

बाल विवाह मुक्त भारत CHILD MARRIAGE FREE INDIA

सुरक्षित बचपन, सुरक्षित भारत | SAFE CHILDHOOD, SAFE INDIA

Viswa Yuva Kendra is a voluntary organization dedicated for the development of the deprived people (backward and poor rural women, scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, children in need of care and protection) in the state of Odisha since 1986. The organization is working on the issues related to Child Marriage, Child Trafficking, Child Labor and Child Sexual Abuse with the support of Kailash Satyarthi Childrens' Foundation from May 2023. We have been participating in Child Marriage Free India Campaign in 300 villages of Dhenkanal and Angul districts of Odisha.

The Child Marriage Free India Campaign

- Action Month:** VYK had observed the action month in June 2023 for rescuing the child labor from both Angul and Dhenkanal districts. The campaign activities were also taken up during 20th November to 10th December 2023. By end of January 2024 we have rescued 72 child laborers from different commercial establishments from both the districts with the support of Labor department and local administration.
- Child Marriage Free India Campaign:** On 16th October 2023 the campaign was organized in 135 locations of Angul and Dhenkanal district through community awareness, sensitization in educational institutions, signature campaign in railway/ bus stops, candle march, campaign through chariot. We had touched more than 8000 people directly and many more indirectly.
- Awareness Campaign:** The awareness campaign in educational institutions, women self help groups, adolescent groups, community organizations were conducted in all the 300 project villages through cultural events, chariot campaign, awareness meetings etc.
- Pledges:** We have taken up awareness campaign and pledges of 462,000 people by end of January 2024. Youths and Adolescents, school and college students, women and community members of project villages and outside have been participated in mass pledges, small group and individual pledges.
- System Strengthening:** We organize awareness meeting among VLCPC/ PLPCPC members at the Village and Gram Panchayat level respectively. We mainly sensitize them about prevention of child marriage, school enrollment, support children in need of care and protection in convergence with existing government system.
- Traditional Leaders Training:** Traditional leaders like Chief of different caste/religions, priests of temples, selected PRI members, decision makers of the village of the project area have been trained about their role in prevention of child marriage, sexual abuse and trafficking and support system available with the government.
- Adolescent leaders training:** More than 600 adolescents have been training from all the 300 project villages about the objectives and their role as a peer in prevention of child marriage, abuse and trafficking.

8. **Convergence:** The campaign has been supported by district administration, Angul and Dhenkanal. They have been participated in different events at the panchayat, block and district level. Rescue of children from child labor, child marriage and sexual offences have been supported by District Administration, Social Welfare Department, District Child Protection Unit, District Education Office, Child Welfare Committees and Police Department. Special letters/circulars have been issued in favor of the campaign.

9. **Vulnerability mapping:** House hold survey have been conducted in all the 300 villages to assess the status of children in relation to marriage, sexual abuse, trafficking, education, convergence of services etc.

10. **Case Intervention:** With the support all the stake holders and service provides of the project we have prevented 50 child marriage, 60 child sexual abuse, 45 child trafficking (Child labour/Bonded Labour/Child Trafficking/Forced Labour) and 45 child trafficking for Sexual Exploitation cases by end of January 2024.

Campaign Photos



Background

Child marriage is not just an age-old social evil, but also a heinous crime that robs children of their childhood. Child marriage is a “crime against children” that violates basic human rights, minor girls are forced to marry and live a life of mental trauma, physical and biological stress, domestic violence including limited access to education and increased vulnerability to domestic violence. The consequences of child marriage are severe and extensive. Some of the specific consequences include: early pregnancies leading to complications and higher rate of maternal mortality and death of infants, malnutrition among both the infant and the mother, increased vulnerability to reproductive health, disruption in girl’s education and thereby reduction in opportunities of her personal and professional development, domestic violence and abuse, limited decision making powers in the household, and mental health issues.

India’s Census 2011 revealed 12 million children were married before attaining the legal age, of which 5.2 million were girls. Globally, child marriage is identified as a crime and a menace that needs to be eliminated. It finds space in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, under target 5.3 of Goal 5 that states elimination of all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation by 2025.

