

'JAGARAN'

A proposal for the empowerment of girls for the period 2015 to2016

1. ABOUT NISHTHA

Nishtha, a totally community based women's organization was born in the mid-seventies. From the very beginning, its aim was to empower of the women / girls through awareness building on women's/girls' rights amongst them and empowering them to demand such rights. Nishtha is presently working in 300 villages in South 24 Parganas of West Bengal. Nishtha emphasizes on the coordinating nature and tradition with modern learning tools to foster grassroots understanding about the needs and application in all spheres of the life as a contour of sustainable development. Its campaigns for education of girl child, and against child marriage, trafficking, domestic violence and gender discrimination has endeared the organization in government and non-government circles by its inherent qualities. The programmes of Nishtha are a reflection of continuous self analysis & subsequent proactive revisions that made us a participatory resource centre for community women, youths and elderly in the field of education and health for our target area.

2. BACK GROUND OF THE AREA

Five districts among the top ten populous district of the country are in West Bengal and out of these five the South 24 Parganas district is worst effected by school dropouts, child marriage, atrocities against women and child trafficking. The reported cases of atrocities against women are maximum in this district.

Women are victims of social and economic discriminations. In the whole of West Bengal, 90% of the female workers work in the unorganized sector and these 90% women workers of the unorganized sector get exactly half wages than that of the male workers. Child marriage, school dropout, child trafficking and atrocities against women are very high in this district, South 24 Parganas.

Education

The situation of West Bengal in context of education of girls is amongst the worst as the state stands at fourth position in gross dropout rate from Class I – X only after Bihar, Sikkim and Rajasthan. Although Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan / Mission have tried to reduce the dropout rate, there is a lot to be done in order to ensure that the girls continue their education.

Gross Dropout Rates Girls of Schools of General Education in 2004-05			
States / Nation	Classes I-V	Classes I-VIII	Classes I-X
West Bengal	44.10	63.55	80.24
India	25.42	51.28	63.88

Source: Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.

In the age group of 11-14 years and 15 – 17 years, only 68.7 percent and 36.9 percent females respectively attend school, compared with 75.4 percent and 51.4 percent males in the corresponding

age group. No information or data of this vast population of dropouts are found, and they are left uncared in spite of the fact this group is most traffic prone, vulnerable and needs most of attention from all levels of society.

The age group of 11-18 years being the most vulnerable, no information or record is available on the whereabouts of the dropout children as to where have they gone or what has actually happened to them later. That is why it is not possible to keep a track on these children.

The interlinking relation between the dropout rate and child marriage is well known to all of us. As girls drop out because of marriage and of the dropped out girls are married earlier. Since the birth of a girl child and marriage of the child becomes the prime concern of her parents. They are treated as a burden of the family and the parents want to get rid of the burden by marrying her off soonest by any means. The relation between the above mentioned information and data can be well understood as according to the Rapid Household Survey conducted across the country, West Bengal stands at number three position in child marriage only after Bihar and Rajasthan with an average of 54.9 percent.

Child Marriage:

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As per empirical studies from the civil society sector including NISHTHA almost all the girls are faced with tortures and violence from different angles and different sources that are consequences of child marriage. In majority villages of one of the blocks of South 24 Parganas district, 60% marriages are under-age marriages. Merely 20% of the adolescent girls are growing-up within protection of mainstream schooling.

Trafficking

Last year the issue came up in the March session of the Parliament that only from our district 14,000 human were trafficked and among them the number of girl children was most and this is the highest number of child trafficking in our country. The dropped out and out of school girls are prone to trafficking and child marriage. No information is available on their whereabouts. That is why it is not possible to keep a track on these girls.

Recent data shows that South 24 Parganas is one of the two most significant source areas for trafficking in the state. A 2003 study on trafficking in one village in South 24 Parganas, showed that every second to third household in the village lives off the income of a trafficked girl between the ages of 13 and 15. Another study conducted in 2004-2005 discovered that, in only 4 villages more than 100 girls below 18 had been trafficked to Mumbai for forced prostitution during the preceding two years.

