

Addressing Early and Child Marriage in India: *A Participatory Study on Mapping Outcomes*

An AJWS-TISS Initiative



Tata Institute of Social Sciences

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Contents

ABBREVIATIONS	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
THE EARLY AND CHILD MARRIAGE INITIATIVE IN INDIA	2
A BACKGROUND TO EARLY AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN INDIA	3
Project methodology	4
FINDINGS OF THE BASELINE ENGAGEMENT WITH GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS	5
Understanding the outcome categories	6
Conclusion	11
ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY	12
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	14
BACKGROUND TO EARLY AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN INDIA	16
Control of women's sexuality	18
The colonial context of gender subordination and the age-of-consent deba	te 18
Law and politics	20
The demographic argument	20
Women's work and the family economics of marriage	21
Global response	22
CHAPTER 2: FRAMING THE MONITORING QUESTION	23
OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY	24
METHODOLOGY	25
CHAPTER 3: DESIGNING THE OUTCOME MAPPING	27
OUTCOME MAPPING: THE PROCESS	29
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS OF THE BASELINE ENGAGEMENT WITH ORGANIZA	TIONS
	33
FINDINGS	33

a. Normalization of violence against women and girls	34
b. Structures of control	37
c. Young persons' growing needs and aspirations	39
d. Other dimensions of organization work	42
In conclusion	44
CHAPTER 5: UNDERSTANDING OUTCOME CATEGORIES - FOCUSING ON	CHANGE
	47
OUTCOME CATEGORY 1: COLLECTIVIZATION	47
a. Understanding collectives	48
b. The potential of safe spaces	51
c. Spaces for learning, support, and awareness	56
d. Dialogue between collectives and adult community members	57
e. Leadership and sustainability of collectives	58
OUTCOME CATEGORY 2: GENDER AND SEXUALITY	63
a. Organizational perspectives and work on gender and sexuality	63
b. Challenges in addressing issues of gender and sexuality	65
c. Taboos and misconceptions among young persons	69
d. Access to sexual health services	71
e. Absence of sexuality education	72
OUTCOME CATEGORY 3: NEGOTIATIONS AROUND MARRIAGE	77
a. Organizational perspectives and work on marriage	77
b. The institution of marriage	79
c. Negotiation and expression of choice	85
OUTCOME CATEGORY 4: LAW, POLICY, AND ADVOCACY	89
a. Organizational perspectives and advocacy work	89
b. Knowledge of and awareness about rights and legal entitlements	89
c. Working with existing state and legal mechanisms	90
d. Use of other strategies	92
e. Engaging with networks and social movements	94
OUTCOME CATEGORY 5: EDUCATION	98

a. Organizational interventions and strategies for education	98
b. School as an enabling space	102
c. Gendered narratives of aspirations of young people	103
d. Structural limits in pursuit of aspirations	104
e. Education after marriage	107
Outcome category 6: Livelihood	111
a. Livelihood opportunities provided by the organization	111
b. Synthesizing the understanding and work on women's labor	113
c. Pursuing and negotiating livelihood-related aspirations	114
d. Collectivizing for safety in the workplace	115
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	117
REFERENCES	120
GLOSSARY	124
ANNEXURE I: PROFILES OF ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STUDY	126
ANNEXURE II: COLLECTIVES	137

Abbreviations

AJWS: American Jewish World Service

ANM: Auxiliary Nurse Midwife

ASHA: Accredited Social Health Activist

DLHS: District-Level Health Survey

DMSC: Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee

FAT: Feminist Approach to Technology

IIPS: International Institute for Population Sciences

IIB: Juvenile Justice Board

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

MASUM: Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal

MJAS: Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti

MNREGA: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

NFHS: National Family Health Survey

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NIOS: National Institute of Open Schooling

SSK: Sahajani Shiksha Kendra

TISS: Tata Institute of Social Sciences

YRC: Youth Resource Cell

Executive Summary

The Early and Child Marriage Initiative in India

In recent years, numerous development agencies and their partners have focused on the issue of early and child marriage, with the aim of enabling women and girls to enjoy complete freedom in their choices regarding health, education, and sexual and reproductive rights and needs. The aim is also to enhance women's and girls' agency to access opportunities for economic autonomy and to alleviate their social marginality. However, these efforts focus on indicators that dwell on age-centered norms and attempt merely to delay the age at marriage until 18 years. This leaves unaddressed the structural factors at the root of this complex issue and does not always translate into women and girls being able to access opportunities in the various facets of life.

The American Jewish World Service (AJWS) and its partners in 2014 launched the Early and Child Marriage Initiative in India to support and strengthen a national effort to end child marriage and enable girls to realize the full spectrum of their human rights. The Initiative uses a developmental evaluation framework to guide its implementation, seeking to move beyond the age-centric approach to measure change in organizational efforts to empower women and girls.

In collaboration with AJWS and many of its grassroots partners, and adopting participatory methodologies informed by a shared feminist perspective, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) took on the role of determining the benchmarks and assessment criteria for mapping outcomes in accordance with the AJWS Learning for Change strategy that forms the core of its Early and Child Marriage Initiative. This strategy requires the evaluation framework to be relevant to—and thus adoptable for—organizational work in communities and engagement with civil society, prove credible for change in policy and advocacy, and be feasible and ethical for partner organizations. The objective of developing assessment criteria is to evolve a new set of meaningful measures for understanding change that organizations can adopt and thereby evolve an empowerment approach that takes into consideration the root causes of the issue of early and child marriage. This would be in keeping with the Learning for Change strategy, with a special focus on collectivizing girls and women and addressing their education, livelihood, and sexuality rights.

A background to early and child marriage in India

Across the world, the data used to indicate incidence of early and child marriage is the percentage of currently married women between the ages of 20 and 24 who were married before the age of 18. Based on several sets of data, the estimated incidence in India in 2011 is 41.7 per cent. Several states across the country report higher rates. However, a review of evidence spanning historical, sociological, and demographic literature indicates that early and child marriage is a sociological phenomenon associated with the structural subordination of women and girls. Feminist scholarship has unearthed a long history of the subordination of women and girls in terms of control over their sexuality, harnessing their labor, and enforcing social norms. This control is further perpetuated by a social morality that perceives the institution of marriage as the resolution for either the social vulnerability of women or to rein in the apparent social "threat" that they pose. Historical as well as contemporary research captures the various patriarchal systems, structures, and institutions that outline the prerogative to control women's bodies, sexuality, and labor.

Even within the legal and demographic discourse of marriage, "consent" is largely about the physical body and not the personhood of women. Twentieth-century legal reforms reflect the manifestation of bodily control through the population-stabilization measures of family planning policies targeted at controlling women's fertility. It was in the late twentieth century that the discourse shifted, not only to the recognition of women's and girl's reproductive and sexual rights, but more specifically, to the need for women's empowerment for the development of nations and to control their populations.

Given this complex nature of early and child marriage, the AJWS Learning for Change strategy proposes, for use within the development evaluation community, an integrated and comprehensive approach for the development and empowerment of girls and young women that is conscious of the social context of their lives, their families, and the communities in which they reside. It suggests a multipronged strategy to address the root causes of child marriage while comprehensively broadening girls' educational attainment, skill development for livelihood options, and general empowerment and sense of agency through women's and girls' collectives. It is in such collectives that the issues of health, sexuality, and rights can be discussed by unmarried girls. The approach also includes providing supportive and protective resources for girls who are married or women who married when they were young, including girls and women experiencing coercion or violence or those who are threatened with violence.

This approach brings within the purview of marriage the issues of consent, choice, autonomy, and agency. The strategy is also complemented by Nirantar Trust's landscape analysis on early and child marriage for AIWS. This analysis understands the institution of marriage in relation to root causes and locates marriage within larger structural dimensions, such as the political economy of marriage; issues of gender subordination and educational and institutional gaps; the centrality of marriage; the contexts of risk, vulnerability, and uncertainty; and age as an axis of power.

Project methodology

The broad aim of this project is to evolve a framework of relevant markers of change that are developed in a participatory manner and based on a feminist perspective. The traditional understanding of change in early and child marriage has been limited to a topdown articulation of change within an age-centric linear logic model. Reality is more complex, messy, and not always predictable. Thus, because of its sensitivity to understanding complexities and marking change through processes, outcome mapping was chosen as the preferred methodology for this project.

Given that early and child marriage is a complex social phenomenon with deep historical and cultural antecedents, there is a need not just to address the symptomatic evidence of marriages taking place but also to identify and build links with root causes related to gender inequality. This encompasses practices within families and communities as well as conservative attitudes toward the assertion of sexuality by youth. It also includes sociocultural practices that restrain women's mobility, control their labor, and subvert legal and policy imperatives against child marriage.

Outcome mapping as a methodology helps organizations working within communities to evolve approaches and programs that recognize and contribute to needed shifts in behaviors, relationships, and activities within organizations and communities.

Field work was conducted with 16 grassroots organizations that are part of the Early and Child Marriage Initiative and spread across eight states in India. A workshop on outcome mapping was conducted with each organization to adapt the methodology for data collection and to understand outcomes in the context of how each organization addresses the structural aspects of early and child marriage in the communities where they work. Thus, the expected outcomes, or outcome categories, evolved from the current work of the participating organizations. In all, 16 outcome mapping workshops and 66 focus group discussions (with approximately 8-10 participants each) were organized, and 35 interviews were conducted, some of which involved two persons at a time.

Findings of the baseline engagement with grassroots organizations

The findings that emerged from this research reflect the experiences of the everyday lives of women and girls as they confront gender norms, family and community customs, and caste- and religion-based practices. The research reflects the various facets of violence that women and girls grapple with in their domestic and community lives, wherein violence has been exceedingly normalized.

Closely related to the issue of violence are the structures of control and surveillance, instituted within society to ensure that socially appropriate and gendered behavior, including norms of sexuality, is adhered to by girls and women. From the research was evident an urgent need from young persons across the study for appropriate gender- and sexuality-related information. A strong desire among youth to pursue aspirations and choices related both to education as well as livelihood also emerged. This desire was expressed by adolescent girls as well as young and older married women, boys, and men.

The grassroots partner organizations use multiple strategies to combat the control, surveillance, and violence that women and girls experience. One of their main strategies is to create awareness of rights among women and girls as well as community members including the men in their families—and other important stakeholders, such as school administrators and teachers, health activists, and locally elected representatives. It is within this space that organizations also ensure that appropriate gender- and sexualityrelated information is shared with the groups. The organizations also expressed the challenges of working with young couples who have run away together as well as reaching out to young married women. Additionally, organizations also provide specific support—such as counseling, legal services, and vocational training—to women and girls. To influence public opinion, the organizations collaborate extensively with networks and alliances through campaigns and collective action and engage with communities.

Understanding the outcome categories

The analysis of data from the field led to outcome categories, the fundamental units of measurement for the Early and Child Marriage Initiative. These outcome categories emerged from and relate to the work of each organization, including addressing early and child marriage; they will be used to describe the changes expected to be seen further within the work of organizations. Each outcome category contains a list of progress markers that depict certain common features across organizations. These markers were developed primarily at the level of the organization (for organizations to plan and assess change within their own parameters while undertaking work in a specific outcome category) and at the level of collectives (this includes the collectives and the individuals within the collectives that organizations are working with).

The six outcome categories are as follows:

i. Collectivization: In interactions with various grassroots organizations, it became evident that the collective is the bedrock, the foundational premise on which processes of social change are based. It is seen as a space that gives girls and women the opportunity to recognize and articulate their aspirations and express themselves without inhibition in an atmosphere that is nonjudgmental and safe. Many members described their association with the collective as an important point in their lives that helped them learn to negotiate at both individual and structural levels and build friendships and peer support, allowed spaces of freedom away from social restraints as well as for shared reflection, and facilitated opportunities for learning and building leadership.

Thus, the process of collectivization emerged as an important category to understand change in the context of women's and young persons' lives. It is fundamental to understanding the ways in which young persons negotiate and exercise their choices and agency. Both at the organizational and collective levels, organizations reflected various modes and processes of collectivization, in keeping with their work, their histories, and their contexts. Organizations also facilitated dialogue between collectives and the members of the communities they worked in.

This category aims to capture the ways in which organizations mobilize and

involve young persons in the process of collectivization to eventually empower them to negotiate choices for their lives. With collectives, the outcome category aims to capture the process of someone becoming a member and their acquiring certain capacities and perspectives that will enable them agency and autonomy to the greatest extent possible.

ii. Gender and sexuality: In unpacking the discourse around the institution of heteronormative marriage in general, and early and child marriage in particular, it is important that the organizations' work be grounded in an understanding and a perspective on gender and sexuality. This is especially important because early, child, and forced marriage is one of the many practices meant to control young persons' expression of their sexuality.

Most organizations had a sound though slightly varied understanding of gender, contingent on their contexts, but were grappling with issues of sexuality. They used various modes, such as workshops, camps, helplines, and opportunities in schools, to discuss adolescent reproductive and sexual health, to engage with issues of gender and sexuality. Many felt the need for organization members to be equipped with skills to talk about sexuality in their communities, build capacities, and change perspectives on gender and sexuality. They also attempted to use the modalities of workshops and dialogues to start conversations on consent, choice, and agency within collectives.

In order to evolve a complex, positive, and intersectional approach to issues of sexuality while linking them to the various areas of their work, organizations and collectives had to confront the challenges posed by restraints over women's and girls' mobility and control over interactions between young persons and quell prevailing misconceptions, taboos, and stigma around expressions of sexuality—or even menstruation—without suppressing individual experiences. Organizations attempted to build on the strengths of young girls valuing the collective as a safe space. This was done to enhance their freedoms and choices through efforts such as supporting girls in their use of phones and exploring other avenues for subverting undue restrictions and helping them access appropriate sexuality education. At the level of the collective, the aim is to eventually see an articulation and expression of sexuality that is not only framed around the discourse on violence and reproductive rights but that also talks about desire and pleasure. In their work, both organizations and collectives found the need to engage with state health workers, mothers, fathers, and even brothers within communities, to support young persons in a nonjudgmental manner.

iii. Negotiations around marriage: Given the centrality that the institution of marriage enjoys in Indian society, it is extremely important that the sense of inevitability associated with it be challenged through engagement with its structural aspects and what it means to young persons. At the level of the organization, this outcome category aims to capture the ways in which organizations take steps to build a nuanced understanding around marriage one that links it with structures of power and control and yet empowers youth and women to make their own choices within and outside of—or apart from marriage.

Organizations focused on supporting young persons' agency and aspirations attempt to build capacities for negotiation and decision making by providing opportunities for them to be independent, gain confidence to speak for themselves, and achieve self-reliance. Several organizations used distinctions in the meanings of early, child, and forced marriages and the related strategies to address them but stressed on consent and preparedness across them all. The engagement with gender and sexuality strikes at several structural dimensions, such as the reasons for exerting control over young people, particularly young women and girls, as stemming from notions of honor; the power of caste and community norms and the repercussions if young persons transgress them; the structures of family and patriarchal control and the fear of not finding a suitable match in case of delayed marriages; economic constraints experienced by families and reinforced by state and community pressure to enforce early marriage; and most of all, the efforts to go beyond delaying marriage to create conditions that empower young persons to make their own choices regarding crucial aspects of their lives.

It was important that the age-centric discourse on early marriage be questioned to engender a change in women's and young persons' choice and agency. Organizations—and to some extent, collectives—played a role in enabling young persons to strategize and negotiate—and even pressurize families into delaying marriage—by seeking alternatives such as pursuing further education.

At the level of the collective, the idea is to map young persons' ability to make decisions regarding marriage, whether or not to marry, their choice of partner, and whether or not to have children. Although there was very little discussion on alternative options to marriage or side-stepping the centrality of marriage, young persons also viewed marriage as an expression of their choice and desire, reflected in cases when they ran away to be married or married to escape violent situations at home. In the case of young married women, the opportunities to pursue aspirations of their choice depended on the marital household, with restrictions often increasing.

iv. Law, policy, and advocacy: Organizations associated with the women's movement believe that law is one of the many instruments of social change, especially in the struggle against violence against women and for human rights. However, the usefulness of the law on child marriage is questioned by many groups. Several organizations used the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, as a preventive measure, to threaten families or create pressure on dominant groups in the community to prevent early marriage. They are however cautious of the over-reliance on state mechanisms, especially the police, to address the practice.

