if any. At the end of each field visit, impressions from the document review and the field visits were shared with the organisational teams. As well as tentative recommendations.

The two teams then collected more documents, reports and refined the quantitative data that they had collected and sent these to the reviewer. The draft report was submitted to HAQ for feedback on accuracy of facts and to fill the data gaps.



## **EVALUATION APPROACHES**

In addition to Participatory Evaluation mentioned – and described above – the evaluator drew upon Utilisation Focussed Evaluation (UFE) and Contribution Analysis. UFE looks at 'the end uses of the evaluation by its primary intended users to guide decisions about how an evaluation should be conducted'. Contribution Analysis is 'an impact evaluation approach that iteratively maps available evidence against a theory of change, then identifies and addresses challenges to causal inference'. UFE was used because this evaluator had done an evaluation of HAQ's previous project in 2015 and found that the primary user – the project director – had used the evaluation and implemented many of the recommendations with utmost seriousness.

The partner teams also echoed this during the inception meeting and the field visits when they described their strategies and activities in the current phase. Contribution Analysis was being used because HAQ had formulated a Theory of Change for this project and this provided a good basis to analyse the impact of the interventions.

## **EVALUATION QUESTIONS ARTICULATED BY THE JABALA AND MJAS AS WELL AS HAQ TEAMS**

1. Where are we in relation to what we set out to do?
  - a. What is the difference between the last phase and this phase results?
2. What effect has the project had on adolescent girls?
  - a. Any positive changes in the lives of the adolescent girls?
  - b. Has their 'voice' increased?
  - c. Have they become more confident?
  - d. How are the girls' negotiating with their families?
  - e. What about their relationships with their mothers?
3. Has the work with men – boys and fathers – led to any qualitative changes?
4. What about the work with religious functionaries?
  - a. What is their interest in the issue of child marriage?
  - b. How is the state looking at them?
  - c. What are some advocacy issues emerging from the work with religious functionaries?
5. What have been the issues with caste panchayats?
  - a. What has been their role?
  - b. What have been our efforts?
  - c. What are their perspectives on child marriage? Adolescent girls? Gender issues?
  - d. What have we been able to change?
6. What were some of the good practices? Strategies that worked?
7. What were the challenges? How can they be addressed?
8. What about the sustainability of the activities?
  - a. Which ones can be scaled up?
  - b. What can we do in future?
9. Have the teams' capacities improved?
  - a. What were the inputs? And the outcomes?
  - b. Have the perspectives of the teams been built? Have these processes of transfer of perspectives been institutionalised in the organisations?
10. How has the partnership worked? What are the implications for future partnerships?
11. To what extent have we been able to balance the focus on the Community and the Government Systems? Have we been able to balance between *engagement* and *opposition*?



## SECTION 2

# **FINDINGS**

## *OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT*

In this section we attempt to summarise the Findings of the review related to the two partner organisations using the Triple S Framework, which in turn is based on the Indicators of Success and the Changes Sought to be Accomplished in the proposals to the donors. We also discuss emerging issues and some of the evaluation questions posed by the partners. And finally a brief section presents recommendations for future action.

Most of the desired outcomes at all the three levels stated in the Triple S Framework – Realisation of Rights by Girls and Boys, Increased Support in Families and Communities, and Responsive Support Systems for Interventions - have been achieved, some to a higher degree of satisfaction than others.

### **REALISATION OF RIGHTS BY GIRLS AND BOYS**

In the three years of the project interventions, educational outcomes of girls have improved. Many more girls of the older age group (15 to 18 years) are enrolling in schools and fewer are dropping out. In the MJAS area, the percent of enrolled girls has increased from 46 percent to 86 per cent over three years and the drop outs amongst this higher age girls' group have decreased from 54 percent to 11 percent. While such data is not available from the West Bengal project, there are reports of increasing enrolment rates and utilisation of the Kanyashree Prokalpa.

There is clear evidence of empowerment of girls, increased autonomy, voice and self-determination. Girls are engaged in discussion and analysis of issues that affect them and take collective action on several very sensitive issues like child marriage, sexual abuse, suicides of girls, Kanyashree availability and so on.

In Rajasthan many girls have delayed their own gaunas, and in both Rajasthan and West Bengal many girls have stopped their own and others' marriages, often at great risk to themselves.

In the three years, 61 girls' marriages have been prevented and 37 girls have delayed their gaunas in Rajasthan, while in West Bengal 90 marriages have been delayed or prevented in two years. Girls are able to discuss many issues with their mothers, including reproductive health and the mothers are actually welcoming these discussions, claiming that they are learning from their daughters.

Stories of empowerment of girls narrated in the evaluation workshop were:

*One 12-year-old girl negotiated and went to her in-laws house to assess the living conditions before accepting the proposal. She then agreed to the engagement on the condition that she would continue her studies and playing football.*

*Another girl, Sumitra 17 years old from Hasiyavaas was married at the age of 10 years when she was in class 4. When her elder brother-in-law came to take her during gauna, she put the fear of POCSO in him. He went back without her.*

*Rekha drives a motorcycle. She was married in childhood and wants to get out of this marriage. Her parents are supporting her.*

*(Source: MJAS team)*

Reports to the donors mention other cases that indicate empowerment.

*Two Bal Mitras raised the issue of child sexual abuse which then the organization pursued further;*

*Bal Mitras also campaigned in favour of prohibition of liquor along with mobilizing women's group.*

*(Source: MJAS team)*

*In Bishnupur, Rampurhat-II Block, Birbhum, a Panchayat Member objected to the girls convening their meeting at their regular venue, the temple compound. He said that the girls would pollute the religious space because of their "dirty" periods. The girls did not back down. They told him that they were doing nothing wrong. It is a merely meeting, talking and sharing in that space which they felt was open and liberating. Seeing the determination of the girls, the Panchayat Pradhan promised them a space in the school. Once again the girls stood fast. They are still working hard to re-claim their previous space.*

*This incident also led to a great discussion and debate about menstruation, purity – impurity and the taboos surrounding periods.*

*(Source: Jabala team)*

Adolescent Girls' and Boys' Groups have been formed in both field areas with a membership of around 2000 young people. These groups are progressively becoming stronger. Both partners express that it has been difficult to form Boys' Groups for various reasons.