The latest National Family Health Survey (2019-21) shows that although there is a drop in the overall rate of child marriages, from 26.8% in the National Family Health Survey (NFHS 4) to 23.3% in NFHS-5, it is still high despite laws, programmes and schemes in place to address the issue.

Child Marriage Free India Campaign

Understanding the seriousness of the issue, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in W.P. Civil 382 of 2013 pronounced that the sexual intercourse committed by the husband upon his wife being under the age of 18 years with or without her consent can be constituted as rape. To address this, the most definitive and audacious commitment to end child marriage was made with the launch of [Child Marriage Free India campaign](#).

[Child Marriage Free India \(CMFI\)](#) is a nationwide campaign led by women leaders and a coalition of more than 160 NGOs spanning more than 300 districts working to eliminate child marriage in India. CMFI is working to attain the tipping point of child marriage, after which the society does not accept this evil practice and that will happen when the prevalence of child marriage is brought down to 5.5% by 2030, from the current national prevalence rate of 23.3%. This is being done by initially targeting 257 high-prevalence districts and gradually focusing on all the districts of the country.

Child marriage results in child rape, resulting in child pregnancy, and in a large number of cases, may lead to child deaths. For decades, we have been losing generations of our children to child marriage. The [Child Marriage Free India campaign](#) has received extended support from various Departments and Institutions of over 28 States. So far, across India more than 5 crore people have taken the pledge to end child marriage over the last one year through the efforts of the [Child Marriage Free India Campaign](#).

Know more about the [Child Marriage Free India \(CMFI\) Campaign](#), please visit:

<https://www.childmarriagefreeindia.org/>



THE GOAL

Reduction of Child Marriage to 5.5% by 2030

as proposed in WHEN CHILDREN HAVE CHILDREN - TIPPING POINT TO END CHILD MARRIAGE (Ribhu, 2023)

DEMANDS OF THE CAMPAIGN



Ensure **access to free and quality education** for all children till class 12 (or 18 years of age, whichever is later)



Dedicated **budgetary allocation** for schemes and infrastructure for education and vocational training till class 12



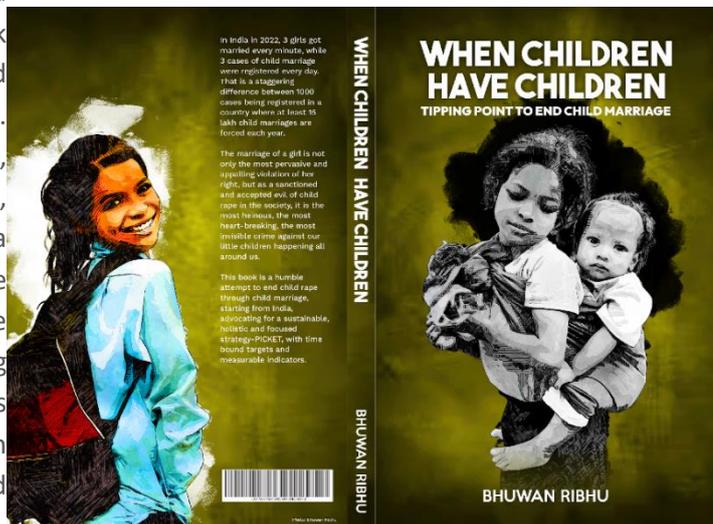
Enable **real-time attendance data analysis** and intervention when irregularities occur



Effective **implementation and enforcement of laws** against child marriage for all sections of society

Tipping Point to end child marriage

Noted child rights activist, author, Supreme Court lawyer and founder of CMFI campaign, Bhuwan Ribhu has authored a book - *‘When Children Have Children: Tipping Point to End Child Marriage’* and put forth a framework advocating a sustainable, holistic and focused strategy with time-bound targets and measurable indicators to make India child marriage free by 2030. This book shows the path to eliminating child marriage in India within the next decade. As suggested by the author in the book, by adopting a systematic, highly focused, and intensive intervention model, over a phased timeline it is possible to reduce the national child marriage prevalence levels to 5.5% —the threshold, the tipping point, beyond which the prevalence is anticipated to diminish organically with reduced reliance on targeted interventions.