This outcome category aims to step beyond the use of law and policy to explore strategies of advocacy, network building, and association with social movements undertaken by organizations. Organizations and their collectives engage with community members, panchayat officials, marriage service providers, Juvenile Justice Boards, and other modes of collective action to make communities sensitive to the needs of young persons, especially women and girls. In addition, they also engage with other networks that they are part of, in social movement platforms and advocacy groups, to take forward the issue of early and child marriage, although they admit this is not always easy.

v. Education: Many of the organizations in this study spoke about how education reflects the aspirations of not just young people but their parents as well, specifically their mothers. However, it was also used as a strategy to delay marriage. This aspiration has much to do with the notion of education as enabling a certain degree of autonomy and self-fulfillment, as also an investment that promises employment. Organizations in pursuit of this objective focused on workshops to build perspective on varied dimensions of education, directly worked with schools or in nonformal contexts through literacy centers and technical training sessions, and supported young persons, including young married women, to re-enroll in schools.

The main challenges that the organizations reported were the economic constraints that families faced while supporting the education of their youth, the lack of infrastructure in their regions, the struggles and negotiations that girls faced compared to boys in pursuing higher education or even going to school—which is often the only avenue for them to realize their aspirations and the lack of family and community support to pursue their ambitions.

This outcome category aims to engage with various structural aspects of education, including what it means for young persons to be educated and to go beyond the mainstream discourse of education that focuses mostly on issues of enrolment and retention.

vi. Livelihood: An understanding of labor and livelihoods is central to understanding women's lives, and understanding the varied intersections of gender and labor, collective action, and earning an income is integral to that. Young persons, as well as those who are vulnerable and in situations of marginality, experience the need to access a livelihood. Organizations cater to this need in various ways, such as by providing access to livelihood opportunities through skill-based training, providing information related to livelihood schemes to women and girls, supporting women and girls with accessing the public domain and working outside the home, and encouraging women to opt for unconventional career options such as driving or becoming mechanics.

This outcome category aims to capture the ways in which organizations enable access to various livelihood options and how they impact on an individual's negotiation capacities. In doing that, many of them challenged the gender-based division of labor and reflected on the way in which young women's labor is under the greater control of the marital family due to early marriage.

Conclusion

The AJWS-TISS Early and Child Marriage Initiative, incorporating the Learning for Change strategy, was undertaken as a participatory exercise to monitor change in organizational work on early and child marriage. Organizational work in this area fit into existing structures of work on violence against women, rising to the challenge of young persons' needs and aspirations, and working with networks and social movements. Organizations discussed gaps in their own understanding of critical issues such as gender and sexuality and the need for further opportunity to build perspectives and translate them into strategies for engaging with communities. When measures of change were conceptualized using outcome mapping processes, the limits of existing modes of measurement were self-evident, and the sense of autonomy in being able conceptualize, reimagine, and subsequently measure change was empowering, even as change was not always restricted to a positive value. This manner of monitoring adopts a new path in assessing change in young girls' and women's lives that is not circumscribed by impactbound results.

Organizations Involved in the Study

The organizations involved in the study are listed in the following table, along with some basic information about each organization:

No.	Organization	Registered since	Geographical location	Whether urban or rural	Thematic area of work	Working with
1.	Amra Padatik	2006	West Bengal	Urban and rural	YouthGender and sexuality	Young girls and boys
2.	Awaaz-e- Niswaan	1985	Maharashtra	Urban	Violence against women	Older women Young women and girls
3.	Bhumika	1995	Telangana	Urban	• Violence against women	Older womenYoung women and girls
4.	Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT)	2007	Delhi	Urban	EducationYouthGender and sexuality	Young women and girls
5.	HUMSAFAR	2003	Uttar Pradesh	Urban and rural	 Education Violence against women	Older women Young women and girls
6.	Jeevika	1994	West Bengal	Peri-urban and rural	LivelihoodViolence against women	Older women Young women and girls
7.	Kislay	1992	Delhi	Urban	• Livelihood	Older women and men
8.	Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM)	1987	Maharashtra	Peri-urban and rural	Gender and sexuality Health	Older women Young women and girls

9.	Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS)	1995	Rajasthan	Rural	YouthGender and sexuality	• Young girls and boys
10.	Sahajani Shiksha Kendra (SSK)	2002	Uttar Pradesh	Rural	 Violence against women Youth Education	Older and young women and girls
11.	Sahiyar	1984	Gujarat	Urban	 Violence against women Gender and sexuality Education	Older women and young women and girls
12.	Shaheen	2002	Andhra Pradesh	Urban	Violence against women	Older women and young women and girls
13.	Thoughtshop Foundation	1993	West Bengal	Urban	YouthGender and sexuality	• Young girls and boys
14.	Vanangana	1993	Uttar Pradesh	Rural	 Violence against women Livelihood Education	Older and young women and girls
15.	Vikalp	2004	Rajasthan	Rural	YouthEducationGender and sexuality	• Young girls and boys
16.	VOICE 4 Girls	2011	Telangana and Andhra Pradesh	Urban and rural	 Education Youth Gender and sexuality	Young girls and boys

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Early and Child Marriage Initiative in India, a program by the American Jewish World Service (AJWS) and its partners, began in 2014 to support and strengthen a national effort to address early and child marriage and to enable girls and women to realize their rights. Particular to this initiative has been the development of an alternative framework for assessing change that moves beyond measuring change based on quantitative, age-centric indicators and instead looks at the achievement of outcomes that directly or indirectly address structural factors that sustain the prevalence of early and child marriage. This framework evolved through the participatory effort of researchers from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), grassroots organizations supported by the AJWS, and the staff of AJWS. Each partner brought a different set of strengths to this endeavor.

The Initiative began in 2014 when AJWS commissioned Nirantar Trust, a Delhi based women's organization, to undertake a landscape analysis on how early and child marriage was being conceptualized and addressed in program and policy spaces in India. Using a feminist perspective, the analysis highlighted the structural factors leading to early and child marriage, highlighting the need to look beyond age at marriage, while emphasizing an empowering approach to monitoring and evaluation useful for organizations in their work (Nirantar Trust, 2015). The AIWS Learning for Change¹ strategy foregrounds these insights. This strategy recognizes that to strengthen the process of ending child marriage, it is necessary to work on the root causes that underlie the issue by strengthening collectives that enable girls to be empowered and take control of their own lives.

AJWS then initiated the participatory monitoring exercise with grassroots partners working on early and child marriage across India. They approached the Advanced Centre for Women's Studies at TISS to be partners in this initiative, thus laying the foundation for the project. Along with a shared feminist perspective, TISS brought to the partnership the technical expertise and methodological resources necessary to address the monitoring and evaluation question of such a complex practice. The intention was not just to monitor

¹ The Learning for Change strategy focuses on evidence emerging from research and the field level work of organizations guiding the action towards change. Details discussed at https://ajwsamericanjewishwo.netdna-ssl.com/wpcontent/uploads/2016/03/ECM Research Strategy onePager HiRes Web.pdf.

and evaluate efforts related to early and child marriage in the conventional sense but to evolve a framework to understand and document change—even as it occurs incrementally and sometimes in a nonlinear fashion—through a participatory approach with grassroots organizations supported by the Initiative in the research.

The participatory efforts highlight how organizational strategies can integrate new modes of planning and assessing change around early and child marriage. This then can lead to shifts in understanding change beyond the result-oriented impact of an organization's work. The ultimate objective of the project is for AJWS and TISS together to contribute to the global conversation on measuring change among policy makers, donors, and the wider development sector. It is also to build the capacities of grassroots organizations to observe and monitor the changes their everyday work brings about.

The core objective of this study was to arrive at a framework through which organizations can understand, track, and document changes in their work in the Initiative and with the collectives they partner with, a framework that will specifically address the issue of early and child marriage in India. As part of the study, TISS researchers visited each organization and their partners to initiate a process known as outcome mapping. This is a process for observing the contexts and challenges of an organization and how it works and then determining what changes it proposes to achieve.

This research report delves into two interrelated but distinct issues: first, it generates an understanding of the issue of early and child marriage in India from the perspective of grassroots organizations.² Then, building on the foundation of this understanding, it looks at the development of a framework to capture complex changes that occur as organizations confront early and child marriage in their work. This framework emerges via the refinement of the methodology called outcome mapping, producing an alternative that interprets change beyond numbers in order to see meaningful *outcomes* in women's and girls' lives.

The study adopts a feminist perspective that situates heteronormative marriage as an institution that regulates women's and girls' sexuality. The first part of this report highlights the complex nature of early and child marriage through historical, sociological,

² "Organizations" refers to registered Indian non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations. They are largely citizens' groups that work in the social sector with a not-for-profit and development-focused agenda.

and contemporary developmental concerns that have framed this issue in India. In light of these aspects, mapping the change in dislodging early and child marriage requires a methodology that is sensitive to the complex structural constraints on young women exercising their will and choice in their mobility, sexuality, and participation in society. It also requires tracking change along individual lives, group efforts, and institutional structures. All of these aspects need to be reflected in the developmental evaluation community where early and child marriage continues to be perceived within the agecentric discourse.

To elucidate the outcomes that the organizations participating in the study want to achieve, the report presents the context and challenges that these organizations and their partners work with as a baseline. The baseline findings were drawn from the many discussions, interactions, and observations that took place during the process of developing the framework with the organizations, their partners, and other persons of potential influence.

The bulk of the report explains the rationale for the six *outcome categories* and their progress markers on the change that is expected to be seen, distilled from the findings of the study and the subsequent analysis that TISS conducted. What it demonstrates is that the change envisaged requires shifts in the processes, actions, and attitudes singled out by the grassroots organizations in their work with young persons and women through collective action. There is a need to also challenge the norms of social relations, including gender and sexuality, while continuing the efforts to overcome the gaps in education, employment, and legal system access for girls and women. Ultimately, the complexity of the problem needs to be mirrored in the ways that the change around it is measured or described.

Background to early and child marriage in India

The issue of early and child marriage in India is a sociological phenomenon with extensive historical evidence of its structural subordination of women. The unequal status of women is rooted in patriarchal control over their sexuality, the social and economic inequalities, lack of opportunities for education and livelihood, and an overall denial of the autonomy and agency of women within the private and public spheres. The structural constraints are reflected in skewed sex ratios and other markers of developmental opportunities in health and education and the lack of mobility and leisure for girls and women—all of which signify the low status of girls and women in Indian society. Thus, in the areas where it is prevalent, early marriage and instances of child marriage compound the existing subordination of girls and women.

Across the world, the percentage of currently married women aged 20-24 years who married before the age of 18 is used to indicate the incidence of child marriage (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2012). In India, such data from three rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) (1992-1993, 1998-1999, and 2005-2006) portrays a declining trend in child marriage, although the rate of decline has been slow, at less than 1 percentage point per year (International Institute for Population Sciences [IIPS], 2015). Still, according to the 2005–2006 NFHS data, the proportion of women married before they were 18 years old continued to be large, at 47.4 percent—or almost one in two women—a decrease of 6.8 percentage points, from 54.2 percent in 1992-1993.

The 2007-2008 District-Level Health Survey (DLHS) presented slightly different data, however, with the percentage of women (aged 20–24 years) married before they were 18 at 42.9 percent (IIPS, 2008). Based on the three-round NFHS trend, a linear projection for 2011 estimated incidence at 41.7 percent.

According to the two survey sources, child marriage is more prevalent in rural parts of the country, although it is not unique or restricted to those areas. The 2007-2008 DLHS found around 48 percent of currently married women aged 20-24 years in rural areas who had married before they were 18, compared with 29 percent in urban areas. Even though the gap between urban and rural areas appeared to have been halved, from 30.2 percentage points in the 1992-1993 NFHS to 18.6 percentage points in the 2007-2008 DLHS, currently married women in rural areas were twice as likely to have married at a young age as their urban counterparts.

The DLHS 2007-2008 data for each state indicated that more than half of the women aged 20-24 who had married before they were 18 lived in Jharkhand (55.7 percent), Karnataka (50.2 percent), Madhya Pradesh (53.8 percent), Bihar (68.2 percent), Uttar Pradesh (54.9 percent), Rajasthan (57.6 percent), and West Bengal (54.7 percent). While there are several issues associated with early marriage that are common across these states, there are also factors allied with the local context, history, and culture.

Control of women's sexuality

One of the remarkable features of the dominant social order in early India was the sexual control over women to maintain purity of caste and gender hierarchy. This was rooted in religious traditions and norms that sought to discipline the woman's sexual impulsiveness and thus subordinated her to the husband through duties within marriage (pativratadharma). Religious texts, such as the Manusmriti, warned that women's nature was "fickle" and that they were the bearers of impure thoughts, wrath, and dishonesty. This was evident in their overflowing sexual impulses that had to be controlled. The powerful ideology of "wifely duty" over this "essential nature" (Chakravarti, 1993, p. 582) achieved control through women's dependence on the patriarchal family and obedience to the laws of the State, which could sanction even violent reckoning for transgressions of those laws and customs by women (Kosambi, 1991; Chakravarti, 1993). This long history of controlling women's sexuality perpetuates a social morality that perceives the institution of marriage as the resolution for either the social vulnerability of women or to rein in the social threat that they pose.

The colonial context of gender subordination and the age-of-consent debate

During India's colonial period, the status of women in society was debated by the State, the orthodoxy, social reformers, and later, the nationalists (Chatterjee, 1989). Women's roles were linked variously to the service of the nation, or their bodies were made representative of community or the nation, as in the Bharat Mata (Mother India) icon. The nationalists equated the nation with "mother" and projected the ideology of women as dutiful wives in the service of the country (Sinha, 2000). Thus, marriage and family figured prominently in the discourse on community and nationhood.

In the next phase of anti-colonial struggles, social reformers brought in notions of conjugality in their discussions on nationhood. The debate that centered on the age of consent for sex (which was the same as marriage) began with the State's introduction of the radical Native Marriage Act III of 1872,3 which did not have many supporters.

³ The Act fixed the marriageable age for girls at 14 years and for boys at 18 years, legalized intercaste marriages, prohibited polygamy, and legalized divorce. However, it was rejected by almost all religious communities and ultimately had a very narrow jurisdiction (Sarkar, 1993).

Subsequently, reformers proposed, in 1891, to raise the age of consent for sex from 10 to 12 years for girls, following a case for restitution of conjugal rights in a child marriage by the husband, which was resisted by the wife when she became an adult (Sarkar, 1993).4 The age-of-consent debate also brought about the first organized feminist resistance, which shared nationalist outrage against colonial rule, through protests against Katherine Mayo's Mother India⁵ and for an older minimum age at marriage (Sinha, 2000). Despite the sexual abuse and rape of young girls within these marriages, exemplified by the infamous death of an 11-year-old girl in 1890,6 the cultural nationalists saw as culturally acceptable a postpubertal consummation of marriage, known as the garbadhan. At this point, colonial laws around child marriage were deemed as interfering in the religious practice of Hindus. Women's bodies thus were claimed by others and subjected to the whims of husbands and communities.

Despite protests by reformers and families of young girls, the age of consent debate emerged as contentious among the diverse factions. Consent, as argued by the cultural nationalists, medical reformers, and the colonial authority, was about the physical body and not about the personhood of women, which was immaterial to the legal discourse (Sarkar, 2000). These momentous discussions among communities, families, and the State continued to inform debates into the twentieth century.

 $^{^4}$ In 1887, Rukhmabai, an educated woman from the carpenter caste, claimed her right to refuse to live with her uneducated and ill husband to whom she was married in infancy. She was threatened with imprisonment for challenging the restitution of conjugal rights according to law, and the threat was removed only after considerable reformist agitation and the personal intervention of Queen Victoria (Sarkar, 1993, p. 1870).

⁵ Sinha (2000) writes that the American journalist Katherine Mayo reported in 1927 on the horrors that Indian women were subjected to during childbirth even as they were being glorified in Indian nationalist discourse, but her articles were criticized as imperialist propaganda.

 $^{^6}$ Eleven-year-old Phulmonee was raped by her 35-year-old husband and died. Her husband was not found guilty of rape because she was older than the statutory age limit of 10 years; the English judge exonerated him from culpable homicide because he had said that they had had intercourse previously and nothing untoward had occurred then. This incident added weight and urgency to the campaign to raise the age of consent from 10 to 12 years (Sarkar, 1993).