*Meeting with Football Team Girls, Hasiyavas*

The groups have demonstrated complex – and courageous - collective actions and fair degree of autonomy. Theatre Groups have been formed in both areas, they write their own scripts, perform relevant and topical plays and generate public discussions on burning issues that concern them. Girls’ football teams have broken several social taboos like ‘girls should not play or be engaged in sports’, ‘girls cannot stay away from home’, ‘girls cannot wear shorts’, ‘girls of different castes cannot mix, eat or sleep together’ and so on.

Through the collective and individual actions of the adolescents’ groups, many social norms are beginning to change as mentioned above. Transformation of gender norms is beginning to happen in many ways with girls claiming their voice, their mobility, their choice. Boys too are beginning to recognise their privileges and using these for empowerment of their mothers and sisters.

*Adolescent Boys’ Groups  
Meeting, Gudhiya*



*Adolescent Girls’ Groups  
Meeting, Ajaysar*



*“We are enjoying learning new things and are using the opportunity to think. One of our friend’s sister was married last year and now she is pregnant and is with her parents. She is now 16-year-old. We feel bad as other girls of her age are going to school and she is pregnant. If such a thing happens to any of our sisters in the village we will tell our sisters to refuse to marry and we will also talk to our fathers. If, even then, they don’t agree, we will seek out legal action”*

In Rajasthan caste panchayats are being challenged by girls and boys through their refusal to participate in child marriages and 'bavnis' and other religious, cultural and social practices. Annu Kumari's story of how she and her parents decided to take on the caste panchayat by deciding to derecognise her child marriage, are examples of courage and determination. Confronting the unnatural death of a young girl in the face of social pressure to suppress what could be an honour killing, is another example of the girls taking on the caste panchayats and community leaders. In West Bengal Muslim girls are resisting social pressures to marry early, many times to men far older than themselves.

## **INCREASED SUPPORT IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES**

Different kinds of community action have resulted in support to girls' and boys' efforts for their struggles for their rights. In both areas, mass campaigns against child and forced marriage have seen the participation of media, of district administration and many others. In Rajasthan the cadre of Jagrut Nagrik Samities and in West Bengal the civic volunteers have been the pillars of the community action. There are positive examples also of the local village leaders and dalit women sarpanches, pursuing the district administration to improve schools for the girls or provide facilities for sports for girls.

*In Hasiyawas village School Management Committee of elderly people, dominated by men was trying hard that girls go to school for higher education also. Girls also fought that all the teacher staff vacancies are filled.*

*(Source: AJWS Narrative Report 2016)*

*The parents in Hasiyawas locked the school for 6 days in protest. As a result eight teachers were appointed in that school. The parents gave a memoranda to the district collector, the education department and the chief minister to upgrade the school. The Collector asked them to collect a personal contribution of Rs. 3 lakh and then he would arrange for Rs. 7 lakh. The villagers collected Rs. 3 lakh and got the promised Rs. 7 lakh from the department..... Toilets were assessed in all the schools in 19 villages. The report was sent to the Directorate of Education. SSA sent a team to assess the situation and eventually Rs. 1.8 lakhs was sanctioned to make modern toilets for girls. .... Five more rooms were made after mobilising resources. Now the school has 10 classes.*

*(Source: Evaluation Workshop, March 2019)*



*Meeting with Hindu religious leaders in Angargoria*

In West Bengal, in this phase, some new community and other stakeholders were added to the project initiative – village resource persons to conduct social audits of panchayat funds, Hindu religious leaders, civic volunteers (after training at the local police station they follow up on cases of reported child marriage), Masjid functionaries in addition to the Muslim religious leaders only. Meeting with Hindu religious leaders in Angargoria

**Several positive outcomes are being noted at the level of the community in the project areas.**

- The general public is now fully aware that child marriages are prohibited. They know about the law.
- Participation of women in Panchayat meetings as well as Block level meetings has increased because of Jabala's sensitisation of mothers' groups and SHGs. It appears that social norms are changing.
- A Mothers' Meeting organised during the evaluation revealed that mothers' aspirations for their daughters are high. They want them to have careers and professions and not be dependent on anyone else. They want them to get married after 22-23 and to boys of their own choice.
- Panchayats continued to use their resources for wall writing and other messaging for the communities. They organised regular meetings to create a dialogue between all the stake holders to assess the processes for prevention of child marriage and ensuring access to child rights and entitlements, including discussion around the maximum utilization of the available resources with each of them. Jabala's work with the religious leaders has yielded powerful results vis a vis prevention of child marriages, even as it has thrown up other issues.

## **RESPONSIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR INTERVENTIONS**

In West Bengal Inter-Departmental and inter-agency Convergence is beginning to happen. District Child Protection Units are now functional in both districts, they have their separate office space, independent appointments of DCPOs, full-fledged staff and separate budget allocation available. Child Marriage Prevention Committees were set up in the project villages in the first phase, and in 2014 – 2015 these were merged with the governments' mandated Village Level Child Protection Committees as part of Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS). District Child Protection Units (DCPU) are constituted in the two districts under the project. Jabala has been training the VLCPCs on invitation of the DCPU based on the learnings from the project.

*Meeting with Mothers in Kumarpur Nutanpalli*



The school awareness programme in the two project districts in West Bengal has resulted in increasing commitment towards child protection issues within the schools. Child sexual abuse prevention committees as well as those to address Sexual Harassment have been set up in various schools. Members of Jabala team who are part of this project are appointed as external members.