Tipping Point Methodology

The aim of reduction of 60% of child marriage (in each of the phases) is assumed to bring down the incidence of child marriage to 5.5% in the next 9 nine years from 2021, from the last available estimates i.e., NFHS-5, till 2030. An additional assumption is that such a focused and elaborate intervention against child marriage would have a ripple effect. The tipping point analysis has been

divided into two phases. The first phase will extend over a period of six years, starting in 2021. Subsequently, the second phase will span over a three-year period. It is expected that the national average for child marriage prevalence (percentage women aged 20-24 who were married before 18 years) would decline from 23.3% to 13.7% if the prevalence of child marriage is reduced by 60% in the 257 high-prevalence districts in the first phase followed by a further reduction of 60% in all districts across the country.

In order to reach the Tipping Point, the author has proposed a strategy at national and district level.

- a. **National Level strategy** where Governments, Institutions, statutory bodies, etc. work towards prevention, protection, increased investment, improved prosecution, convergence and use of technology for monitoring
- b. **District Level strategy** is similar to national level strategy but includes district administration, Panchayats, civil society, NGOs, other functionaries, parents and children who work collectively to prevent, report, and take action against child marriage.

Case Study-1

An adolescent girl from Kandhapada village of Athmallik block was studying in the local Higher Secondary School. She was 16+ years old. Somehow, she was influenced by a local youth and kidnapped on 13th November 2023. The A2J Team immediately went to her family and counseled parents to file a FIR. The matter was reported to police by Access to Justice Angul Team and filed a FIR by her mother. The police investigated the matter and rescued her from Bhubaneswar after two days. She was produced before CWC, Angul and placed in a Child Care Institution at Angul. Then the parents took the girl to home giving an undertaking for taking proper care of their daughter. The kidnapper was arrested under section 363 of IPC and POCSO Act and sent to the jail.

In an unfortunate incident her mother was found dead at a farm land in the next month. Her father was the prime accused of the murder and brought under the custody of the Police. After three days of the incident, the A2J Program Coordinator and Counselor made a home visit of the girl for counseling. As the girl was taken home with an undertaking by the parents, it was immediately brought to the notice of CWC. The CWC allowed the extended family members to keep girl till the completion of rituals to be performed after death. Finally, the family members produced the girl before CWC and she was sent to CCI on 5th January 2024.

Case Study-2

A minor girl from Chhendipada block of Angul district was in love with a boy from Papasara village of Kishorenagar block. To get marry her love, she eloped from her village on 10th August, 2023. With the support from the bride's family and friends, they got married at a temple on the late evening on 10th August and the newly married couple went to bride-groom house. In



the next day the bride-groom family was having preparation of the post marriage rituals at his home. Access to Justice Project Associate Ms. Dipi Dehury came to know about the marriage. She collected personal details of both of the bride and bride-groom from the source. It was verified from birth register of her village Anganwadi Centre and found the date of birth was 6th February 2006. The matter was intimated to the block level Child Marriage Prohibition Officer for recuse of the minor girl and provide administrative support for the action. Then the matter communicated to the local Police Station for providing protection, in case of any community aggression.

Mr. Biswajit Dash, Program Coordinator "Access to Justice" along with the Project Associates Ms. Dipi Dehury and Ms. Jyosmita Pradhan, ICDS Supervisor Ms. Ranjulata Naik, Ms. Pooja Swain, Coordinator Child Line-Angul, Abhisek Mohapatra, (Child-line team member), Handapa Police personnel and Dipak Sahu (Social Worker), went to bride groom house and interacted with the bride and bride-groom's family. Then minor bride was rescued in the presence of Anganwadi Worker and Panchayat Samiti Member-cum-Village President. The girl was produced before Child Welfare Committee, Angul (Case No. 2119/ dated 11.08.2023) and placed in a Child Care Institution at Angul.