Law and politics

The effect of child marriage on the health of future generations was deliberated during the debates on the age of consent. Well into the twentieth century, many more voices including those of such women's organizations as the All India Women's Conference joined the campaign for passage of the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929, more popularly known as the Sarda Act. It fixed the minimum age at marriage as 14 for females and 18 for males (Gupta, 2012; Sagade, 2005).

Not long after Indian independence, the minimum age was raised to 15 for females. In 1978, without much ado, the age limits were raised again, to 18 for females and 21 for males (Bhatia & Tambe, 2014). In 2006, following the Law Commission's 2003 recommendations, the law was amended to explicitly prohibit child marriage because the minimum age was ineffective in restraining marriage (Gupta, 2012; Sagade, 2005). An interesting observation regarding the passage of the 1929 Act and the 1978 amendment to increase the required minimum age was the disinterest of feminists and the enthusiasm of demographers (Bhatia & Tambe, 2014). This contrast was echoed during passage of the National Population Policy of 2000, which required legislation to prohibit child marriage and policies for youth on the basis of urgency to stabilize population growth as well as the legal regulation of child marriage.

The demographic argument

Since the early 1950s, the population control discourse has held sway within India's development policy and planning processes, citing overpopulation as a reason for poverty. The logical outcome of this has been the control of fertility, and thereby the bodies of women, through the programmatic provision of contraceptives, and later, coercive methods to limit population growth. Even though India declared, in 1978, at the World Population Conference that "development was the best contraceptive" (Mathai, 2008, p. 238), in terms of policy, it reverted to implementing its family planning program with vigor. Political setbacks to the ruling establishment led to the family planning program now focusing largely on women in 1980. Subsequently, in early 1994, the discourse shifted to recognize the reproductive and sexual rights of women in conjunction with the development of nations (WGNNR newsletter, cited in Bandarage, 1997, pp. 91-94).

As demographers Dyson and Moore (1983, p. 54) emphasized, there was urgency in favor of a "broadly feminist mode of social action," specifically focusing on increasing "the autonomous social and political capacity of groups of females—both as an end and as a means to facilitate reduced birth and death rates." While recognition of women's agency was specified, its role as a means of facilitating a reduced birth rate, thereby advancing the population control agenda, prevailed. The discourse of rights couched in instrumental terms coincided with the increased consideration of adolescents and youth as specific categories for attention.

The health consequences and educational deprivation as developmental challenges of marrying young are well documented but lead to solutions that offer only symptomatic redress. They do not address the underlying factors of early and child marriage, such as control over labor, mobility, and sexuality (Dreze & Murthi, 2001; Santhya et al., 2010; UNICEF, 2001, 2005). Additionally, the burden in terms of negative impact of early, child, or forced marriage is overwhelmingly played out on young girls who are not only deprived of their fundamental right to health care and opportunities for education but are also limited in their freedom to interact with peers or to participate in social and cultural activities in their communities. School drop-outs, poor educational attainment, unwanted (early and multiple) pregnancies, poor health status, isolation, constraints on young women who are burdened with social roles at an early age, and vulnerability to violence and abuse are all consequences of early and child marriage that have their roots in structural factors.

Thus, the resistance of international agencies to shift from the age-centric discourse is perhaps reflective of the complex relationship of reproductive and sexual rights to the consensus around population stabilization. By engaging with child rights advocates, feminists at this point could pave the way for re-imagining responses to young persons exercising their agency in their life choices

Women's work and the family economics of marriage

Endogamous and patrilocal marriages⁷ tie families together across villages or regions,

⁷ Endogamous marriage: marriage within a specific ethnic population, caste, or similar subgroup; patrilocal marriage: where the married couple lives with or are attached to the husband's kin.

leading to an extension of kin networks, cemented through customs of exchanged gifts, including dowry. Early and child marriages essentially bring women into the household economy and bind them to domestic labor. The unpaid labor of women that is harnessed through marital duties is exploitative because it lies outside the market and is influenced by familial and patriarchal ideologies, such as labors of love, nurturing, and sacrifice (Uberoi, 1993).

In a globalized context, and with a rapidly changing political economy, the need for productive and reproductive labor in households is now also addressed in other ways. Unconventional marriages, for instance, unite rural Indians across boundaries of region, language, and sometimes, caste; men from the states of Harvana and Uttar Pradesh, for example, seek out and marry women from West Bengal, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh (Kaur & Palriwala, 2014). Yet a marital union that crosses boundaries as the result of both partners choosing it is often regarded as a threat to male power in those communities, a threat that destabilizes male control over resources. Such couples can be punished violently, as in the case of the diktats of khap panchayats (assembly of elders) who sanction the killing of young runaway couples (Chowdhry, 1997).

Global response

In the recent forms of global response, the call for ending child marriage entered the newly formulated Sustainable Development Goals with the explicit inclusion of early, child, and forced marriage. This, however, must recognize the cultural continuities in the normative structures that define the lives of women and girls and acknowledge the aspirations, including sexual agency, of young persons. This recognition has been lacking, especially since ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which views child marriage as a human rights violation (Save the Children, 2014).

Chapter 2: Framing the Monitoring Question

The proposed framework for monitoring the Early and Child Marriage Initiative began with a review of the methodologies and tools that inform the conventional monitoring of change within development evaluation. Over the past three to four decades, monitoring and evaluation have been tied globally to changing definitions of "development," although the primary objective of international aid funding was the alleviation of poverty (Lumsdaine, 1993). Additionally, aid funding came to be inextricably linked to performance measurement and reporting (Binnendijk, 2000).

In the process for measuring change, it is essential to elaborate the context by asking such questions as "why," "what change and whose change is envisaged," and "how will this change be interpreted?" The act of monitoring and—particularly—evaluation is often carried out from a distance by "professionals" as opposed to the community or group who benefits from the development intervention. The change sought is also largely driven in a top-down manner and closely linked to what is expected from the measurement. Developmental change that attempts to achieve global standards often works to aggregate results and establish causal factors. This requires that change be articulated in more universal terms and pegged to common indicators. These frameworks neither lack the space to report nor allow the implementing team to report what change was actually witnessed. (Batliwala & Pittman, 2010; Binnendijk, 2000; Mayne & Rist, 2006), including tracking negative impacts, backlashes, reversals, and unanticipated changes.

There is also a constant pressure to measure positive change. The entire process of tracking change is viewed as reflecting growth and the good health of the development intervention and requires evidence of smooth progression (Batliwala & Pittman, 2010; Ramalingam & Jones, 2008). Over the years, there has been a tendency to use linear logic models to understand and conceptualize interventions, even though the reality is not linear or graphic but complex, messy, and not always predictable (Batliwala & Pittman, 2010; Binnendijk, 2000; Earl, Carden, & Smutylo, 2001; Ramalingam & Jones, 2008). Hence, as remarked by Batliwala and Pittman (2010, p. 9), "very few M&E frameworks or approaches actually enable us to understand how change happens or how gender relations have been altered." Linear frameworks not only flatten events but tend to assume linear causality. They also tend to be focused on measuring and reporting performance of predetermined results. There is now emphasis on the need to look at complexity and adapt a systems approach to conceptualizing interventions (Ramalingam

& Jones, 2008; Patton, 2010). There is also a need to recognize and understand how power plays out in this process of change assessment (Batliwala & Pittman, 2010).

When measuring change, research design is viewed as critical for understanding the relationship of the intervention to the result (outcome). There is much debate on whether experimental designs constitute the methodological gold standard, and if they do, then what evidence is required to deem an intervention effective (McDavid & Huse, 2006; Patton, 2010). Much of the debate on the methodological gold standard is based on what is understood as "rigor" in the research process. Closely associated with this is the deconstructing of what constitutes hard, unbiased scientific data—in particular, deconstructing what the terms "reliable," "valid," and "objective" mean.

There is also a push toward the use of mixed methods (Patton, 2010). The emphasis now is increasingly not on quantitative or qualitative methods but on the need to use an appropriate research design that is driven from the evaluation perspective.

Given the debate on monitoring change and the complex nature of the topic, the monitoring study aimed to capture evidence through a reframing of how change is constructed on what is considered the actual "unit of monitoring" and what are considered the "benchmarks of change." It also includes within it the actual process of monitoring this change. In order to capture shifts in structural factors, there is a need to develop benchmarks that are relevant to the context. Current indicators are mostly quantitative in nature, and as indicated by the NFHS data, are limited to focusing on actual age at marriage.

Objectives and scope of the study

The aim of this study was to evolve a framework for developing relevant indicators that capture change. This framework needed to integrate a feminist perspective and evolve in a participatory manner. The monitoring study thus wanted to achieve the following objectives:

- Develop markers of change through a participatory process
- Conduct a baseline study that provides relevant information for the indicators to be developed

• Devise ways of collecting monitoring data that capture the evidence of change as articulated through the indicators

Methodology

Outcome mapping (Earl et al., 2001) emerged as a methodology for this research because it is sensitive to feminist concerns of addressing inequalities of social power while simultaneously capturing nuanced and complex evidences of change. It thus complements and extends conventional monitoring and evaluation methodologies. It is also distinct from conventional approaches to evaluations that assume a causal relationship between an intervention and lasting results in the well-being of intended beneficiaries.

Outcome mapping

Definition: Outcome mapping as a methodology helps organizations working within communities to evolve approaches and programs that recognize and contribute to shifts and changes in behavior, relationships, or activities of people within the organization or communities. It offers a methodology that can be used to create modes of planning, monitoring, and evaluation that enable organizations to document, learn from, and report on their achievements.

Outcome mapping as a methodology relies strongly on the contribution of actors within a larger system to a particular issue or objective rather than focusing on attribution. It also recognizes that change occurs in complex social contexts. Hence, the system is as important as the people contributing to sustained change.

Rationale for selection: Outcome mapping seemed ideal to capture change as "outcomes" because of its sensitivity to complex, continuing change within deeply entrenched social practices, such as early and child marriage. Outcome mapping uses three core concepts: outcomes, boundary partners, and progress markers.

Outcomes are defined within the process as changes in the behavior, relationships,

activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organizations that a program works with directly. Outcomes are developed for all actors or groups targeted or potentially influenced by a program or intervention, who are referred to as boundary partners.

Outcome mapping defines boundary partners as "those individuals, groups or organizations with whom the program interacts directly and with whom the program can anticipate opportunities for influence" (Earl et al., 2001, p. 1). For early and child marriage, it encompasses not just practices within families and communities but conservative attitudes toward assertions of sexuality by youth and sociocultural practices that restrain women's mobility, control their labor, constrain young persons' aspirations, and subvert legal and policy imperatives against child marriage. Outcome mapping thus recognizes that social justice is essentially about changing how people relate to each other and to their environment.

Progress markers are a set of graduated indicators of behavioral change that boundary partners set for themselves as their direction for change and to monitor outcomes. These markers also help provide constant reflection and improvement in the performance of an organization. The graduated scale of progress markers ranges from changes that the organization expects to see to likes to see to loves to see in their work. An outcome challenge represents the ideal—though realistic—outcome that the progress markers lead to.

For the purpose of the study, and given the broad and complex nature of the initiative on early and child marriage, outcomes were categorized into certain distinct domains termed outcome categories. Each category has its own set of progress markers. The progress markers were defined in accordance with the outcome challenge set by each of the 16 organizations involved in the initiative. The outcome challenge broadly defined the ideal outcomes that each organization envisaged within their sphere of work.

The hallmark of outcome mapping is a focus on contribution to change rather than directly attributing the results to a program's activities (Batliwala & Pittman, 2010). This could even manifest itself in small or incremental shifts in relationships between people or groups and behavioral changes as well as alterations achieved through activities. These then form the foundations of long-term changes in norms or structures rather than just demonstrating results that can be measured.

Chapter 3: Designing the Outcome Mapping

The 16 organizations involved in the initiative were the primary boundary partners whom TISS engaged with. These organizations were identified as the *unit of change* by the AIWS Learning for Change strategy. The collectives (groups) that the organizations directly engage with in their work were identified (by the organizations) as their boundary partners. These collectives varied across organizations and comprised groups of women and girls and men and boys. Most of the organizations formed their own collectives, while some of them chose to work with groups that were already formed, such as a school management committee or self-help groups.

The organizations participating in the study were purposively selected and were differentiated along certain parameters, depending on their geographical location and area of work (in the end, eight states are represented: Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Delhi, Gujarat, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan). The TISS researchers initiated the field work to develop the outcomes and outcome categories,8 which evolved from and reflect the current work of the participating organizations. Data collection took place at three levels:

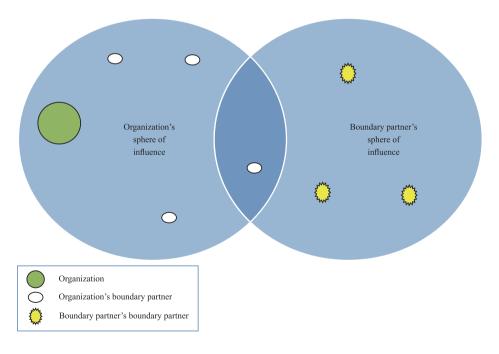
- i. Outcome mapping workshops for each organization's staff and board members.
- ii. Focus group discussions with the organization's boundary partners, such as collectives of women and girls and men and boys, which included young married persons as well.
- iii. Interviews and discussions with individuals and groups with whom the boundary partners of the organizations interact directly and with whom the program anticipated opportunities for influence.

In all, 16 outcome mapping workshops and 66 focus group discussions (with approximately 8-10 participants each) were organized, and 35 interviews were conducted, some of which involved two persons at a time.

⁸ "Indicators" as a term was eventually replaced with "outcomes" and "progress markers." Henceforth in this report, "indicators" is replaced with "outcomes," "outcome categories," or "progress markers."

Informant interviews or discussions were conducted with persons and groups with influence, such as parents, teachers, elected representatives, and service providers. The informant interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with communitybased boundary partners and boundary partners of these boundary partners. These included young persons and adolescents, both married and unmarried (aged 15-24 years), parents, and other adults in the community (aged 30 and older). Interviews were conducted with panchayat (assembly) members, local state officials (police officials), and service providers (doctors, ASHA [accredited social health activist] workers, and ANMs [auxiliary nurse midwives]).

There is a distinction in the levels of boundary partners. When organizations work directly with women's groups to bring about change, the latter become their boundary partners, but when the youth collectives work to bring about change in their own families and communities, women are then seen as their boundary partners. If young persons within a collective want to create a platform for dialogue with their families or community, the latter become the collective's boundary partners. For the organizations that have a youth collective as their boundary partner, the family and community members become the boundary partners of the youth collective.



Organization and boundary partners

Outcome mapping: The process

The first stage of the outcome mapping process—intentional design—was adapted and carried out with each of the 16 organizations. This process helped locate the political position of each organization in their program addressing early and child marriage, establish consensus on their long-term understanding of change, and consequently, articulate a plan and elicit strategies for each organization to adopt.

The *adapted design* stage answered four questions:

- i. What is the vision to which the organization wants to contribute with their work on early and child marriage?
- ii. Who are the organization's boundary partners (those they work with directly)?
- iii. What are the changes sought?
- iv. How will the organization contribute to the change process?

During each organizational visit, a one-and-a-half day participatory workshop was conducted with a core team that comprised selected staff members, field workers, volunteers, and/or peer educators (depending on the organization's membership). The workshop encompassed five aims:

- i. Understand the history of the organization.
- ii. Understand the organization's context of early and child marriage and its root causes.
- iii. Build a vision and mission to address early and child marriage.
- iv. Decide who should be the boundary partners.
- v. Develop progress markers for change with each boundary partner.

Variations were made in the methods used for the workshops (group work, facilitated discussions, and so on), based on the number of participants, time available, and energy level of participants as well as the space available for conducting the workshop. The workshops and field visits were carried out in two phases: the pilot phase consisted of visits to five organizations between February and March 2015, and the second phase covered the remaining 11 organizations, from April to July 2015.