Based on this convergence model and the joint action plans, the Jabala team intervened in a total of 90 cases in the project areas in two years. There is greater ownership of the issue and the agenda by the government machinery. A WhatsApp group has been formed to facilitate quick action and to keep everybody informed and connected. Officials accept that as a result of this, information is received by all concerned quickly and action plans are made. And this has made prevention of child marriage effective.

There is a perception among the District Officers that there have been many improvements. For example, the DSWO told us:

*'Kanyashree enrolment has increased. Child marriages have decreased, even if they have not stopped completely. Earlier we did not get any information. Now there are so many changes – VLCPCs, VCPCs are active, awareness has increased. There are 5 Childlines... people know that there will be two years' imprisonment and Rs 2 lakh fine if they do a child marriage. So definitely child marriages have decreased.'*

This DSWO also felt that the Child Protection Committees need to be strengthened through monthly meetings. Block officers should monitor 12 to 15 gram panchayats because it is difficult for the district to monitor and strengthen the CPCs.

In Rajasthan the situation is a bit different. The main input to sensitise the administration has been through the public campaigns that the MJAS has facilitated with the leadership of adolescent girls and boys. MJAS has also supported the youth leaders and collectives to dialogue with the administration and raise questions that concern them. Meetings and sessions with front line providers like the teachers and also with panchayat members have been used to sensitise them to issues like child sexual abuse, child marriage and so on.

*Girls of different AGGs are approaching their respective panchayats with demands related to schools, education, entitlements etc. In Hasiyawas girls got the panchayat to approve provision of sport shoes and other sports gear for their football game. The panchayat gave the money from their own funds. Girls went to Ajmer market to buy the material themselves. This was an empowering process. The same panchayat has also approved funds for levelling of the ground for playing football. Following the example of Hasiya was girls in other villages are also approaching their panchayats for support to their AGGs.*

*In Sakaria village a public traditional meeting (chaupal) was organized in collaboration with the panchayat where data about children was presented in the meeting and discussed. More than 200 persons participated. Health and education of girls and boys were discussed extensively. A heated debate took place on child marriage. The community was divided between those who favoured the practice and those against it.*

*(Source: Report to AJWS 2018)*

MJAS has not yet systematically engaged with the health system for adolescent health rights. The initial work of sensitising the girls and boys and mothers to sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents is a good start that needs to be systematically built upon. MJAS is on good terms with the Child Welfare Committee and the police in the district. While they can be mobilised to address violations of child rights, these systems come under severe pressure from political and panchayat leaders. The child protection structure is weak in the state and although MJAS has been attempting to activate the VLCPCs it has not really succeeded.



One objective that was in the Ford Foundation proposal - 'Systematic process of child marriage annulment in place for those seeking it' - could not be achieved.

Between the social customs and disinterest of the state to implement the PCMA, it has not been possible to implement the system of injunction order to prevent child marriages or annulment of these should the girl wish to do so. Instead of the injunction order which has legal binding, the documented case studies show that a 'paabandi letter' is given by the police. This is not legally binding and families go ahead with the child marriage on the sly. On the other hand, the 'samaaj panchayat' solution is preferred – 'let us settle this amongst ourselves'. In both the informal mediation in the police stations as well as the social village level solutions, money exchanges hands. And girls' rights are violated. The MJAS team has been asking for injunction orders and annulment data from the District Judge but it is not yet forthcoming. According to the MJAS- HAQ team, the judges need to be sensitised to how the girls' rights are violated.

Experiences with other agencies like the Childline, Nehru Yuvak Kendra, and the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao are also mixed. MJAS runs the Childline in three blocks of Ajmer. The problem is that Childline does not do adequate follow-up of cases. They are concerned only with rescue of children. MJAS's core commitment is to follow up of each case. According to MJAS, Childline's work is marked by legalese and they end up being quite child unfriendly if not actually terrorising. Thus conflicts arise.

The relationship with NYKS is also uncertain, because it is person dependent. The current Officer is promising and wants MJAS's help in recruiting girls into their Youth Clubs. This is considered as an opportunity by MJAS. Earlier MJAS has been on the District Youth Advisory Committee. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao would also like MJAS to be on their Task Force, but as with other government organisations, this too seems tokenistic. And MJAS is rightly quite wary of getting into tokenistic relationships.

The point being made is that although MJAS has high credibility at the district level because of their sincere and committed work on women's and children's rights, they are perhaps not able to leverage their relationships to the highest level. And this may be a function of the nature of these agencies and the mismatch between MJAS style of working and theirs.

## **OTHER OUTCOMES – SKILLED FACILITATION, WIDER IMPACT, LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE GENERATION**

There were other positive outcomes beyond those expected or aspired for. Some of the other outcomes of the project have been the capacity enhancement of MJAS team as a whole (HAQ-MJAS and MJAS) in terms of skills and learnings. It has developed different modules, tools and techniques, campaign material etc. Training of Trainers have been held in which the team members have been trained as trainers. The organisation is now recognised as a resource in the area of child marriage prevention. The team was invited by UNICEF Gujarat to train 800 peer leaders from 80 villages for their initiative on prevention of child marriage "UDAAN".

The MJAS team members as well as the girls and boys who championed the cause of prevention of child marriage, received national and international recognition. Many young people were featured on two national television shows, one young woman featured on a TedTalk. Some young girls and boys have been able to find livelihood opportunities through their training in the Tech Centre run by MJAS.

In West Bengal, Jabala's work has been recognised at the state level and UNICEF and the state government have been piloting the concept of 'child friendly panchayats' with leadership from Jabala. Based on the Triple S Model, and as a follow up of the earlier evaluation, the Jabala Team prepared a 'convergence model of implementation' with check-list and SoPs on "child marriage free gram panchayat", stakeholders mapping, roles and duties of different departments, case intervention process etc. These were adopted and implemented by government. Kanyashree beneficiaries from Jabala's adolescent girls groups are being recognised as Kanyashree Jodhas. Others are working as citizen reporters for national dailies.