According to the latest report published by NCRB (National Crime Record Bureau, Government of India), West Bengal stands in the first position in number of cases of domestic violence against women. Furthermore, among the whole state, the crime and cruelty against women has been the MOST in our district of South 24 Parganas. It is a matter of utter shame incidences of violence against women including molestation, abuse and rape & murder are highest in West Bengal. In addition, recently the cruelty and different types of gender based violence against women has

reached such a level that all are horrified. It is being heard that perhaps West Bengal is the most unsafe place for the women in our country.

Now it is very clear that women have to be empowered so that they come to power and administration; because only women can understand their own problems & issues and can take appropriate action. Women are the peace makers; hence, Nishtha strongly believes that a 'violence free just world' is possible only on the day in which women come to the power corridor and become equal decision makers.

Education is the main tool of empowerment and without education empowerment will remain a mere word only. Nishtha strongly wants to address all girl children of school going age with special emphasis upon the dropped out and out of school girls and mainstream them again.

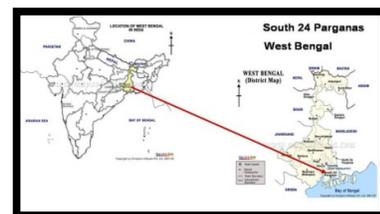
3. NISHTHA'S STRATEGY FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION PROJECTS

Nishtha addresses different worst areas of sufferings of the women and girl children and provides support to other areas of development. The major spheres of activities are mainly centred around education for girls, intervention to stop child trafficking, health and nutritional support, drinking water and sanitation programme under women's leadership, programme on youth and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Health Rights of women, Day Boarding for vulnerable girl child laborers, Night Shelter for children of sex workers, Campaign and advocacy against domestic violence, to promote and protect human rights of girl children etc., sustainable agriculture and promote rights of women as farmers, etc. Nishtha also conducts trainings of different types including leadership and life skill development, vocational training on different trades, Communication, Group Formation and Management, Volunteer Mobilization, etc.

NISHTHA has been working with success to achieve these objectives through a four tiered cross generational organizational pyramid consisting of *Bahinis'* or armies:

- * Girls' and boys' groups – Balika and Balak Bahinis (920 members).
- * Adolescent girls' and boys' groups – Kishori and Kishor Bahinis (4603 members).
- * Adult women's groups – Mahila Mandals (5830 members), and
- * Groups of senior women (93 members).

These groups have developed a strong social network among themselves which is relentlessly fighting against social evils like alcoholism, wife beating, desertion, etc., and deeply plunged to change the attitude and behavior of the strong and conservative gender biased society. They have already meeting with face of success and are energizing themselves for further struggle.



Since inception in mid nineteen seventies, Nishtha had laid the most important emphasis upon Group formation and girls' education to empower our future women generation. Thus Education for girls is always a very special programme for Nishtha.

4. IMPACT OF 'JAGARAN' – 2010 to 2014

Nishtha started the 'Jagaran' project with 200 girl children. These girls are from poor and gender biased families and most of them were child laborers. The rate of dropout and child marriage was extremely high in these families. These girls were supported on education and among them 37 girls

have appeared Madhyamik and studying higher secondary class. Five girls have migrated with their families, four dropped out due to severe illness owing to their earlier daily labourership, four were married off early. Thus, the child marriage has come down drastically. The retention in school has gone up, girls are now raising voice against violence and discrimination against girls. Moreover, their Mothers' groups have emerged as a very strong group and they are now playing the role of a watchdog so that their protection and enrolment in school is increased and child marriage and other violence against girls is reduced.

These Mother groups have eradicated liquor shops with the help of local police, cases of wife beating and desertion have come down, they are continuing a campaign on human rights of women and girls.

This spirit has to be continued and activities carried on for nearly twelve more years if this trend of change has to be hold up and has to be brought into place. By this twelve years, many girls will complete their college education, some will start earning, many will be settled in life, since by this time they will become adult, they will have an association in their own village and they will continue raising voice against injustice and deprivation. Further, they will participate in the decision making in their village and their families. This role model will encourage the community to educate their daughters.

5. PROPOSED INTERVENTION:

Goal:

Provide formal education, knowledge and training to 271 girls so that they complete their college education and become empowered to lead a dignified life.

Project Area:

The project would be implemented in Phingedauri and Damdama villages of Bishnupur I Block of South 24 Parganas district, West Bengal, India. A map of the area is affixed.