Chart work: Root cause analysis of early and child marriage at MASUM



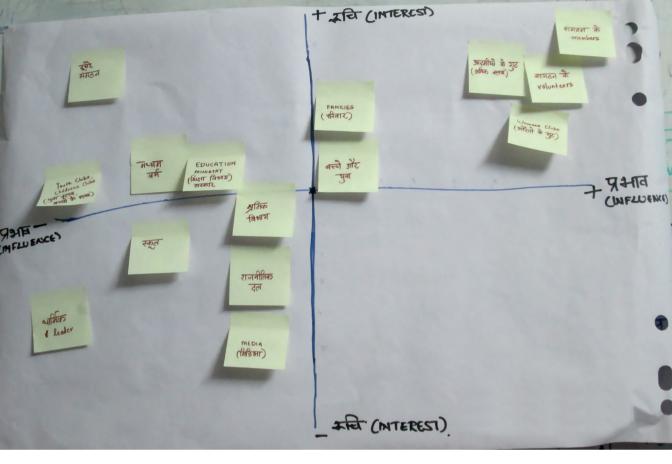
Developing progress markers at MJAS



Group work during an outcome mapping workshop at Shaheen



Amra Padatik members arranging progress markers vis-à-vis boundary partners



The outcome mapping process on deciding boundary partners at Kislay



Outcome mapping workshop: The TISS team with Vikalp

Chapter 4: Findings of the Baseline Engagement with Organizations

Prior to undertaking the field work, a brief mapping of the 16 organizations involved in the data collection process revealed that the major areas of their work were spread across the following broad domains, with significant overlap. These were: violence against women, livelihood, gender and sexuality, education, and early marriage and young persons. A review of literature on existing indicators in these areas was then conducted. The combination of organization mapping and data from the literature review were further analyzed to account for the overlaps, and the following tentative framework was used to direct the data collection process. This indicator frame looked to address early and child marriage using Collectivization, which had emerged as a common feature across all organizations and was seen as a political tool to focus on the following thematic areas of change:

- Economic autonomy
- Law and policy
- Shifts in sociocultural norms and values
- Reclaiming sexual and reproductive choices

With this broad framework, a pilot visit (phase 1 of data collection) was conducted with five organizations individually, followed later with the 11 other organizations. During the second phase of data collection, some of the thematic areas changed when it became evident that they were inadequate. Hence, some findings reflect a slightly different theme.

In the following discussions, the organizations included in brackets ("[]") indicate those that helped elicit the various findings.

Findings

Although the 16 organizations focus on a variety of issues in their work, the contexts of the women's and girls' lives were more or less similar across all eight states, with some exceptions. Women's and girls' lives typically entail experiences of confronting norms of gender roles and of how family customs and the cultures of community, caste, and religion inform their daily movements, reflected in varied dimensions of violence, such as domestic violence and violence in the neighborhood. Sustained work with women and girls by organizations over the years has had some impact.

a. Normalization of violence against women and girls

Domestic violence is a common occurrence in communities and is an often-repeated feature of women's daily lives, witnessed by young children as well [Sahajani Shiksha Kendra (SSK) and Amra Padatik, among others]. Women and girls spoke of the "normal" nature of such violence, sometimes involving the influence of alcohol. The high tolerance for violence was evident in how it was not always perceived as a violating act but actually indicative of belonging; women even perceived it as demonstrating care and love. In many places, women justified violence if, as one woman explained, "it was her fault or she did not do her duty" [FAT]. Or, as another woman said, "Arguments take place between a man and wife. If the wife commits a mistake, the husband can beat the wife. But a woman can't beat a man" [Vikalp].

Domestic violence was recognized as such when it happened in marital relations, but if a brother slapped or abused his sibling it was not considered as violence.

There are instances of resistance by women. In many places, young women said it was not okay for women to be beaten [VOICE 4 Girls and FAT]. They were emphatic that violence could not be tolerated and were frustrated at their mothers for accepting it. A young woman reported that gender training had given her the confidence to question sexual violence and even oppose its supposed religious sanction. She wants to be trained in Islamic studies in order to counter such religious misrepresentation, she said, "because Allah has not said that you can beat women; it's people who have made these laws" [Thoughtshop Foundation]. The power of the normative nature of gender roles did prevail, as reflected in the words of young boys in the community who said that even when a father is wrong, he beats up the mother [Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS)].

Violence in the public domain, be it a neighborhood or a school, is of concern. In Rajasthan [MJAS], young girls reported that violence at home is common, with inebriated men beating their wives while questioning them on where they had been, whom they had met, and why they had groomed themselves a certain way. Young girls also reported instances of sexual harassment in school from teachers and boys. Other forms of discrimination prevail in communities, such as caste-based discrimination; for instance, a teacher in Rajasthan said that the harijan (lowest caste) boy in the school could do everything that other children did, except eat with them. Some schools discriminate against young girls who are married [Thoughtshop Foundation, Shaheen, and VOICE 4 Girls]. The reason most often cited for this discrimination was that the married girls were now sexually active and thus they would be a "bad influence" in the school space.

But there is also backlash against women who are sufficiently empowered to complain, as indicated in the responses of some panchayat members in Rajasthan. For instance, one elder complained that there were 10-12 domestic violence cases filed by women from the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe community but attributed it to "women's higher education" [MJAS]. The upper caste panchayat members resented the education that empowered lower caste women to resist domestic violence by registering complaints with the police. In other reported situations, women experienced physical violence for taking the initiative to educate themselves or being generally assertive about their interests [HUMSAFAR].

Organization intervention

Most organizations offer counseling and legal support to survivors of domestic violence [Bhumika, SSK, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Sahiyar, Shaheen, Vanangana, and Jeevika]. Sometimes, this domestic violence takes the form of extreme cruelty to newly married young women who are quite vulnerable in their new household, such as through torture and the deprivation of resources [Vanangana, HUMSAFAR, and Awaaz-e-Niswaan]. Many instances of violence that organizations deal with relate to dowry, with the dowry demands increasing of late.

Organizational interventions create safe spaces, not just through individual counseling but also through the collectives' campaigns, protests, and advocacy, which provide women and girls with the confidence to express—and in several instances, resist normative codes and even negotiate with their families. Women reportedly struggle immensely to gain the confidence to lodge a police complaint against their husbands in cases of domestic violence, organize protests within their communities, and so on [Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Vanangana, Sahiyar, and Jeevika].

Collective action and collective organizing are thus an important means of creating

awareness, building confidence, creating opportunities for resistance, and even dealing with opposition. As an older woman in Vanangana's Dalit Mahila Samiti collective said, "If he [referring in general to the men in her community] now hits [her], all the women get together and tell him to not hit her. She is our daughter or daughter-in-law."

The organizations' work on violence (including sexual assault, sex-selective abortion, and communal conflict) covers relief assistance, research, campaigns, public awareness programs, and protests. The work on preventing violence reflects a continuum between violence within the home and in the public domain [Sahiyar, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, and M[AS]. Among their collectives and volunteers, organizations have created awareness that domestic violence goes beyond marital violence and includes violence in natal homes by fathers, brothers, and others [VOICE 4 Girls, Shaheen, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, and Vanangana]. Thereby sustained collective action doesn't only address violence against individual women but also highlights other forms of social and structural violence and control.

Working with movements and networks: using the law

Most of the organizations that have a long history with the women's movement or other social movements have engaged with the State to help women and girls access schemes, services, and other entitlements, using legal mechanisms and the law proactively. Creating awareness around the relevant laws and their utility is a significant strategy of the organizations when reaching out to women who have experienced violence in their lives. Organizations also work in alliance with other movements and networks that wield influence, such as spaces for debates over rights and politics to advance human rights. It is through these networks and movement spaces that support has been gained for influencing public opinion across a breadth of issues: queer rights, minority rights, violence against women, children's rights, sanitation and housing rights, Muslim women's rights, and anti-communal violence campaigns [Sahiyar, Vanangana, Kislay, Shaheen, MJAS, Vikalp, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Bhumika, and Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM)].

Participation in movements and networks gives organizations a perspective that is intersectional. It can also enrich them with the ability to advocate for rights related to sexuality and gender, often sidelined in larger social movements. For instance, Amra Padatik engages with labor movements and child rights networks to press for amendments to the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 that would protect the rights of children of sex workers. Awaaz-e-Niswaan, a feminist organization, engages with issues of identity and sexuality within feminist queer networks, MIAS, which operates with a women's rights perspective, engages with child rights groups to strengthen the support for the noncriminalization of young persons within the juvenile justice system. Several groups, such as MASUM, want to be part of networks of young persons.

b. Structures of control

Closely related to violence in the public domain is the fear associated with girls "doing wrong" or something "bad" befalling them because girls and women are considered the repositories of the family, caste, or community honor. The power to control women as a way of maintaining honor has extended to other male family members over the years. Young women mentioned that brothers are now stricter than fathers [Vanangana, Awaaze-Niswaan, Shaheen, and MJAS]. As one young boy said in Rajasthan [MJAS], "We can raise our voices and even give [them] a beating when the girls do something wrong. There is a need to control a girl. If she does not listen when you tell her sweetly, then it's okay to give her a beating."

These instances of control to retain honor range from opposing marriage by choice (also called "self-choice marriage" by the study's participants) and condemning elopement, to denying the pursuit of education or a livelihood of choice. They even govern what a girl or woman wears and where she goes and whom she speaks to. Families and communities expressed contradictory notions concerning protection of honor and the safety of girls vis-à-vis young women's assertion of their will or choices. This was noted by all organizations as a distinct change; previously, families and communities worried about the safety of girls and wanted to protect them. Now they fear that girls will run away to pursue their desires and thus need to be controlled. In both instances, the surveillance reflects concern with the sexuality of young women.

The control of women's sexuality is prevalent through caste injunctions, religious strictures, family and social pressures, and even social ostracism, all of which expect women and girls to conform and thereby restrain their freedoms, desires, aspirations, mobility, and opportunities for growth [MJAS, MASUM, Vikalp, SSK, HUMSAFAR, Vanangana, and Sahiyar]. There is heavy surveillance on the physical mobility of young married women, young girls, and boys—in that order. Some Sehariya girls spoke out against marriage because the restraints were harsher in the in-laws' home, although they also admitted that it was impossible to avoid marriage [SSK].

However, girls also said that they make the most of any opportunity to go out and even seek out spaces where they can speak to boys, such as parks or malls [Shaheen, Kislay, MJAS, and Amra Padatik].

Organizational responses

Early marriage is a socially sanctioned norm within which it acts as a way out for the family to "fulfil its responsibility" toward the child, irrespective of the child's choice and disregarding of consent. Some organizations regard this as forced marriage [FAT and Sahiyarl. Many organizations view early marriage critically even when young people choose it for themselves by running away to be together [Jeevika, Vikalp, SSK, Awaaz-e-Niswaan and HUMSAFAR]. Organizations see such actions of young people as reflecting the pervasive intent to control their sexuality. Parents and/or communities tend to regard young people acting on their desires (rejecting the control) as the "misuse" of freedoms and educational opportunities.

Using various methods, several organizations work to dispel caste discrimination among their collectives by encouraging intercaste marriage but advocating against castebased patriarchal practices (such as cradle marriage⁹), mass marriages, 10 and "sheikh marriages" that especially target young women within some religious groups. They work toward inclusion of diverse groups from lower caste, Adivasi (indigenous), and Muslim communities, thereby addressing structural issues via programmatic efforts [SSK, Bhumika, Kislay, MASUM, FAT, and Vanangana].

Individual acts of resistance by young women in the community are seen as threats by the community stakeholders (sarpanch or village head, police, elders, etc.), who restrain others from emulating these actions, increasing the challenges to the organizations' work [Vikalp, Jeevika, HUMSAFAR, Vanangana, and Sahiyar]. Some organizations use traditional practices tactfully, such as having women staff members wear some form of the ghoonghat (veil with a sari) and the purdah (veil) to access spaces and then slowly eschew those practices as well as actions intended to control young women [Vanangana

⁹ A practice wherein families fix the marriage immediately after birth.

 $^{^{10}}$ Weddings organized by individuals or institutions wherein numerous couples are married simultaneously.

and Awaaz-e-Niswaanl.

In some instances, early marriage is a coping mechanism for discrimination. For instance, Amra Padatik staff members noted that sex workers often resort to the early marriage of their daughters to avoid the stigma attached to being the child of a sex worker.

c. Young persons' growing needs and aspirations

In addition to women's organizations that have extended their work to young people, many organizations (Vikalp, FAT, MJAS, VOICE 4 Girls, Thoughtshop Foundation, and Amra Padatik) work specifically on the needs of youth.

Sexual rights and knowledge

Across all organizations, young persons both directly and indirectly expressed the need for information and understanding around issues of sex and sexuality. Whether it was in West Bengal, Rajasthan, or Delhi, girls expressed the need for information, yet were also shy and uncomfortable talking about some things. Discussions of sexuality and adolescent needs are hardly a practice among families or even peers. Mothers often do not communicate sufficiently with their daughters about the changes that they will experience as they mature. They are also hesitant about sharing information on puberty and sexual and reproductive hygiene with their daughters [SSK and Kislay] and believe girls learn from their friends. Parents in many areas, such as in Hyderabad, Delhi, and Rajasthan, also said that because the family atmosphere is repressive, children tend to look elsewhere for information but that this creates a greater possibility of being misled or "spoiled" by engaging in activities that are unacceptable to the communities (watching pornography or accessing information about sex and sexuality through various virtual means such as phones and laptops). Parents hope that there can be spaces for them and their children to talk openly [Shaheen, Kislay, MJAS, FAT, and Vikalp]. Some women admitted that they expect their daughters to be their friends.

Young persons mostly aspire to learn, do things, and "become someone," and education is a means to attaining these dreams. Often, because access to and opportunities for education are limited, young persons turn to other competing aspirations, such as wanting to act on their attractions to other people or their interest in

marriage. Running away to be with someone they love is not uncommon [Jeevika, Amra Padatik, and MASUM]. Notions of the "good girl-bad girl" are linked to assertiveness with sexuality and having boyfriends, as revealed through the difficulties organizations face during various discussions with young persons on the positive aspects of sexuality. Organizations deal with the challenges related to addressing issues of young persons' sexuality in varied ways, although they often struggle to recognize it as a matter of dealing with young persons' sexuality and aspirations for intimacy.

Education

Girls from each state mentioned that, although they wanted to study generally or seek a higher degree or even pursue a job, being able to do so depended on negotiation with their family. Organizations working with young persons tend to engage them in education for empowerment through collective mobilization [Vikalp, Thoughtshop Foundation, VOICE 4 Girls, and FAT]. Many of these organizations have appealed to young persons around their aspirations for education as a window to the world. VOICE 4 Girls sees the residential camps it offers young girls from the Social Welfare Department schools during their vacations as avenues to distance themselves from their families and situations of vulnerability as they often face neglect and discrimination within their families, leading to low esteem and self-deprecation. Women's organizations [SSK] also use literacy as an avenue to address educational deprivation and as a vehicle to build confidence and leadership among women. Some of these organizations have started using technology; for example, FAT set up a tech training center. Others use creative channels such as performance theatre and street theatre [Kislay, SSK, Sahiyar, Thoughtshop Foundation, and Vanangana], youth workshops [Sahiyar], and comics [Vikalp] to bring young people together. While many organizations use education as a means to help young women delay marriage, they are also looking for other ways to help the women pursue further aspirations because many communities set limits on how much education is permitted for girls [SSK, HUMSAFAR, and VOICE 4 Girls].

Young and married

Several organizations expressed their challenges or inability in reaching out to young women who are already married; these organizations see a need to reimagine their modes of organizing. Some attempt to reach out to families of young girls and boys who are their volunteers [Vikalp and M[AS]. Awaaz-e-Niswaan has set up a reading room for voung women, while others reach out through their women's collectives [Vanangana and Sahiyar]. Many organizations plan to reach out to young married women despite the challenges, for example, by helping them access the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan¹¹ schools or open schools¹² [MIAS and Vikalp]. Oftentimes, gauna becomes a cut-off point after which not only girls but even boys are burdened by household and livelihood responsibilities and drop out of school. As one boy reported in Rajasthan [MJAS], "We can continue our studies before gauna, not after gauna. After marriage, there will be a lot of responsibility and we cannot study. Also, as boys, we can't dream and wish for things as we did before marriage."