While all these positive results have occurred, there are a few of the desired outcomes that have not been achieved in the two states despite significant efforts by partner team members. One is the activation of VLCPCs in around 14 villages that the MJAS team focused on. Despite formation of the VLCPCs and introducing an active civil society member, and doing several rounds of orientation to roles and responsibilities, the VLCPCs continue to be non-functional. In West Bengal too, the VLCPCs do not appear to be as strong as they were three years ago. This appears to be a reflection of the macro environment in both states. In Rajasthan the ICPS is not implemented well. In the absence of direction from the top, and no commitment to monitoring the implementation, it is very difficult to make village level institutions function. In West Bengal although there has been a considerable positive movement in strengthening on the ICPS, local elections disrupted the momentum of formation and strengthening the VLCPCs.

Similarly, the implementation of the PCMA is not happening as it should in both states. The clause of annulment by girls who were married as children and then deciding they do not want the marriage when they attain adulthood, has been impossible to affect. Political interference in the instance of child marriages has paralysed the administration in many cases reported and brought to their notice. Patriarchal mind sees triumph over the knowledge of the law and the constitution. Although the states along with UNICEF have announced Child Marriage Free Panchayats, there are no guidelines available. Perhaps state level coalitions and alliances working with increased strength might bring forth better results?

The work with boys is the second area where there may be scope for some fresh thinking. This evaluation indicated that changes are happening within boys, they are realising how their mothers and sisters are at a disadvantage. Many boys are stating that they are helping mothers with household chores and intervening within families to allow for more freedom for their sisters. Although the programme has incorporated boys into the leadership and citizenship training along with gender sensitisation using the SaathSaath module, it may be worthwhile to conceptualise afresh the work with boys. The SaathSaath module may be gender sensitive from the perspective of girls and women, it may not have content on Masculinities. Gender content from the perspective of boys may be required. The test is a response of boys – and men – when it comes to property rights for women, control over women's sexuality and violence against women. Do their ideas of gender justice hold up at these levels?

As mentioned in the earlier sections, although MJAS and Jabala had set for themselves an objective of monitoring and documentation and an MIS, they have achieved mixed results in this area. A consultant was brought in to visualise an MIS. Unfortunately, it has not yielded the required results. Although a lot of documentation exists in both organisations, and has been put to good use, the system of indicators and analysis of the achievements according to the indicators can be better. Team members cannot make sense of the data that they gather, are

not able to analyse trends, or comparisons with state and/or district data. More training may be required in this area.

## **GOOD PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES THAT WORKED**

There were several common good practices in both the organisations' work. Football for Freedom Unity and Solidarity is a great strategy for bringing about the social change that this project aimed at – empowerment of girls, changes in public discourse and social norms related to sports and girls. Theatre Groups are another powerful strategy for providing voice to the adolescent girls and boys, as well as for spearheading social awareness on complex sensitive issues in an entertaining yet provocative ways. The mass campaigns and public action through rallies, demonstrations and celebration of significant days, has been another effective strategy for increasing openness and changing public opinion around social norms.

The creation of 'safe spaces' – the Tech Centres' in Rajasthan and English classes in West Bengal - and also in the form of collectivising girls and boys into AGGs and ABGs, have promoted solidarity. There is a demand from the young people in both the areas that such groups be expanded so that they can consolidate their strength.

In both the field areas, thought has been given to magnifying the effects of the Project beyond the local intervention areas and take the lessons learnt to other villages. In Rajasthan, as an offshoot of the HAQ- MJAS initiative, MJAS has introduced the project interventions in villages other than the 8 project villages. Also by showcasing the achievements in these eight villages, MJAS has also leveraged support from other donors for the Football teams and Tech Centre. Each of the above are measures for sustainability of the project interventions. Even if this project funding were to stop, MJAS would find ways of continuing towards its mission. As a part of this project, Jabala has concentrated on working with the official machinery at the block and district levels, so that the project interventions can be replicated across the two districts.

## **CHALLENGES**

The challenges faced by the teams are actually the reason for this project – strong entrenched patriarchal and traditional mindsets that control girls and women, promote early marriages and control over girls' sexuality. These mindsets exist in every constituency, parents, caste panchayats, school teachers, block and district officials, the police and other law enforcement agencies. And therefore there is a clash between the constitutional rights of the young people and the traditions and cultural practices that violate young peoples' rights.

Another challenge is the swinging of the pendulum from restrictions placed on girls and boys and the forced child marriages, to a recognition of 'rights' by the young people – right to autonomy, self-determination, the right to choose – and the voluntary decision to opt for early marriage, to 'run away', to experience autonomy. There is a resultant challenge therefore of POCSO which criminalises all under age sexual activity, leading to young people being treated as criminals, instead of as growing individuals who need to be informed, educated and supported as they learn to negotiate the difficult terrain of mature decision making.

Both organisations are trying to handle these challenges with patience and persistence. Maybe new and innovative strategies need to be devised and learnt on how to deal with young people's autonomy with balance, with respect. Maybe stronger state level coalitions are required to amplify the voice of the rights' claimants. Another challenge is the capacity of the team members. Many are young, from the local communities. Their strength is the experience of their struggle and the conviction that comes from this. Nurturing of the team members has to continue, through capacity building and training efforts and providing them the support and sense of solidarity that they need. Burnout is very real when dealing with entrenched patriarchal mindsets, that violate all sensibilities. Team members have to be taught coping skills and provisions have to be made in the work routine to address burnout.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

Each of the two partners have found ways to build in sustainability.

The project is located within the vision and mission and the long term strategic plan of MJAS and this makes it sustainable. The organisation has found ways of complementing and leveraging the different programmes so that the long term objectives are achieved.