Project Duration:

Since it is an Education Project, it is necessary that the selected girls should be supported till they complete the college education. Thus, each of the girl students will require to be supported right from Class V till completion of college; because it is from this age the girls become victims of dropout, child marriage and trafficking. Hence, the project will be of twelve years duration.

Objectives:

- Ensure education to the vulnerable girls till they complete college education.
- Reduction of Drop out level to 20% of the admitted children.
- Build a positive consensus among the parents, stakeholder and community as a whole regarding the education of the child and ensuring education friendly environment in family and community.
- To provide vocational and other trainings to those girls who would discontinue studies after Madhyamik.

Strategies:

- To ensure retention in mainstream school of already admitted 271 girls of Jagaran project.
- Change the knowledge, aptitude and practices of the community to stop early marriage, gender discrimination, etc., to ensure girls in the formal school.
- Reduce the factors which make the children become victims of dropouts, neglect, torture, forced labour and child marriage.
- Forming group of children who will be well aware on their rights, act as peer educators and raise their voices against the problems faced by them.
- Provide educational backup support including clothing to the girls.

Activities:

- Re-admit already admitted 271 girls of 'Jagaran' Project.
 - Provide educational materials, uniform/clothing, etc., to these children.
 - Establish and follow the tracking system, MIS, etc., to study and assess their improvements.
 - Pay regular home visits and meetings with parents of these children to sensitize them to create an education and child friendly discrimination free environment in the family.
 - The passing out girls of Madhyamik examination will be admitted to Class XI and also to admit the Higher Secondary passed out girls to colleges.
 - Organize meetings with the mothers so that the parents especially mothers take an active role in ensuring the education of their daughters.
 - Organize meetings with communities to sensitise and motivate them to act as a group of pressure builder to ensure education of children stop early marriage, gender discrimination, child labour and gender based violence, etc., which are the main cause of dropout.
 - Organize training programmes for the girls and mothers so that they become well equipped with information and make them up to date with which they can raise their voices against deprivation, discrimination and violence against children.
 - To provide training to 20 girls who have discontinued from their studies after Madhyamik.
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Itemized Budget

Budget for the Project - JAGARAN : April'2015 to March'2016		
S.	Particulars	Budget
A Personnel Cost		
1	Honorarium of Social Worker Rs 5000 x 12 months	60000.00
2	Honorarium of Accountant Rs 6000 x 12 months	72000.00
3	Fees for Documentation Officer Rs 3000 X 12 months	36000.00
Sub Total		168000.00
B Programme Cost		
Educational Support		
1	Clothing for 110 girls Rs. 250 x 110 students	27500.00
2	Educational Materials (Khata, pen, pencil, bags, books etc) Rs 300 x 110 children	33000.00
3	Tuition Fees Rs. 100 x 110 students x 11 months	121000.00
Sub Total		181500.00
C Awareness Building		
1	Stakeholder meeting 1 times x 30 persons x Rs.25	750.00
Sub Total		750.00
D Capacity Building		
1	Kishori Vahini Training TA & Food Rs 70 x 25 heads x 6 days	10500.00
2	Get together of 500 members of Mohila Mondal	10000.00
Sub Total		20500.00
E Support to 67 Higher Secondary students		
1	Clothing Rs. 300 x 67 Girls	20100.00
2	Tuition Fees Rs 300 per month X 11 months x 67 Girls	221100.00
Sub Total		241200.00
F Education support for college students		
1	Stipend for 76 College girls - 1st year Rs. 300 x76 girls x11months	250800.00
2	Stipend for 16 College girls - 2nd year Rs. 600 x16 girls x11months	105600.00
Sub Total		356400.00
G Vocational Training for 20 girls		
	Rs 1000 X 20 heads	20000.00
Sub Total		20000.00
H ADMINISTRATION		
1	Audit and Legal expenses including service charge	5000.00
2	Stationary, Printing, Postage, Telephone, Internet, Electricity etc.	6000.00
3	Travel Cost	7200.00
4		8000.00
5	Annual maintenance for computer	1500.00
Sub Total		27700.00
Grand Total(A+B+C+D+E+F+G+H)		1016050.00
Grand requested for one year Rs 1016050.00		