Through their outreach, organizations try to help re-enroll young married women into further education, but they are often unable to negotiate the stranglehold of control and responsibilities within the marital household and the young women eventually slip out of their activities. Once young women are married, they are burdened with domestic chores, subsistence work, and even family agricultural labor in their husband's household. Additionally, the alienation, lack of financial independence, and condemnation if they make any mistake is severe. In several places, young women mentioned that chances to study and work after entering the marital home would depend on extensive negotiation with their in-laws. In Uttar Pradesh, there is a struggle within organizations over the inclusion of married young women in activities, especially for women who belong to the households of some of their collectives' older women members [Vanangana]. In Rajasthan, a young woman reported that she had secured an appointment as a constable but was denied the opportunity to pursue the job because she had to do household work in the marital home [MIAS].

¹¹ Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a World Bank-funded, government of India project initiated in 2000-2001. It provides for a variety of interventions for universal access and retention, bridging gender and social gaps in elementary education, and improving quality of learning. See www.ssa.nic.in.

¹² Open schools were set up under the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to provide education with a flexible learning structure to remote areas. The NIOS is a national board that administers the secondary and senior secondary examinations for open schools, similar to other board examinations in the country. It also offers vocational courses to students who have finished high school. See www.nos.org/.

Working with men

Several organizations, especially those working with youth, focus on engaging with men in the community and plan to work with men and boys on issues of gender and human rights. Women's organizations, on the other hand, have not attempted to work with men. In some cases, organizations find that men do not want to engage with them [MASUM] because they are perceived as women's groups. Many organizations find working with older men challenging, especially if it concerns discussions around their adolescent daughters. Despite the hostility that men have for organizations that deal with issues of violence against women, staff members think it is strategically necessary to engage with men, especially on issues of masculinity, their role in society, and marriage of daughters because men are the primary decision makers within families.

d. Other dimensions of organization work

Engaging with labor and livelihoods

Despite the deep-rooted gendered division of labor in society, organizations critically engage with women's need for a livelihood, with attempts to challenge the gendered divisions of labor. In most communities that the organizations work in, women experience double burdens, with the marginal groups among them experiencing the burdens of public and private labor. The organizations see a need to engage on the role of marriage and its centrality in people's lives and how it is used to harness women's labor for social reproduction. Older women are burdened with domestic chores until young married women enter their household; new wives are expected to shoulder the housework as well as work in the fields in agricultural households. Younger women were vociferous that the gendered division of labor restrains girls' freedoms and that they should be allowed to do anything they like because girls have equal rights as boys [VOICE 4 Girls].

In other organizations, girls were emphatic that men and boys should contribute to housework, including cooking and washing clothes [Amra Padatik]. However, there were also young women in the study's discussions who stood by the conventional division of labor and said that because boys have no experience with child care or housework, it is appropriate that girls take those responsibilities. In Rajasthan [MJAS], one woman asked, "So you think men should make rotis?" In Maharashtra, women said men should at least

fetch water (in households with no running water) or help women in domestic tasks when they are unwell.

In organizing women around livelihoods, some organizations have started confronting issues of violence against women. For instance, women from the Jeevika savings groups formed a collective called Alor Disha that engages with issues of violence against women. Vanangana began engaging with women around issues of violence and also connected them to opportunities for learning unconventional livelihood skills suited to their rural milieu, such as training to be hand-pump mechanics and participating in the work opportunities available through schemes under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA). Amra Padatik, the collective of children of sex workers, advocates for the rights of sex workers as workers and toward a safe work environment.

Some organizations use opportunities to link labor and caste [Vanangana and Kislay]. For instance, once during the Ramayana¹³ festivities, the upper caste women in the Vanangana group did the sweeping and cleaning that conventionally was done by the Dalit women, and in the role reversal, the Dalit women helped with the cooking. There are organizations, such as Kislay, that work on organizing female and male construction and domestic workers, which has led them to engage with the workers' families and with women and children among the migrant worker communities in the resettlement colonies of Delhi. The women's collectives in rural Uttar Pradesh have organized women to seek work under MNREGA schemes as options for livelihood, for survival, and sometimes to support their children's education [SSK and Vanangana]. Women from these organizations have wanted to learn computer skills, which would help them to organize their MNREGA work rolls while helping other young women access jobs in the white-collar job market.

Other organizations form self-help groups to organize the women in savings schemes [Jeevika and Sahiyar]. While Jeevika's strength is their work on the economic empowerment of women, it has made inroads into addressing violence and other social pressures against women.

¹³ Celebrations around the legend of Lord Ram, the king of Ayodhya.

Working with the government and schools

School officials were mixed in their responses, but many were conservative and did not approve of the intermingling of boys and girls [VOICE 4 Girls and Jeevika]. They were of the belief that young people are distracted and do not pay attention to their schoolwork when classes are of mixed sex and therefore believed in strictness and surveillance. As one official observed, "If something goes wrong, we have to give them counseling immediately or have them directly sent to their homes." Some organizations have received support from school teachers and headmasters for the training on rights, gender, and/or life skills they provide, while other organizations mentioned that it was tough for them to gain entry and acceptance in schools [Sahiyar, Vikalp, MJAS, and Ieevikal.

Some organizations began working with young women by providing training on skills for livelihood or training to build awareness and confidence among the women about their rights [Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Kislay, Shaheen, Amra Padatik, and Vikalp]. While these skills may pave the way for young girls and women to seek out opportunities for jobs, there are other organizations that want their collectives to become business models of social entrepreneurship [Thoughtshop Foundation].

In conclusion

Although much of the work of organizations, especially women's groups, has focused on violence against women, they do not regard early and child marriage as violence. Many organizations, such as HUMSAFAR, do not support marriage of choice before the age of 18 due to the adverse reactions they receive from communities where they work. Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Shaheen, MASUM, and Vanangana articulated that early and child marriage is a violation of rights but that it is a complex issue, as sometimes young people choose to marry for various reasons while, on the other hand, girls are pressurized to marry against their will. Many other organizations, however, adhere to the protectionist approach, seeing early and child marriage as a violation of children's rights, while also promoting feminist traditions of empowerment. It is through their collective work on violence against women as well as individual assistance to victims of violence that organizations see the link between various structures of violence and caste, religious identity, and economic injustice.

Organizations were also mixed in their responses to young persons choosing to run away to be together and thus asserting their choice of partner and their sexuality. Some organizations vociferously expressed opposition when families succumbed to social pressure to conform around early and child marriage [Jeevika and Vikalp], which they see as indicative of the power of structures to control the sexuality of young and vulnerable persons or the power of underlying practices and rites around marriage (kanyadan, bidai, and gauna).

There is evidence of programmatic efforts to address structural issues or root causes—such as interventions against caste discrimination in the Bal Panchayats (villagebased children's councils) [MIAS] or interventions that promote intercaste marriages [MASUM] and training for women to build their confidence or to enable girls to access educational opportunities [Thoughtshop Foundation, VOICE 4 Girls, Sahiyar, and HUMSAFAR]—that at times invite backlash from families and communities.

A characteristic of organizational engagement, with either women or youth, is that all programs work toward bringing people into groups and building cohesiveness. Whether it is through education, livelihood, building awareness of rights, training for empowerment, or for autonomous status and leadership, all organizations attempt collective efforts and engage in group action to address structural transformation.

Based on these findings, the initial indicators within the thematic areas were revised and turned into outcome categories, thereby moving from impact-oriented indicators to outcomes as measures of change. An outcome category indicates a broad area representing certain mandatory modes and structural challenges to each organization's work on early and child marriage. The final outcome categories that emerged were Collectivization; Gender and Sexuality; Negotiations around Marriage; Law, Policy, and Advocacy; Education; and Livelihood.

The outcome categories were created based on a specific rationale: Initially, collectivization was perceived as a tool for change, but then it became an outcome category to indicate social change. Gender and Sexuality and Law, Policy, and Advocacy reflect the norms of society and the structures of control and negotiations that young persons and organizations engage in. It is critical that there be a separate area of assessment of marriage to reflect decision making on an important aspect of young people's lives. Hence, negotiations around marriage emerged as an outcome category. Health was initially included then removed during the second phase of fieldwork because it was not a core focus of most organizations.

Within each outcome category, the ideal change envisioned was spelled out as an outcome challenge. This is to be developed by each organization as they set their specific goals. A set of progress markers depicts the steps that should lead to the achievement of this outcome challenge. One level of change is envisaged at the level of the organization; change is also envisaged at the level of the collective. The six outcome categories and the markers of change within them are discussed in detail in the following section.

Chapter 5: Understanding Outcome Categories – Focusing on Change

The analysis leading to the outcome categories described in this section is based on the work of the 16 organizations participating in this study on monitoring change in the Early and Child Marriage Initiative and describes the changes expected to be seen. Each outcome category contains a list of progress markers that depict certain common features across organizations. These markers were developed primarily at the level of the organizations (to enable them to plan and assess change within their own spheres while undertaking work within a specific outcome category) and at the level of the collectives that the organizations are working with (which involve young persons and adolescents as well as women, both married and unmarried).

Organizations monitor their programs in which they work with collectives. Progress markers for their work are divided into three levels: first, changes that they would expect to see, which indicate basic efforts; second, those that they would like to see, which are a little more complex in nature; and third, changes that they would love to see, which display a greater degree of complexity and lead to the attainment of the outcome challenge. These levels are not assumed to be linear. Rather, they depict the level of complexity of the activity or sphere where the change is to be seen and can occur in a nonlinear manner as befits the organization and its work.

This section explains the rationale for the progress markers and provides a framework for each organization to define its own outcome challenges and progress markers in the course of its planning for monitoring change in the Early and Child Marriage Initiative. The outcome categories and progress markers presented here were distilled from the baseline analysis presented in the previous section.

Outcome category 1: Collectivization

transformation engendered by social movements, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or even state agencies relies on compelling various groups toward action. In the women's movement in India, there are diverse forms of collective action, where some feminist collectives have come together to challenge patriarchal norms through nonhierarchical structures with equitable roles and ways of functioning. On the

other hand, agencies that concentrate on women's economic empowerment have relied largely on organizing self-help groups (Gandhi & Shah, 1992; Kalpana, 2009).

Collectives can be spaces in which women and girls understand the inequality in their lives, including those stemming from the norm and practice of early marriage. In these spaces, they can discuss inequalities and other associated issues, and in doing so, build their confidence to put up a struggle. Thus, they are able to see their personal experiences as a part of wider institutional inequalities, thereby giving meaning to the feminist perspective that "the personal is political." For the organizations participating in the Early and Child Marriage Initiative, collectives have served as the bedrock on which processes of social change, both individual and structural, are based. A collective is ideally seen as a safe, nonjudgmental space that gives girls and women the opportunity to recognize and articulate their aspirations and express themselves without inhibition. As an outcome category, however, the change that is envisaged is a process and is not restricted merely to the objective—the formation of the collective. This process of formation is significant in building collectives and nurturing group efforts.

a. Understanding collectives

Nature of collectives

All the organizations have diverse definitions, compositions, and forms of collectives. The first form is an extension of each organization's structure and outreach process, which also are varied. For instance, MIAS chose to form a collective of community facilitators known as Bal Manch. In Vanangana, Shaheen, Kislay, and Thoughtshop Foundation, representatives from the collectives and communities actually formed the core team and leadership of the organization.

In the second form, organizations with diverse objectives collectivized young girls and women through an intersectional approach in which the axes of marginalization were based on caste, religion, location, ethnicity, and age. Vanangana, SSK, and HUMSAFAR, for example, sought out collectives that are based on caste and tribal identity.

In the third form, Shaheen, Sahiyar, and Awaaz-e-Niswaan focused on collectivizing women, some of whom are marginalized around religious identity, particularly in Muslim communities. Thoughtshop Foundation, FAT, Vikalp, and VOICE 4 Girls mobilized around the axis of age, and their focus is on young adolescent girls from marginalized sections of societies who are vulnerable due to caste, religion, class, and/or ethnicity.

As for collectivizing with men and boys, some organizations opt not to [Awaaz-e-Niswaan, FAT, and Shaheen], while some work with them on gender and women's issues [Vikalp, Sahiyar, VOICE 4 Girls, and Vanangana] or on issues of gender and masculinity [Thoughtshop Foundation, MASUM, and Kislay]. Nonetheless, all organizations operate with a holistic view and work with men and boys on a case-by-case basis. Amra Padatik is the only organization with membership of different gender identities and sexual orientations as well.

The organizations find women's collectives easy to relate to because of their welldefined structure and their years of experience collectivizing within the feminist movement. But organizations find it challenging working with and collectivizing youth because of its transitional nature—with young persons moving away for education, marriage, and/or livelihoods. With membership constantly changing, the collective can be difficult to sustain.

Amra Padatik, Kislay, and VOICE 4 Girls are unique models of Collectivization. Based in West Bengal, Amra Padatik originated as a collective of children of sex workers, formed as part of the Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) but is now building a separate identity as a registered body. Based in Delhi, Kislay is an organization that collectivizes men and women on the basis of trades. They have five unions organizing construction workers, domestic workers, car washers, auto drivers, and street vendors. VOICE 4 Girls, based in Hyderabad, partners with the state government to provide a camp-based residential school module. It is in the process of building a collective of girls, known as sakhis, who have attended VOICE 4 Girls camps. The girls in the collective are trainers and mentors to other girls in the camps and in schools, in a graduating level of positions from assistant counselor to junior sakhis and senior sakhis.

Modes and processes of collectivization

All organizations rely on numerous strategies to collectivize, from the provision of an important and strategic skill for women and girls that they value to providing a space for recreation, learning, and discussions, including talking about any compulsion to marry early. For instance, MASUM and Shaheen provide women with traditional skills training, such as tailoring and embroidery, and then use their gatherings to talk about women's health and legal rights. Some organizations, such as Vanangana and Jeevika, collectivize women and girls through unconventional skills training, such as hand-pump mechanics and masonry. Others, such as Thoughtshop Foundation and HUMSAFAR, also promote economic self-reliance via unconventional skills training.

Some organizations, such as Awaaz-e-Niswaan, FAT, SSK, and Thoughtshop Foundation, use learning within a safe space as the "carrot" to attract young girls and women to their centers, where they also encourage discussion on the pressure to marry young. In particular, Awaaz-e-Niswaan operates a women-only library, and the FAT centers provide tech training. Many organizations offer computer training for young girls. SSK, Vikalp, and Vanangana use literacy training and education as a means to collectivize women and girls. Thoughtshop Foundation has Youth Resource Cells (YRCs) that mobilize youth through skills training and activities.

Organizations such as HUMSAFAR, Shaheen, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Sahiyar, and Vanangana also provide immediate assistance as well as legal services for women who are in situations of violence. HUMSAFAR began by providing counseling and a shelter home for women victims of violence, including domestic violence. Jeevika has mobilized women into two volunteer groups: Alor Disha focuses on violence against women, while Alor Barta focuses on early and child marriage.

Almost all the organizations attempt to create an inclusive space for the collective members they work with, but they also struggle to reach the more marginalized communities in their program areas. Vanangana, for example, works with Dalit women through the Dalit Mahila Samiti collective. However, they mentioned that, over the years, they have not connected with the *Valmiki* or *Ati*-Dalits living nearby, whom they now plan to focus on. The staff at SSK, most of whom are Dalit, spoke about the challenge of working with women from Other Backward Classes and the Sehariya tribe, who are often strongly conscious of the caste divide.

Many organizations use traditional techniques of reaching out to communities, such as door-to-door visits, word-of-mouth information, campaigns, surveys in the communities, and the distribution of pamphlets. Several organizations use novel approaches, such as sport events, melas, and rallies. For example, Vikalp uses bicycle rallies and volleyball training and tournaments in villages to collectivize girls. As a young woman volunteer explained:

"We formed a volleyball team last year, and it was a one-of-its-kind activity in

which girls were given a platform to claim public spaces unabashedly. There was resistance by parents and families, but still, 12 girls registered for it and practiced the game in the school compound. There were also married women who were a part of the team."