Jabala's design of working closely with the official ICPS structures and supporting them to implement convergent child protection interventions is a way of building sustainability.

The strategy of peer leaders and other change agents at the community level – Bal Mitras and Jagrut Nagarik Samities, Civic Volunteers, religious leaders – is a strategy for sustainability – these community cadres will carry on the work because their consciousness has changed.

Football for girls is a strategic activity. This needs to be expanded and continued. Peer Leaders and Adolescent Girls' and Boys' Groups are also a critical activity that needs to be supported and continued. And MJAS and Jabala should continue to provide thought leadership and handholding support for public campaigns on different social issues.

## **BALANCE BETWEEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT WITH PUBLIC SYSTEMS**

Based on the experience of the HAQ-MJAS initiative, the MJAS team had a special question about whether they were able to balance their community engagement and work with the public systems. MJAS' work with the communities is very strong indeed. Rigorous case work and close and persistent follow up of issues in the community, contribute to close relationship with the community.

While MJAS is supportive, the team also challenges patriarchal and social practices. There have been instances where the community groups have rejected MJAS presence and discouraged team members from even entering the villages. Even in these instances the team has held fast, recognising that their mission is tough and they are not going to be able to change the attitudes and mindsets in a hurry. And while they are on appropriate committees at the district level, and have been engaging with different departments, the results may not have been as desired. And this is more a factor of the nature of public systems than their own efforts.

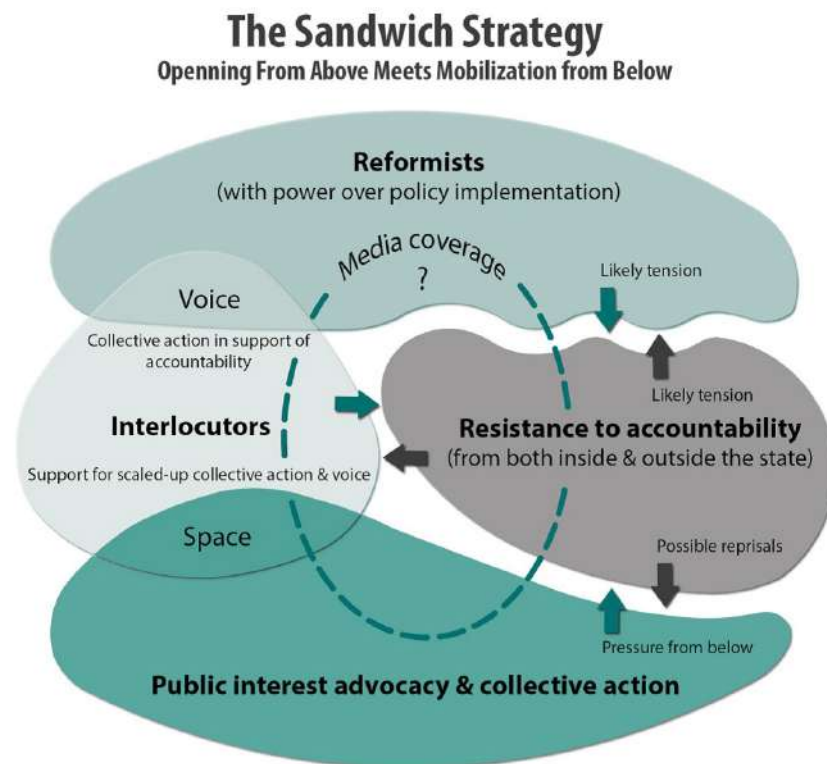
Stemming from MJAS's concern, both partners' teams can collectively reflect of what they want their strategy of engagement with public systems to be. To what extent are they willing to go while 'engaging'? What are the non-negotiables? How can they guard against co-optation? Can the strategy of building leadership and putting pressure from below be the answer? Or maybe the Sandwich Strategy as shown below is the answer?

MJAS and Jabala both need to forge links, or foster larger coalitions and alliances at the state – and the national – levels to effect policy interventions and commitments from the top, identify interlocutors who have an entry into higher policy and administrative spaces, skilfully use media to highlight both the positive deviations, as well as the violations of rights. And use pressure of collective action from below.

The Triple S model places emphasis on WELL EQUIPPED TEAM OF SKILLED FACILITATORS FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION . While the teams in the three partner organisations are very strong in terms of their passion, commitment and competencies, there may be more to learn about how to be even more skilled facilitators of social transformation.

## TEAMS' CAPACITIES

Training and capacity building efforts within MJAS and Jabala have been noteworthy. In MJAS resources have been built within the organisation, cadres of trainers on sensitive subjects like CSA, Gender through the SaathSaath training modules, WenLido and so on. While many of the older staff in both the organisations have developed a feminist and rights perspective and a rare maturity to intervene effectively at the community level, many of the younger and more recent recruits would benefit through concerted capacity building. Jabala's block level teams require consistent field level guidance and support.



Source: Fox, Jonathan. SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY: WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE REALLY SAY? GPSA Working Paper No. 1 September 2014

A small survey on capacity building efforts carried out during this evaluation with both the organisational teams, showed that team members feel that they have deepened their rights and social accountability perspectives, and improved their strategic planning, documentation, and facilitation skills. The results of the survey should be discussed in team meetings and plans made to strengthen the teams' skills in setting indicators and using these to analyse their work. A second point of discussion can also be: what are the mechanisms for transmitting the organisations' vision and mission to new members and how can perspective building be institutionalised within the organisation.

## **PARTNERSHIPS - MJAS, HAQ, JABALA AND OTHERS**

Both MJAS and Jabala team members value the partnership with HAQ because of many reasons – a good match between the perspectives and values of the two organisations, the technical support and field mentoring received from HAQ, the opportunities to showcase the work in fora which may have otherwise been inaccessible to MJAS. Team members also valued the open and in depth discussions and dialogue, the opportunities and emphasis on creativity and innovation in the partnership, the resources that the partnership brought in through collaborative projects. They were also able to openly express their dissatisfaction and expectations from future partnerships: better salaries, more resources for things like girls' exposure trips, football teams, continued capacity building of the team, shared credit for the work done. They would like guidance for developing a sound and well-conceived programme with boys. They had several expectations that need to be discussed and clarified – some may be realistic and some may be aspirational.

From the observations in the inception workshop and reports of collaborative training workshops, it appears that the partnership between MJAS and Jabala also was fruitful. Although the two organisations work on the issue of child marriage and adolescent rights in very different contexts, they share experiences of their strategies and challenges and the lessons learnt. The report of the gender training that was done for the staff of the two organisations shows an open sharing of reflections and experiences. Jabala team has also appreciated the exposure tours to the MJAS field areas and the opportunity of widening their perspectives.

The sustained way that MJAS has brought in resource persons from like minded organisations – both from within Rajasthan as well as from other parts of India – shows that the organisation values partnerships and collaborations. This should be built upon to create a strong coalition for adolescent rights and prevention of child marriage, at the state level. Similarly, Jabala would enhance its own efforts by forging alliances at the state level.

## **A CONTRIBUTION ANALYSIS**

Contribution Analysis answers some of the kinds of questions given below:

*Has the Program influenced the observed result? Has the program made an important contribution to the observed result? Why has the result occurred? What role did the intervention play? and for management questions: Is it reasonable to*

*conclude that the program has made a difference? What does the preponderance of evidence say about how well the program is making a difference? What conditions are needed to make this type of program succeed?*

Source:

[https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/contribution\\_analysis](https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/contribution_analysis)

The Theory of Change stated below envisaged that conscientisation of girls and boys, educating them about their constitutional and human rights, organising them into sangathans through different means like the football teams, the Tech Centre, regular sessions on issues of their interest, would result in them dialoguing with their elders and engaging in collective action to stop their own child marriages, prevent others' child marriages or gaunas, motivate their friends to continue education. It was also envisaged that the interventions mentioned above would also lead to empowerment of individuals and enhance their ability to speak their minds, exercise their right to choice. The assumption was that the project interventions – actions of the young people, and the engagement of the project staff with officials and other duty bearers would somehow result in institutionalisation of changes within public systems. These linkages were not quite spelt out in the Theory of Change or in the programme logic and therefore failed to lead to the kinds of changes that were envisaged.

The Results section above and the improvements in outcome indicators like number of child marriages and gaunas prevented and delayed respectively, number of girls re enrolled in schools bear witness to the fact that by and large the programme interventions were highly effective at the levels of the individual boys and girls and adolescents groups and contributed to the positive results. They were somewhat effective at the level of bringing about a different consciousness at the level of community stakeholders. And perhaps they were not so very effective at increasing the responsiveness of duty bearers, or of institutionalising the changes within public systems, like the child protection system, the judiciary, the education and the health systems. The assumption that patriarchy can be dismantled to make way for implementation of laws like the PCMA, or implementation of the ICPS, could not be nullified or countered through the programme interventions.

## **ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE REVIEW**

Due to the age of consent under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offence (POCSO) Act 2012 being 18, all sexual activity below it is criminalised. With the Supreme Court Order declaring sex with an underage wife also an offence under the POCSO Act 2012, health workers are afraid to help any under- age girl seeking

### **Theory of Change**

Child marriage is a violation of rights and children must be protected. Patriarchy and social norms remain the key drivers of child marriage. The 3S model is based on interventions at three levels in order to address and impact child marriage, namely: Self, Society and System. When the individual is empowered, at the societal level communities are mobilised, and mandated structures are activated and held accountable. Thus, through a harmonious coherence between these three levels, child marriages can be prevented. This requires skilful facilitation as well as certain processes and forums to ensure proper institutionalization and sustainability.

abortion, given the requirement for mandatory reporting under the law. The health workers therefore do not want to take the risk of supporting under age pregnant girls, without reporting the pregnancy/sexual activity to the police. Girls who get pregnant thus see a quiet marriage as the only option - even if it is a child marriage. Even if married, they cannot 'legally' seek abortion without the husband being criminalised. In effect, a law that was meant to protect them has ended up forcing them into early marriage or early motherhood!

Effecting a change in the legal systems, effective implementation of the PCMA require much larger efforts than what multidimensional projects like these can undertake. A larger judicial education and advocacy project is required to transform patriarchal judicial mindsets so annulments by girls etc can be possible.

While it is great to have adolescents recognised as leaders and champions for the issue, how ethical is it to put them in positions of vulnerability? The role of Kanyashree Jodhasas informers is the case in point. What do programme implementers need to do to ensure that human rights defenders are protected and have a support system? There is an additional issue of the conflict between increasing solidarity and trust through adolescents girls groups, and asking a few amongst them to turn informers – what does this do to the trust between the girls? These issues need to be discussed and some measures need to be put in place.

Deploying religious leaders in the project of gender justice when the feminist critique of all religions is that they are the epitome of patriarchy and that religious leaders wield a lot of power over women. And in fact, perpetuate patriarchal control over women. It may be good to discuss this tactical engagement within the teams so that they are aware of the larger contradictions, but understand the short term use of this strategy.

There is a need to come out with a nuanced position on conditional cash transfer schemes like the Kanyashree and Rupashree. Rupashree is after all reinforcing the notion of marriage as an institution and an inevitable destiny for all girls and women. And the added complication of Rupashree being perceived as a convenient dowry if the girl marries after she is 18. What of self determination by girls? about 'marriage or no marriage?', if 'yes to marriage, then when?' and the position around acceptable age at marriage not as the legal age, but beyond the legal age and when the girl feels she would like to marry after attaining some degree of independence, has to be advocated for. Rupashree - like schemes have to be transformed – rather than linked to marriage, they need to promote career options for girls, reward girls who want to pursue careers.