MASUM organized a *mela* in which newly married couples were invited to take part in a range of games and activities to enhance their communication with each other and thus build them into a stronger unit. Awaaz-e-Niswaan organizes bicycle rallies for girls; Vanangana uses soccer as a means to organize women and girls; and Amra Padatik uses cultural activities through its Komal Gandhar collective. 14 These resourceful methods have proven successful in piquing the interest of women and youth and eventually in forming groups.

b. The potential of safe spaces

To young people, a safe space is a forum founded on the premise of a shared understanding of its members' lived realities that does not judge them but assures trust and solidarity. They are often the result of an organization's or collective's inclusive and democratic practices that strive to keep their diverse contexts meaningfully alive. Organizations truly reflect democracy when they facilitate young members setting the agenda of their collectives and deciding whether the group should be open or closed. In some places, being open (wherein anyone can come and go in collective meetings with no restrictions) has worked well, while in others, being a closed group (membership is limited but may change and evolve over time) has worked better. For instance, with girls in Shaheen and within the Dalit Mahila Samiti collective [Vanangana], there is comfort in a closed group because they have known each other for a long time, trust each other, and are willing to talk in front of one another.

The women of Jeevika's Alor Barta collective came together having known each other for a while although they were still new to the challenge of working against child marriage. Vanangana's Guftugu Manch is a more fluid group of which the membership is not constant; in discussions, girls from the group reflected that they enjoy their meetings

 14 Komal Gandhar is the cultural wing initiated by sex workers' children of the Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee, which is the mother organization for Amra Padatik in Kolkata.

but come together only when they can. Some girls attend a meeting only once a year, but they still receive peer support. Vikalp's camps, sporting events, and rallies provide a fluid space for young women as well.

Friendships, networks, and peer support

In various discussions, there was emphasis that the collective spaces provide opportunity for girls to do something that they otherwise would not have been able to do. These girls' lives reflect the many constraints that have been directly or indirectly imposed on them (where they can go, what to wear, and with whom to interact, with most of the control manifesting in pressure to marry early). The spaces have allowed them to find their voice and friendships [MJAS and Amra Padatik]. In Amra Padatik specifically, members said that through the interactions they found courage and support in being part of a group and sharing their stories as children of sex workers. Girls also said that while it is difficult for them to talk to boys in their own localities, it is easier to meet and befriend boys in their meetings. The YRCs of Thoughtshop Foundation try to create a space of comfort and dialogue between girls and boys as they sit together for the meetings. According to one of the YRC's young women members:

"Apart from the adolescent reproductive health module, we conduct all our sessions together; even after the adolescent reproductive health basics are done with the children, further discussions on the issue, a quiz, etc. are done in the mixed group [of boys and girls] only, and it doesn't get difficult for us or for them to share things openly."

Shaheen's Community Centres and Vanangana's Guftugu Manch collective provide young marginalized girls with a space to meet, learn, and have discussions. While new friendships are formed among members in a collective, some also bring their friends to be part of the group if they find discussions useful or even if they want company. Participation in some groups is an act of resistance; for instance, boys who are associated with MASUM have brushed aside peers who ridiculed them for being part of a "women's organization." Members of older women's collectives influence other women who are not part of any group to join so that they can discuss their concerns and problems.

The specific and nuanced manner in which a space translates into a safe space was observed in all its dimensions during the field work. In Shaheen and FAT, for instance, young girls said they love going to the organization's office because they can share things they cannot talk about with anyone else at home. Girls who have been coming to Shaheen's Siddiqui Nagar center for a long time were more vocal and confident about their rights. As one of them explained:

"I was once kidnapped on the way to the school. I rescued myself from the situation and therefore stopped going to school. My parents do not know about the incident. It is after coming to the Siddiqui Nagar center that I have shared it with others as I believe it to be a safe space."

These girls were seen to be encouraging newer members to talk more and speak confidently. They felt there is no hierarchy in their gatherings because everyone is a didi (sister). In both Sahiyar and MASUM discussions, girls spoke of how they could do whatever they wanted to in the center, like playing, singing, and dancing.

In camps conducted by VOICE 4 Girls, participants eloquently articulated the need and their capacity to negotiate. Many of the girls said that if their parents were to not allow them to study or pressure them toward early marriage, they would negotiate with them. On being asked how they would negotiate with their parents, one girl responded that she would make an economic argument: "If I study well and get a job, I will be able to help the family." Another girl said, "I will tell my parents that being at home can sometimes be like being in jail, and girls need to go out and mingle with others just as much as boys do."

Spaces for freedom

Both boys and girls mentioned that, while it is easier for boys to go out of their home than for girls, there are still restrictions placed on both. However, girls are freer to attend collective meetings. Clothes are also an important marker of a feeling of freedom. In an MJAS discussion, adolescent girls spoke of several restrictions at home on the clothes they wore, especially when going out of the house. As a workaround, they secretly carry jeans, shirt tops, and purses with them to the MJAS office. When girls participated in the My Happiness camp organized by Vikalp, they brought with them track pants and T-shirts for their self-defense practice, even though they wore their regular salwar outfit to the camp for its two-month duration. Vikalp's youth volunteers who attended the camp were able to cover the expenses for their bus travel by negotiating with the panchayat members to provide the money.

That collective meetings take place in communities, or that a center tends to be located in communities where members live, has both positive and negative implications. A FAT strategy to increase girls' mobility involves having discussions with girls as well as their family members, inducing them to come to the office for training-which has established the office space as a space away from home, where members can breathe and dream freely. In discussions with girls at FAT, it emerged that their life aspirations ranged from being a photographer or studying biology to becoming an air hostess, a software engineer, or travelling abroad to places like America and Singapore. Women in the MASUM center said that it had flourished into a space where all their issues could be discussed and all their problems solved. As one woman explained, and many others agreed:

"At home, we can't reveal that we talk about things like domestic violence and the rights of women here. They only know that we come here for tailoring classes. At home, I have to speak strategically and sometimes lie. But here I can just be myself."

The HUMSAFAR office space is mainly used for training programs, providing shelter to couples, and for counseling sessions; collective meetings and group discussions largely take place within the community areas. There was little interest from the community for their work initially, but with an increase in women's leadership and family support over the years, meetings now take place in demarcated spaces without interference or resistance.

The YRC members from Thoughtshop Foundation spoke of their initial challenge in securing a suitable enclosed space in the community where young people could talk comfortably. They began meeting in an open space in a nearby area, but it lacked privacy. Until they found a space, the Nobo Disha YRC members used to share a space with a local club, but as one young woman said, "Club members used to comment on our dresses, if we are wearing jeans or sleeveless shirts. That is the problem of using someone else's space—you don't have freedom."

The flip side to these positive stories is that certain influential community members tend to keep a watch on what takes place in these spaces and sometimes interfere, even speaking on behalf of the younger people. For instance, a grandmother who accompanied her granddaughter to the Guftugu Manch collective space [Vanangana] stayed for the meeting. This instilled fear among the girls, who were extremely careful about what they said in the group. Similarly, when men from the village walked by or sat around in the meeting space, the younger as well as older women were forced to uncomfortably cover their heads in the required cultural practice. Thus, the place is not a completely safe space for them. In most of the centers, children and young boys hang from the windows during a meeting, curious as to what is happening within the center, which proves to be a hindrance.

In HUMSAFAR, older women from the community were part of a discussion with young girls, but when questions were asked about marriage and early marriage, the women began to interfere. One older woman stated, "It is alright to marry early. Girls don't understand many things." Similar such issues were also experienced by HUMSAFAR during a field visit where older men interfered with what boys in the discussion had to say, and the boys could not speak freelv.

In a discussion with adolescent girls associated with MJAS, participants said that they are not able to say anything to their parents when they are chided or restrained from doing something. One girl explained:

"We can't do anything. We get scolded if we go out, watch TV, are delayed in getting water, do not do our work properly, go home late, or if we do not listen to them or disagree with them. Mummy scolds us and Papa beats us. My brother does not beat me but shouts if I watch too much TV."

Older women in Ajmer, Rajasthan, said that, at home, what the man says is upheld, although in some cases, it is the mother-in-law who enjoys supreme authority in domestic matters. Monetary control is in the hands of the men, and the women seemed to be fine with this situation. Similar thoughts were reflected by women in other organizations. Girls shared experiences of how they are not always successful in negotiating at home. For instance, a girl in a focus group discussion in Kislay noted that she was not allowed to go for a school trip because the boys who were her classmates would be part of the trip.

Collectivization of young people is seen by organizations as leading to an increase in their ability to decide on matters that interest them and to negotiate with influential persons in their families and/or communities to pursue these matters. These may range from being able to step out of one's house (not just for work but also for leisure or recreation); being able to decide on how to dress; the division of household chores; financial decisions; and decisions around aspirations for education, employment,

c. Spaces for learning, support, and awareness

Spaces for sharing, discussion, and reflection

All collectives were formed with the objective of having a common platform for young persons and women to discuss issues relevant to them and for new learning. The study's discussions within groups hinged on members' experiences and contexts. In Vanangana, a senior Dalit Mahila Samiti collective member spoke of how, after marriage, women often don't have anyone to talk to and share their experiences with, especially when there is violence at home. They often cry alone. The most that they can share are quick exchanges with friends while fetching water. But being part of the Dalit Mahila Samiti collective has changed this, giving them the space and peer support to share their experiences and seek action. In FAT, girls narrated experiences of learning to use a computer or camera through their training and even being able to document issues of gender discrimination and early and forced marriage with these skills. Along with training on technology-related skills, they also have a space for discussions on their experiences of discrimination at home and issues related to their body and growing up as well as matters of love and attraction, which are central to their sense of attachment with the organization.

Awareness of rights and legal entitlements

Across organizations, a marked increase was observed in women's and young persons' awareness of rights and legal entitlements, critical thinking skills, and changes in perspective regarding social norms and values, thanks to workshops, trainings, and discussions. Several members of Amra Padatik had learned through the organization to value sex work as a profession and perceive it as their mothers' livelihood choice. Members of MASUM are able to critically engage with issues of secularism, democracy, and the rise of Hindu fascist tendencies, along with issues pertaining specifically to youth, such as addiction, romance, and attraction. Girls at the VOICE 4 Girls camps spoke about the value of negotiation and how they feel they are in a much better position to negotiate with their parents on a range of issues, including marriage and other aspirations. One girl who had attended the VOICE 4 Girls camp revealed after the focus group discussion:

"I have learned so much at the camp. It was also nice to be able to talk to the boys. In this school here, there is so much discrimination that girls and boys can't even stand together, not even for a group photograph. But I am telling you, when I grow up, I will come back to this school and make a film on how the camp can change the lives of girls in this school."

Collectives are taking the initiative to organize special legal-awareness campaigns to circulate knowledge in the community. Collectivization, along with increased awareness and changing perspectives, enhances the ability of young persons to voice their opinions in a vibrant manner. For instance, Kislay, MIAS, Vanangana, and Shaheen conduct special legal-awareness camps and self-defense training sessions for members to gain basic knowledge of their legal entitlements and rights and to articulate their rights with confidence.

Several organizations have a strong focus on broadening knowledge, perspectives, and critical thinking and building confidence among the collective members using in-house or external facilitators and trainers. Trainings have covered gender; caste; religion; sexuality; violence and rights; and opportunities linked to education, housing, livelihood, and employment.

d. Dialogue between collectives and adult community members

Along with working with young persons on early and child marriage, it is important for organizations to facilitate dialogue between collectives, parents, and other adults in the community who are seen as decision makers on all significant matters, including marriage. Even though all collectives were initiated and mentored by an organization, the role of the members should be acknowledged. MJAS, for instance, works through members of its Bal Manch collective with adults in the community to permit their daughters to go to meetings and training programs, to join activities, or to support the organization's work. Kislay also encourages interaction between youth volunteers, their families, and community members. When a collective member experienced pressure from extended family and the community to marry off her daughter (also a youth volunteer), the organization helped her to negotiate for the girl to complete her schooling and seek employment.

Dialogue is crucial for ensuring better communication between young persons and

adults. When collective members want to have community discussions on issues concerning them, organizations facilitate campaigns and forums that are led by the collective members.

e. Leadership and sustainability of collectives

Diverse expressions of autonomy and negotiation

Participation in a collective, with its opportunities for new learning, perspective building, and exposure to different external forums, is seen as helping to develop and increase leadership qualities in collective members. Leadership is founded on the idea of building agency and encouraging the voice of collective members, especially girls and women. It involves harnessing negotiation capacities and a realization of each individual's right to autonomy and self-expression. As much as it is grounded in the realization of individual aspirations, it cannot be separated from collective action, as evidenced by the work of the organizations.

The nature of leadership that is nurtured varies from organization to organization. Some organizations focus on individual leaders, while others concentrate on collective leadership. At the individual level, girls are becoming increasingly aware of their needs, aspirations, and legal entitlements; they choose to take initiative as well as express, negotiate, and seek support to pursue their aspirations. This is reflected in various collectives—from the girls in Kislay, who express their desires and are confidently working toward them, to the girls organized by Vikalp, who are negotiating with their families or with panchayat members, to the girls in Shaheen, who mention facing difficulties to attend meetings yet overcoming them. In a discussion in a Shaheen collective, one woman said she had resumed her studies in class 12 and joined a computer course as well, after giving birth to her two children.

Qualities of leadership are built within the collective and in keeping with the spirit of collective action. FAT has organically developed and fine-tuned, over the years, its structure of building leadership among girls at various levels. In Sahiyar and Thoughtshop Foundation, the girls become a part of their respective collectives and eventually evolve as leaders or mentors in the collective. Vikalp takes part in campaigns involving youth, such as We CAN India, which built up and sustained a corps of volunteers who subsequently joined the organization. These youth are then able to work and build collectives in their communities, even as they remain within the organization. However, this remains a challenge generally due to the transitional nature of young persons' lives.

Challenges for sustainability

In some organizations, the collectives are struggling to become spaces with properly defined leadership. The members of the Alor Barta collective working with communities on child marriage said that they need to work closely with Jeevika members, even though they aspire to work autonomously and build their collective strength, leadership, and confidence. VOICE 4 Girls is attempting to work on another camp model that sends the same batch of girls through progressive levels of training. One of their central concerns is around what happens to the girls after they complete the camp. They can only try to influence the state department that runs the schools, but ultimately, it is up to those officials to allow a role for these girls. The effort, therefore, is to create a ripple effect in which at least a subset of a larger group of girls attends the camp to teach other girls to become change makers when they go back to their schools; a few girls do return to the camp as assistant counselors or mentors. This incremental effect is observed in the difference between the maturity of a former camper who has become a sakhi and that of a new camper, in their manner of speaking, expressing themselves, and their selfpresentation.

Some young members of collectives confidently expressed their interest in becoming leaders and went on to become a source of inspiration for other youth. As one of the boys associated with MASUM said:

"I often speak to elders and ask them what I can do for our village youth. Initially, I did not get any response from them, but now they say, 'Whatever you want to do, we will support you fully.' [My friend] and I have planned that every Saturday we will invite an external expert in our school for a discussion on issues such as education, democracy, etc. and encourage young boys to think. We want to guide them to think about what they want to do ahead in life. We want to work with them and have a program that runs for the entire year."

Most of the organizations rely on facilitators from the community who are also part of the collective, as with Bal Manch or the Shaheen collectives. The counselors in the VOICE 4 Girls camps are college students of a different class background from that of the

campers. One of the senior staff mentioned that this is done to facilitate a two-way learning process. Both forms of leadership are seen as inspirational for the girls.

Collectivization has been important for social change through the opportunities it has offered, particularly that of a space away from home for people to come together, which has immense liberating potential. At the core of collectivization are the processes, in the organizations as well as among those they work with, for empowering youth and women, which then enables them to progressively engage with and attempt to alter the conditions that lie at the root of early and child marriage.

Distilled from the preceding discussion, the progress markers in the outcome category Collectivization are listed in the following table with a set each for organizations and its collectives:

Progress markers: Collectivization	
Organizations	Collectives
 Mobilize young persons, especially women and girls. Build collectives as safe and inclusive spaces. Work with communities to accept and support the collectives within their community. Support and enable young persons to pursue their aspirations. Support autonomous voices within the collectives. Build sustainability mechanisms within the collectives. Shift responsibility for generating supportive spaces from the organization to communities. 	 Build new learning and knowledge. Form friendships and peer networks. Ensure that members perceive the collective as a safe space. Strengthen trust and solidarity within the collective. Take leadership initiative. Negotiate with the family members and/or other immediate persons of influence. Build support at family and community levels through dialogue and collective action. Practice notions of autonomy, choice, and agency.

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Outcome challenge: As a feminist organization, we wish to collectivize women and adolescent girls from Dalit, Ati-Dalit, and Muslim communities so that they can be self-reliant and autonomous. As an organization, we fight to secure the rights of these women through collectivization.

Progress markers: Organizations

- Working towards the enhancement of suppressed talent in women and adolescent girls and simultaneously developing their leadership capacity
- Shifting focus from the organization to its collectives so that collectives can take action in times of need
- Initiating processes to make collectives strong so that they can be autonomous and sustainable

Recognizing and respecting individual identity on the basis of caste, religion, and gender

Like to see

- Creating a space where women and adolescent girls can speak freely without any fear or hesitation
- Giving space to women and girls to voice their opinions and work towards fulfilling their aspirations
- Organization members themselves not committing any kind of violence and protesting incidents of violence in their surroundings
- Expect to see
- Actively working against discrimination on the basis of caste and religion Making relations sustainable with collectives and providing a space for collective members to share their problems through individual communication

Progress markers: Collectives

- Collective members taking up leadership roles at the district, state, and national levels
- Collective members connecting community women with other organizations or government departments
- Helping women and adolescent girls enhance their talent and develop their knowledge in technical education; inspiring them to actively participate in outdoor sports; developing leadership
- Developing an environment of trust within the collectives such that members can share own problems without hesitation
- Like to see
- Collective members raising their voices and protesting against gender-based violence, discrimination on the basis of sexuality, and caste-based discrimination in their community as well as against the denial of health rights and access to government schemes

Expect to see

• Using the collective space to enhance self-confidence in women and adolescent girls

Outcome challenge and progress markers distilled from organization data during the outcome mapping process



A meeting with the community members at Kislay

Outcome category 2: Gender and Sexuality

The review of both the sociological and historical literature indicates that, whether it was in the colonial period or in the postindependence phase of Indian history, families and communities exerted patriarchal control over women's mobility, sexuality, and labor (Chakravarti, 1993; Chowdhry, 1997; Sangari & Vaid, 1999). Often times, the State colluded in this control over women's bodies, which became the sites and preserve of honor (John, 2008; Menon, 1999; Sangari & Vaid, 1999). The work of organizations in their communities reflects this in the prevailing structures of control and the dimensions of violence perpetrated on women and girls. Early and child marriage as well as forced marriage have become one of many practices meant to control not just women's but young persons' expression of their sexuality. It is therefore crucial for organizations to understand issues around gender and sexuality to deconstruct the discourse around marriage.

An understanding of gender implies that organizations recognize that patriarchal power is an axis of all social relations, which manifest in the social relations of gender. Sexuality encompasses expressions of desires, pleasure, and freedoms and is not restricted to just bodies and rights or circumscribed by sexual violence.

a. Organizational perspectives and work on gender and sexuality

For organizations, this outcome category focuses on understanding how a perspective on gender and sexuality in their work sensitizes them to matters of early and child marriage. For instance, are organizations concerned about the rigid gender roles in society; the different norms for boys and girls; and the fear that conversations around sexuality, desire, pleasure, and awareness of one's body would make young people aware of the dominant patriarchal control over their lives? Do organizations think this should change to a situation in which young people are able to avoid shame and guilt and have comfort in discussing sexuality in a positive manner? Do organizations create such opportunities among their staff and their collectives or incorporate it in their work? Doing so would help achieve a more nuanced and critical understanding of early and child marriage, thus helping to challenge it.

All the organizations in this study engage with questions of gender and sexuality, but they differ in their understanding, approach, and the degree of incorporation of these

issues into their work. Most of them have a sound, though varied, understanding of gender that is contingent upon their context, but they are grappling with issues of sexuality. For instance, through literature, through training and support from some activists of the Forum Against Oppression of Women, Awaaz-e-Niswaan is building its understanding and perspective on issues of sexuality, reasons for social control over women's expression of desire, dress codes, and other controls over the body. Other organizations, such as Vanangana, SSK, and Vikalp, are building their perspectives and capacities through training programs organized by Nirantar Trust and CREA (Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action).

Broadly, the areas within gender and sexuality that are being worked on are awareness of rights and legal entitlements (and the dismantling of stereotypes) and the violation of rights (including discrimination and violence against women) in the spheres of health, education, and livelihood. All organizations, in different ways, are addressing gender discrimination by paying attention to participation and representation of young girls and women, both within their structure and in their collectives. In MJAS, Jeevika, MASUM, Shaheen, and Kislay, for instance, young women volunteers become leaders in their community-based initiatives, while in VOICE 4 Girls, all girls who attend the camp are nurtured to be potential leaders in their respective schools and communities.

All organizations work on creating awareness on gender issues among multiple groups. More than half of the organizations focus on women's rights and its violations through a well-defined framework. FAT, HUMSAFAR, and MASUM, for example, do this through workshops and modules for young girls; Vikalp and VOICE 4 Girls do it through a camp model for young girls led by an activity-based curriculum. Others, such as Jeevika, Bhumika, Shaheen, and Awaaz-e-Niswaan, address issues of violence against women but differ in their approaches. Jeevika works through its women's collectives (Alor Barta and Alor Disha), while Bhumika works through its helpline and counseling services; Shaheen and Awaaz-e-Niswaan do it through counseling services and supporting survivors' with following their chosen redress mechanism. Thoughtshop Foundation and Sahiyar use opportunities to discuss adolescent reproductive health to also talk about gender issues and sometimes sexuality.

In several of the community discussions, control over sexuality and denial of sexual rights was linked to questions of honor. Fear of elopement by young people leads to families reinforcing the practice of early and child marriage.

The discourse on gender and sexuality is also closely linked with notions of power and

control operating across families, communities, and society. The power hierarchy stems from multiple axes of oppression and marginalization; some of the axes that were identified, apart from gender and sexuality, were age, caste, religion, and economic status. Organizations focus on the intersections of gender and sexuality with these varied axes. For Awaaz-e-Niswaan and Shaheen, another axis of disempowerment is defined by religion; for SSK and Vanangana, caste is an additional dimension; and for organizations like Thoughtshop Foundation and MIAS, age is yet another dimension.

Most organizations work directly on building awareness of issues of sexual and reproductive health. Some, such as MASUM and FAT, have adopted a positive approach toward sexuality that not only addresses it from a clinical or violence-based perspective but also includes issues of desire and pleasure. SSK and Vikalp staff members mentioned in-house challenges, such as the need for skills training for them to talk about sexuality within their community. An exception to this would be an organization like Amra Padatik, comprising sex workers' children, whose connection to sex work has helped them in situating sexuality within their work. Groups like Awaaz-e-Niswaan take part in the Queer Pride march and are open to discussions about nonheteronormative relationships, both within the organization and in their collectives. In the study's discussions across states, non-normative desires and relationships emerged, albeit in cryptic words and codes, such as a "special" sister or brother. A special sister or brother refers to a relationship that has many meanings, such as being favored or being an object of desire, and so on.

Most organizations demonstrated a nuanced perspective on ideas of consent, choice, will, and agency and have been successful incorporating it into their work. One of the most common ways of starting conversations around these ideas is through workshops and trainings. Organizations use dialogue as a strategy to have conversations within collectives on choice and agency. For instance, in both MIAS and Vikalp, volunteers from the organizations used dialogue with young men and groups of girls to have a preliminary conversation on choice and consent in terms of sexuality.

b. Challenges in addressing issues of gender and sexuality

The most dominant form of control over young girls' and women's sexuality is through control over their bodies and their movements, which manifests—and is also resisted—in various forms.

Control over mobility

The easiest way to control young girls and women is through regulation of their mobility with constant surveillance on where they go, at what times they go out, with whom they go, and how they go. As the findings of the study indicate, the oft-stated reason is concern for the physical safety of a girl or woman. Across organizations, girls mentioned an unsuitable environment as the reason for not being able to go out; the descriptions of the unsuitability ranged from men and boys loitering on the streets, some of whom harassed them, to dark streets with inadequate lighting.

The onset of puberty signals an increase in the level of control and restriction. Girls said that as soon as they were 10 or 11 years of age, irrespective of whether they had attained physical maturity or not, their mobility was restrained. This continued even after marriage. Child-bearing is seen as the point when control reduces for women; women in their mid- to late-30s, who are seen to have passed the reproductive age, have fewer restraints placed on them.

Brothers and fathers are largely the ones who place restrictions on mobility although in some cases it is the mothers or women in the house. For instance, the staff in Awaaz-e-Niswaan said that the mother-in-law and sister-in-law typically decide when and where women and girls can go. Women also said that when their sons discovered, through their friends, that their sisters were "roaming around" with other boys, they felt that their reputation was affected. Some mothers articulated the social pressure of having to discipline their daughters. For example, in a FAT discussion, a woman mentioned that she had to restrict her daughter's movements because she did not want her son to have to "hear things" from other people.

These restraints over safety for girls prevail across urban and rural areas. For young women and girls resisting this control and negotiating their mobility, it is a constant struggle. Across organizations, notably Shaheen, Amra Padatik, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Sahiyar, Thoughtshop Foundation, and Vikalp, girls were loud and clear that coming to the center or the collective space was the first major step for them and they valued it tremendously. They also noted that this opportunity did not mean that they could travel freely or easily anywhere else. In one focus group discussion with girls in Sahiyar, they agreed that by coming to the center over time, their parents had gained trust in them and they had become more confident to go out alone and now imagined travelling further distances. This confidence linked with their assertiveness to deal with boys who sexually

harassed them on the way to school.

Control over interactions

Across states, a shift in the perceptions of parents and community members has taken place. As the staff in Vikalp noted perceptively, and other organizations echoed, previous restraints were rooted in a fear of violation of young girls' honor but had increasingly shifted to a fear of young women expressing and exercising their own choices. The regulation of girls' social interaction is a common means of control. Anxiety was expressed by parents and community members, however, over young persons' extensive use of new modes of communication, especially mobile phones and the Internet.

For youth, any kind of interaction with the opposite sex is under scrutiny by the community. Across organizations, young girls in particular spoke of high degrees and varying modes of surveillance over their interactions at home, in school, in the community, in public places, and at the workplace.

There was much discussion from young people on control over friendships and peer interactions of young and adolescent girls, specifically interactions with boys and men. As one girl reported in a discussion at HUMSAFAR, "Once my friend's parents came to know that she talked to her classmate, who was a boy, they almost stopped her from coming to school. They scolded her badly."

Boys were described as having greater leeway, as reflected in a discussion at the Bal Manch collective, where MIAS works. Boys have their own phones, while girls do not, but girls sometimes use phones belonging to other family members and immediately delete the details of their calls. Volunteers at Vikalp spoke of how parents did not trust girls enough to give them a mobile phone because they feared friendships with boys and consequent elopement. During a Kislay group discussion, boys said that even though they can use a phone, if they speak with a girl, they have to do it secretly.

Women in Ajmer, Rajasthan, said that, in these times, it is common to see boys and girls talking to each other. However, these women suspect that girls use the opportunity for education as an excuse to have relationships; they believe instead of going to school they are meeting the boys they are in relationships with. Hence, the women felt a need to control this behavior and keep track of their daughters' class times. One woman said:

"There is so much that keeps happening between girls and boys these days. But if a girl does something wrong, it's not her fault alone. It's also her parents' fault. As a mother, I should be in the know of what my daughter is doing and where she is going. My relationship with her should be such that she can share these things with me. If something inappropriate were to happen, I will feel bad that my daughter couldn't confide in me."

Across the states and organizations, there is a constant fear that if a girl exercises her choice, then it is the family—parents and brothers—who will bear its consequences. Often, it is the girls and women who are the first ones to be maligned and blamed when anything happens, and they are thus fearful of forming friendships with boys or of even being seen interacting with them. In discussions with girls in Sahiyar, several such incidents were narrated; for instance, if a boy had approached a girl and this was discovered by a teacher or the parents, it was always the girl who was rebuked. Another girl recounted the differential treatment of parents in such cases, recalling an incident in which her brother had given a note to a girl who was engaged. When the incident came to light, her parents turned a blind eye.

The restriction is not limited to just opposite-sex interaction but extends to control over girls' interactions with other girls in the community as well. Girls are marked and known in the area as "bad" for various reasons, having boyfriends being the most common. When asked which girls they considered "bad," young girls in an SSK discussion replied, "Those who fall in love with boys." They also said, "Parents scold us and ask us not to speak with them because we do not know what kind of girls these are. The entire village gets to know about them," and "Their parents also beat them but they do not listen. They say that it is alright to take a beating in love and so they take the beating."

This good girl-bad girl notion is used by young girls to set themselves apart from "bad" girls. As one of the girls associated with MASUM said:

"Sometimes, it so happens that girls fall in love and all that and elope with some boy. This is one of the reasons why parents are reluctant to send daughters to college. One girl does something wrong, and all of us have to bear the brunt. I hate girls of this kind. It is because of them that there are restrictions on us."

While boys enjoy relatively more freedom in various spheres, speaking to girls is just

as restricted for them. Across organizations, boys spoke of the constant scrutiny and surveillance by the adults in the family and the community. At the same time, they also spoke of the widespread tendency to define girls as "bad." A boy associated with MASUM captured this sentiment when he said, "Boys call a girl 'chhapri' and 'faltu'15 if she talks to many boys. If a girl has a mobile phone and keeps talking on her phone, then they say she is 'very fast.' "

c. Taboos and misconceptions among young persons

The taboo on speaking about sexuality and the stigma associated with it are cause for misconceptions. Across several discussions, young girls and boys indicated curiosity about sex and sexuality, but the stigma and shame around it restrained them from discussing these issues.

In a HUMSAFAR discussion, a girl said that when she asked her mother how a child is born, her mother told her that God places his hand on a woman and a child is born. She burst out laughing but accepted that explanation. Even though she knew that it was not true, she was still unaware of how children are indeed born.

Hesitation to name sexual organs is widely prevalent. A staff member from one organization explained:

"Girls will not use the word 'yoni' [vagina] but might refer to it as 'dehi' [of the body]. They will say, 'I am hurt in the body [dehi].' So we ask them where in the body they are hurt, but they will at the most say, 'Below the stomach.' They will not say, 'My vagina is paining.' We try to tell them that if you go to a doctor, what will you say if you are hesitant to even name the place? They will refer to the breast as 'chhaati' [chest]. They will complain that the husband has bit them on the chhaati and it is now bleeding but they will not say the name. So imagine if naming sexual parts is such a challenge, then a discussion on sexuality is an uphill struggle—yet absolutely necessary."

The lack of expressions for sexuality, sexual acts, and body parts related to sex—or the

¹⁵ Derogatory or insulting terms.

suppression of such expressions—leads to the suppression of narratives and experiences related to such issues. This typically leads to words and expressions that are not affirmative of women's experience but instead denigrates them. Such words are also used as swear words and have acquired negative connotations over the years in common language. In a focus group discussion with MASUM, boys admitted to having many misconceptions about sex, including the belief that sex always leads to pregnancy.

While young girls and women were often reluctant to discuss sex in the study's discussions, menstruation was an easier topic. Several girls from Amra Padatik said that they had learned about menstruation from their friends. One girl told the facilitator, "A friend of mine used to think periods are bad, but after discussing with me, now she is okay." Their mothers had told them that menstruation is the "bad blood" of the body that comes out every month. Girls associated with MIAS said that they were taught several superstitions regarding menstruation that led them to believe that menstruation is a "bad thing" that makes them impure. They are not allowed to go to temples or touch the lamps used for prayer, and they cannot worship while menstruating. One girl recalled another girl whose family would not allow anyone to even touch her when she was menstruating and that she had to get up at 4 a.m. to bathe. Women in discussions at MASUM spoke at length about the way in which they are ousted from their rooms and are not allowed to touch anyone, including their husbands, while menstruating.

While there was great hesitation among groups of adolescents and young persons in sharing their opinions on premarital sex, several groups in West Bengal and Rajasthan admitted that young people have sex before marriage and also spoke of the places where people generally meet secretly. Girls in Gujarat explained that couples, despite the many restrictions, meet secretly in places far away from their neighborhood, such as a public park. In a discussion with adolescent girls in West Bengal, some participants said that they think it is alright for boys and girls to "mix" as long as they do not "cross limits." The limits, they explained, is holding hands; premarital sex is unacceptable.