There is the related issue of the right to choose. Many young girls are choosing to get married to boys of their choice before they are 18. This is being perceived by the young people as the right to choose. The reasons for early marriages as decided by young girls are the control that they experience in their parental homes and in society. These aspects need to be addressed through appropriate sustained social interventions. There is also the reason of 'love, romance and sexual rights and freedom' for choosing early marriage. This needs to be addressed through comprehensive sexuality education.

From all accounts, VLCPCs appear to be a critical institution and need to be functional and strong. Jabala and MJAS have an important role to play at this level – strengthening of the VLCPCs and monitoring them continuously. Block and District functionaries need to be supported to ensure that the VLCPCs are doing their job. Indicators need to be developed for this and advocated for by Jabala and MJAS.



And finally, while the law is very important and is necessary, it is not sufficient. The PCMA, as other laws like the Dowry Prohibition Act, threatens and criminalises violators and drives child marriages underground. Along with the law, social interventions are very important. Appropriate budgetary provisions for social interventions and the requisite official machinery, are required.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The recommendations are embedded in the sections above. The main recommendation is to use this report in a debriefing workshop with the team and to use the discussion for achieving greater clarity on the perspectives and values and vision and mission of MJAS. Having said this, some of the key recommendations are:
2. Enhance documentation and analysis skills of the team so that they are able to assess the progress towards the outcome indicators that they set for themselves.
3. Strengthen work with Adolescent boys and girls around the existing topics of Citizenship, Gender, Rights, Health, Violence against Women. And also add on a Social Accountability lens to include all government schemes meant for them – for example, the Right to Education Act, the Rashtriya Kishore SwasthyaKaryakram, ICDS, School Health. All of these and others in addition to the Rupashree and KanyashreeProkalpa.
4. Revisit the work with the boys and conceptualise it with the perspective of masculinities, in addition to citizenship and social justice.
5. Develop advance gender training modules for peer leaders and adolescents' groups who have gone through the basic SaathSaath module.
6. Strengthen support to frontline workers like ASHAs, AWWs and ANMs.
7. Examine whether there is possibility of developing alliances and coalitions at the state level to exert influence at the highest levels of policy and programme formulation for adolescents' rights and prevention of child marriage.

Examine what can be done to bring about judicial reforms related to PCMA along with collaborators. Discuss the issues related to annulment of child marriage by girls when they attain adulthood, in larger fora to develop a strategy for effective implementation of the PCMA and the ICPS.

## **CONCLUSION**

The aim of this project was to test whether the Triple S Model to prevent Child Marriages is workable. The results of the three years intervention and the contribution analysis indicate that indeed transformation at the personal and social levels is possible with the kinds of interventions that this project fielded – capacity building of peer leaders, creating sangathans of adolescent girls and boys groups, interfacing with the mothers and other influencers like teachers and community leaders, public action through campaigns and rallies. Some change may be possible at the level of individuals within public systems, and there may be increased responsiveness but institutional change of the kind desired, may not be possible within the time frame of short term projects or with the kinds of grass roots interventions. There may be need to look at more macro level and vertically linked social accountability and advocacy strategies.

# **ANNEXURE 1**

## **DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**

1. HAQ Proposal to Ford Foundation
2. HAQ Proposal to AJWS
3. Ajmer District Demographic Details
4. Problem statement on Child Marriages – MJAS
5. Socio-Cultural determinants of Child Marriage in Ajmer district: A KAP Study, 2017
6. AJWS Narrative reports (2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18)
7. AJWS Annual Report 2015-16
8. Compilation of presentations made by the MJAS team during the evaluation workshop
9. Child Marriage Case Documentation 2017-18 (Ranjit Singh)
10. Data Sheet - MJAS
11. Scale Rating - Examples and Status – Sheet (MJAS)
12. Football for Freedom, Unity and Solidarity, July to December 2016
13. Football for Freedom, Unity and Solidarity, November 2016 to December 2017
14. Jabala's Report of 2017
15. Report to Ford Foundation 2018-19
16. Jabala's Case studies
17. Slides presented in the Team Meeting - Jabala
18. SOP – Working with Adolescent Girls - Jabala
19. SOP – Prevention of Child Marriages - Jabala
20. Various Excel sheets – Grading of stakeholders, adolescent groups and so on
21. TedTalks
22. Newspaper articles

# ANNEXURE 2

## SCHEDULE FOLLOWED

Date	Details
December 2018	Review of documents and film
December 27 and 28 Ajmer	Inception meeting with three teams – HAQ, JABALA, MJS
February 18 2019	Travel to Kolkata
February 19	Travel to Berhampore
February 19 Berhampore 11.30 am to 6.30 pm	Meeting with Jabala team – presentation of 2017 and 2018 work by team, differences between the ways of working in Phase 1 and Phase 2 (by old team members), documentation aspects of the project
February 20 9.15 am to 10.15 am	Discussion with Biplab, Indira and Preeti on Documentation Systems in Jabala. Feedback on Reports.
Murshidabad District Offices 10.30 am to 12 noon	Meeting with District Child Protection Unit
Beldanga 12.50 pm to 1.45 pm	Meeting with Marriage Registrar
2.00 pm to 3.00 pm	Meeting with Qazis
	Conversation with a Youth Club Member and seeing the football field
Travel to Berhampore	Lunch
Travel to MJ Block 5.30pm to 6.30 pm	Visit to Anushree's (CM survivor) home and meeting with family and community – Village Tetulian
Travel back to Berhampore	
February 21 9.15 am	Travel to Gudhiya. Adolescent Girls' Group Meeting
11.30 am	Adolescent Boys' Groups Meeting
	Lunch
3 pm	Meeting with CDPO MJ Block
3.30 pm to 4.30 pm	Meeting with Nutangram Panchayat (CM Free Panchayat) at Village Natungram
Travel back to Berhampore and then to Suri	
February 22 10.30 am to 11.30 am	Meeting with Hindu religious leaders in Angargoria

12 noon to 1.00 pm	Meeting with Mothers in KumarpurNutanpalli
Lunch	
2.30 pm to 3.30 pm	Meeting with frontline workers – ASHAs, AWWs, ANMs, Dai in Margram
3.30 pm to 4.30 pm	Meeting with adolescent girls and youth peer leaders in Margram
9 pm to 10.15 pm	Meeting with Biplab, Hriday, Sara, and Debolina on data and tables required for the report
February 23 2019	
5.00 am to 11.00 am	Travel Suri to Kolkata
12 noon to 3 pm	Debriefing meeting with team and questionnaire on further evaluation questions – partnership, training etc
March 10 - 11	Travel to Ajmer
March 11 4 pm to 6.30 pm	Meeting with MJAS team – Presentation of the work done  Documentation, Reports
March 12 10 am to 10.30 am	Feedback on the Reports and presentation of data (Karuna, Padma, Rekha, Indira)
10.30 am to 3.00 pm	Presentation of the work done (contd)
3.00 pm to 4.00 pm	Meeting with Ms Nusrat Naqvi and Ma Dimple Sharma (CWC Ajmer members)
4.30 pm to 7.30 pm	Visit to Hasiyavas  Meeting with Football Team Girls,  Discussions with a few youth group boys,  Home visits to Dhoniya's family, Ram Lal (ex SMC member and Sanju's father) and Niraaj (a hockey team member who is recovering from cancer, and a child marriage survivor)
March 13 9 am	Leave for Kekadi
11 am to 12.30 pm	Discussions with the Kekadi MJAS team in their office
1.00 pm to 2.00 pm	Visit to the anganwadi and Meeting Class 7 and 8 at Bilwara School
2.30 pm to 4.00 pm	Meeting with the Panchayat/VLCPC/ other village leaders in Gunganv
	Lunch in Kekadi and discussions with team
	Return to Ajmer by 7.30 pm
April 28 to May 2	Report writing - MJAS
May 6, 7 and 11	Report writing - MJAS
June 7, 10, 11, 12, 13	Report writing - Jabala
June 13	Synthesising and finalizing draft report
July 1-3	Finalising report



HAQ: Centre for Child Rights was founded in 1998. It was registered under the Societies Registration Act, in June 1999. The recognition, protection and promotion of three rights form the cornerstone of HAQ's work. They are: Right to Survival, Right to Childhood and Right to Equal Opportunity.

HAQ's strength lies in its capacity to straddle micro and macro issues impacting children, undertake research and documentation to generate new knowledge and evidence, bring hands on experience into policy advocacy nationally as well as internationally, and strengthen governance for children by holding the duty bearers accountable.

For HAQ, ensuring accountability is not only about monitoring performance but also about strengthening the existing systems through building capacity of key stakeholders to generate a timely and effective response and empowering the rights holders (children) to understand and seek their citizenship rights.

Recognising the seriousness of the implications of child marriage on children as also the country's development and progress, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights is currently implementing a project on prevention of child marriage through the strengthening of existing systems in West Bengal and Rajasthan. HAQ works in partnership with Jabala in West Bengal and Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS) in Rajasthan.

#### PUBLICATIONS.

Implementation of the POCSO Act, Study of Cases of Special Courts in Delhi & Mumbai 2012-2015 (2018) | Children's Access to Justice and Restorative Care – Fact sheets (2018) | Child Marriage No Never: Without My Consent Never Ever, West Bengal (2017) | Child Marriage No Never: Without My Consent Never Ever, Rajasthan (2017) | Upon a Beam of Light Helping Girls at Nirmal Chayya Find The Spark Within (2016) | Lost Childhood Caught in Armed Violence in Jharkhand (2016) | Prevention of Child Marriage: Impact on Girls (2016) | Child Trafficking in India Report (2016) | Strengthening Existing Systems for Prevention of Child Marriage (2015) | Report of the National Consultation on Prevention of Child Marriage (2015) | Budget for Children INDIA 2008-09 to 2013-14 (2015) | Children & Their Rights in Mining Areas- A Community Resource Guide (2014) | The South Asian Report - On the Child-Friendliness of Governments (2013) | International Colloquium on Juvenile Justice - A Report (2013) | Children and Governance (2012) | India-Child Rights Index. (2011) | Twenty Years of CRC- A Balance Sheet (Volumes I, II and III) (2011) | Budget for Children, set of seven publications on child budget analysis for India, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal (2009) | Kandhmal's Forgotten Children: A Status report | India's Childhood in the "Pits": A Report on the Impacts of Mining on Children in India | Blind Alley: Juvenile Justice in India (2009) | National Consultation on 'Countering Challenges in Adoption: Combating Child Trafficking' (2009) | Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Children and Governance: Holding the State Accountable (2009) | Still Out of Focus: Status of India's Children (2008) | Handbook on Children's Right to adequate Housing | Combating Child Trafficking | Budget for Children, set of four publications on child budget analysis for India, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Orissa (2007) | Child Protection (A Handbook for Panchayat Members in English and Hindi) | Status of Children in India Inc. (2005) | Says a child... Who Speaks for My rights? (A series of booklets analysing parliamentary questions and debates from 2003 to 2007 in English and Hindi) | Stop Child Trafficking (A Handbook for Parliamentarians) | Children in Globalising India: Challenging our Conscience (2003) | Children Bought and Sold: We can stop It! (Booklet on Child Trafficking in Hindi and English) (2003) | Children and Right to Adequate Housing: A Guide to International Legal Resources (2002) | India's Children and the Union Budget (2001)