Some girls associated the sexual act with age; whether married or not, they could have sex only after their 18th birthday. Girls also reported an awareness of contraception but had a limited understanding of its use.

In a discussion with older women in Aimer, participants said that they consider premarital sex and pregnancy as immoral. Some of the women said that they think sex is a duty in marriage; some added that if they refuse sex, their husband is offended and stops talking for a week or month. When they learned of their children engaging in sex, they

talked to them and explained the dangers of such a relationship at such a young age.

d. Access to sexual health services

Overall in the study's discussions, there was limited conversation on access to sexual and reproductive services by young persons. This was mainly because the organizations in the study do not focus on access to sexual and reproductive health services. Interventions at varying levels with different service providers had enhanced young persons' awareness.

Across states, there is a lack of sexual health services that cater to youth. Young married women in most discussions said they were reluctant to talk about sexual and reproductive health concerns openly or access information or services due to stigma. The severe repressive environment of families and communities does not give young persons the opportunity to even discuss and understand what might be a healthy attitude to sex and sexuality. Organizations have slowly begun to alter this situation by providing access for their own staff members to training programs on perspectives on sexuality and gender diversity. But the challenge of translating this to communities through their collectives is yet to be overcome.

In areas where young persons said that they accessed services, they did not necessarily find that it ensured privacy and confidentiality. In Kolkata, a girl said that she was once suffering from a gynecological problem and mentioned it to one of the community-based older peer educators because her mother had passed away. The peer educator told others about her "problem," and thereafter, she found herself the subject of ridicule.

Sexual health service providers are also seen as judgmental about young persons engaging in sexual activities, which deters youth from seeking sexual health services. Service providers in one focus group discussion in Ajmer mentioned that they do not see the need to speak with young persons about puberty and sex-related matters because these youth already know about such issues or can discover the information on their own. As one anganwadi worker explained, "Once they are in a room with their husbands, their husbands tell them all that they need to know."

In another discussion, women thought that young people get this information either through television or their friends. They felt strongly that there is no need to provide information to young boys and girls about sexual relationships or even access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Organizations specifically work with ASHA (accredited social health activist) workers, ANMs (auxiliary nurse midwives), and anganwadi workers; for instance, Vikalp and MJAS work in a systematic manner with these service providers as well as their departments to ensure greater sensitivity and sufficient skills as well as the accessibility of various schemes targeting adolescent girls and pregnant or lactating mothers.

e. Absence of sexuality education

Sex education is a much-contested topic in formal education and is still banned in some of the states where the study was conducted, including Maharashtra and Gujarat. The discussions indicated a chasm between parents and children or youth when it comes to conversations and the exchange of information on sex and sexuality. Schools across the states do not encourage discussions on sexuality, and teachers have resorted to skipping the chapter on reproduction and asking students to read it at home. Thus, there were very few avenues for youth to discuss sex-related matters. For young girls, the main sources of information are their friends, older sisters, or a female relative (mostly their older brother's wife), while for boys it is either through reading erotic books sold at railway stations or the Internet (accessed even via their mobile phones).

Organizations reported conducting interventions on sexuality education. Some organizations, such as MJAS, Sahiyar, FAT, and Awaaz-e-Niswaan, conducted sexuality education for girls and boys in their biology class as a part of the chapter on the human reproductive system. But there were conditions: the discussion could take place only in all-girls or all-boys schools (thus, mostly private schools), and there were restrictions on the mode of teaching. A participant in a FAT discussion explained:

"Someone came from outside the school to give us a special lecture about it. It was done only for girls, by screening a movie that showed bodily changes postmenstruation. In school, the science teacher did not discuss with us, as boys were also present in class. She asked us to read it by ourselves."

When women were asked if they spoke to their daughters about body changes while growing up, they gave examples only relating to menstruation. In discussions with older women in New Delhi and Lucknow, some said that their daughters spoke with their sisters or cousins, and mothers did not typically talk with daughters about menstruation. In some cases, women only explained what menstruation was the first time their daughter had her period, with no other discussion. Regarding the need for discussions on sex, love, and relationships, mothers explained that there is a right time for everything and that young people often already know about "these things" from television.

Women described feeling uncomfortable speaking to their children because nobody had spoken to them about these issues, and so they did not know how to broach it. Even organization staff members, especially those who belong to the same communities that they work with on gender issues, could not openly talk about sexuality with youth. Organizations such as MJAS try to ensure that facilitators and collective members are similar in age to help develop greater comfort between them. In Amra Padatik, which includes persons from the transgender community, discussions on sexuality and diverse gender expressions come more easily.

Thus, it is critical for organizations to identify sources through which collective members (young adults, adolescents, and women) can access information on sexualityrelated concerns and to also create safe spaces wherein discussions around sexuality can take place. There is need for safe spaces in which discussions on sexuality can be undertaken in a positive and self-affirmative manner and without hesitation. The need for trained and nonjudgmental staff, who respect the privacy and agency of collective members, as well as the need for critical use of language emerged strongly from the field conversations.

To understand the complex reasons behind early and child marriage, it is important that sexuality be situated in an organization's work and that the issues of choice, consent, and agency be made central to conversations around early and child marriage. Only then will the focus shift from just delaying age at marriage to empowering young persons to express their desires and negotiate around their choices.

Distilled from the preceding discussion, the progress markers in the outcome category Gender and Sexuality are listed in the following box, with a set each for organizations and collectives:

Progress markers: Gender and Sexuality		
Organizations	Collectives	
 Engage deeply with issues related to gender. Situate sexuality in the organization's work. Ensure safe spaces for discussions on gender and sexuality for staff and collective members. Comfortably discuss issues of gender and sexuality. Further build an increased positive and intersectional understanding of gender and sexuality in the organization's work. Support collectives and individual members to engage with a comprehensive and positive understanding of gender and sexuality at the community level. 	 Build awareness on gender and sexuality. Comfortably discuss issues of gender. Comfortably discuss issues of sexuality. Question norms that control and regulate expression in everyday life. Negotiate with family and community for collective members to exercise choice, consent, and agency. Actively challenge norms that control and regulate collective members' expression in everyday life. Engage with the community on issues of gender and sexuality. 	

Organizations participating in the outcome mapping process, based on their context and nature of work, will develop their own outcome challenge and progress markers for each category. Here is an example of the outcome challenge and progress markers for Gender and Sexuality developed for illustration only:

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Outcome challenge: We wish for a society where there is equality and no gender discrimination, where one can take one's own decisions related to sexuality, where the patriarchal structure is challenged and is changing. A society where everyone has the space to express their own sexual choice and is able to access sexual rights with acceptance from society.

Progress markers: Organizations

Establishing broader understanding of sexuality within their work

the community

Supporting collectives and their members in creating a positive and broader understanding of gender in

Like to see

- Building deep understanding on gender
- Linking sexuality with aspects of gender

Expect to see

Creating a safe space to comfortably discuss issues of gender and sexuality

Progress markers: Collectives

- Collectively challenging gender-based discriminations and norms
- Discussing the aspects related to sexuality

Building an understanding of gender and related issues at the community level and initiating dialogue

Like to see

Expect to see

Building understanding on gender-based discrimination

- Recognising issues related to gender discrimination and having discussions around them
- Challenging the gender norms that prevail in day-to-day life
- Recognising shifts among the collective members and challenges to traditional norms

Outcome challenge and progress markers distilled from organization data during the outcome mapping process



Discussions among collective members in HUMSAFAR

Outcome category 3: Negotiations around Marriage

Given the centrality that the institution of heteronormative marriage has within families and communities, it is imperative that the sense of its inevitability be challenged through engagement with the structural aspects of marriage and what it means to young people. This is a gap in the literature of studies on monitoring and evaluation in the development arena, where approaches to complex realities are typically limited. Indeed, the historical, sociological, and anthropological literature reviewed for this study highlighted that early and child marriage cannot be engaged with meaningfully with a limited focus on age at marriage but instead requires critical focus on the institution of marriage.

a. Organizational perspectives and work on marriage

A core focus of the organizations is to bolster young persons' agency and build their capacity for negotiation, decision making, expressing opinions, and pursuing their aspirations. The strategy is based on a perspective that links the institution of marriage to the control of sexuality of young girls and the consolidation of caste, community, family honor, and power through this practice. Another core area of work for the organizations is the provision of counseling and legal support in response to violation of rights within marriage, with perspective- and capacity-building responsibility extended to their collectives.

Some of the strategies used by organizations to address early and child marriage and violations linked to marriage involve access to opportunities for independence and selfreliance. For instance, FAT works to build leadership among girls, thus enabling them to make their own life decisions, negotiate and fight pressures at various levels, and have the information to make these choices. They also train girls to voice their opinions and experiences through filmmaking that challenges prevalent norms around marriage. Another important focus in addressing early and child marriage is the organization's approach to the issue. For instance, when addressing forced marriage, consent is instrumental to the FAT understanding of marriage, and the violation of consent amounts to force. Sahiyar's work also takes on forced marriage.

Some organizations engage with the issue of early and child marriage by defining what a child is by age although they do not negate the role of consent. They support early marriage when there is consent as well as physical and mental maturity of the young persons involved. Nonetheless, they admitted that translating this understanding into practice is difficult. These organizations create enabling conditions for young persons and communities to negotiate around early marriage. Organizations use diverse meanings and strategies along the spectrum of early, child, and forced marriage, but there is consensus to make consent, preparedness, and choice more prominent.

In its work with young people and women, MASUM supports intercaste marriage as a political act by promoting it and by discouraging arranged, same-caste marriage. Kislay similarly encourages marriage of choice and uses dialogue to create acceptance of relationships and marriages of choice of young persons by their parents and families. HUMSAFAR works with youth in schools and colleges as well as communities in both urban and rural areas to highlight the negative impact of child marriage and domestic violence and enable young persons to make their own decisions and challenge genderbased discrimination. Shaheen, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, and Sahiyar provide counseling and legal support in instances of violation of rights and violence against women.

A strong focus of many of the organizations is their work on advocacy with educational institutions and government departments. HUMSAFAR developed a gender module that has been incorporated into the state education curriculum. Through their camp curriculum, VOICE 4 Girls empowers girls with negotiation skills and confidence building to speak up for themselves. Vikalp focuses on the education of young persons, especially girls.

Moving beyond age

Organizations and community members spoke about the changing scenario on the appropriate age at marriage. Despite pressure from the family and community, youth across states had their own perceptions about an appropriate age. Even children discussed marriage beyond the age parameter. Both boys and girls talked of wanting to be financially independent before they married. Girls in the Manthan collective [Sahiyar] think the age at marriage should depend on when a young woman can be self-reliant and is mature enough to understand relationships. In the focus group discussion at a school where Sahiyar conducts sessions on adolescent health, one girl said, "One should not force a girl into marriage; she should marry whenever she wants to."

The lack of a birth certificate (and thus ambiguity regarding age) works against youth

by presenting the opportunity for family members to not disclose a girl's age in order to marry her early. Shaheen staff mentioned that sometimes parents do not disclose the right age to the gazi, or priest, when they want to marry a daughter before her 18th birthday. In such instances, organizations rely on a school-leaving certificate for a girl's age.

All organizations see a gap in the communities in linking the control of sexuality of young women with practices of early, child, and forced marriage by patriarchal forces and structures of power. They focus on creating opportunities and space for these discussions to ensure that girls become empowered and confident to negotiate options around marriage and that they can imagine alternatives to marriage and alternatives within marriage.

Thus, some organizations go beyond defining marriages of anyone younger than 18 as a child marriage and instead distinguish them as "early" and "forced." Early marriage takes place both without the consent of young persons and by their choice. Forced marriage occurs without the consent of the girl (but is in line with the decisions of families, caste groups, and communities whose interests prevail). A nuanced feminist understanding of early and child marriage requires girls' and women's choice and consent as the basis for marital decision making.

b. The institution of marriage

Honor

Restrictions on girls from family and community increase tremendously following puberty, particularly on their choice of clothing, mobility, and interaction with other young persons. Control of sexuality manifests in two ways: (i) in the fear that girls will fall in love with someone of their own choice but outside of their caste, class, or religious community and have sexual relations prior to marriage and (ii) in the fear of sexual assault. Both aspects link with questions of family honor and shame. Discussions with family members and young girls elicited the common perception that girls will "do something wrong" and malign family honor, which is a major reason for marrying girls early.

Across states, girls are pressured to marry early for several reasons. Families arrange early marriage to a person of their choice if their child is found to be in an intimate relationship or making plans to run away with someone. In discussions with sex workers and their children, mothers expressed the fear that, if their daughters continued to stay with them, the stigma of being a sex worker's daughter would make it difficult for them to marry. They also said that even though they were sex workers, they wanted their children to live a life of dignity, and hence, they did not want their daughters to enter sex work.

Honor-related violence, even murder, is a reality in such states as Uttar Pradesh and Telangana, where families often resort to sending a boy to jail on charges of kidnapping their daughter or even murder the couple if they ran away to be together. Sociological literature has captured this practice as a reassertion of control by patriarchal structures of the family and community in western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana (Chowdhry, 2008). In some cases, young people resorted to suicide if they saw no option to the impending violence from their families. Alternatively, they ended their relationship. As a young woman in FAT said, "I ended my relationship because my boyfriend was from a lower caste."

Instances from several states show that, after young people elope, families maintained no relations with them. Thus, early and child marriage is one of the primary methods to control young persons' sexualities, especially girls' and women's sexualities (discussed in detail in the section on the outcome category Gender and Sexuality).

Caste endogamy

Families and communities have a major role in maintaining the power of caste and community consolidation through marriage. In several locations, both organization staff as well as community members spoke of repercussions from marrying outside the caste and/or religious group. Women in rural Maharashtra recounted many stories of girls who had been close to their families but were barred from the village and considered dead because they had chosen to marry outside their caste.

An older woman in a collective associated with Thoughtshop Foundation talked about a Muslim girl who had married a Hindu boy who was banned from her neighborhood by the other families; even though her parents accepted her choice, she could not come into the community ever. When an organization volunteer questioned that decision, the collective member argued with her in support of that decision. Sahiyar staff members recalled a girl who disappeared after she married someone outside the caste. Marrying or eloping with someone outside the caste incites threats as well as violence from family members, particularly from the girl's family.

Shifts in such trends were also reported in urban locations. In a discussion with women associated with FAT, caste did not emerge as an issue. As one woman explained:

"Those times are gone now. Nobody cares about caste anymore. People just want to see if the boy in question will keep their daughter happy, regardless of the caste. If there are people focusing on caste, it's really their loss."

Coercion and support of family and community

Girls are also subject to community pressure to marry early for fear of not finding a proper match later. A former village head in Rajasthan explained:

"They say that if they do not get their children married at a young age, they will not find an appropriate match for them later. That's why they get their children engaged at a very young age and after 4, 5, or 10 years, they get them married, even though they are underage."

A suitable boy was described by older women and girls as belonging to a respectable family, who earns well, understands what his partner wants, owns a house, and is caring. A suitable girl is fair, thin, does household chores, and takes care of her family. In the discussions at Lucknow, families preferred well-educated working women as daughtersin-law because it reflected a certain status, with a preference for teachers, bankers, and those in government jobs.

Boys are also under pressure to marry early, especially in rural Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Particularly in Rajasthan, if a boy is not married by the age of 21 and a girl is not married by age 15, there is a perception they will not find anyone suitable and will have to get a spouse through *naata*. Boys are also burdened with the responsibility of the family and drop out of education as well.

In the urban contexts of Baroda, Delhi, Hyderabad, and Kolkata, community members supported delaying the age at marriage to beyond 18.

The practice of *gauna* in northern India enables girls to continue their education even after marriage. In several locations, girls said that they could continue their studies after

marriage and even complete high school. Organizations reported that the pursuit of education after gauna is rare because the permission rests in the hands of the marital family. In some cases, such as in villages in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, girls and their families had negotiated continuing education even after the gauna, when they shifted to live with their husband

Inevitability of marriage

In most places, young persons thought marriage to be unavoidable. Yet, young girls in many locations said that, if given a choice, they do not want to ever marry. The inevitability of marriage is justified by the need for companionship and security after the death of parents, and it is one of the main reasons for families to get their daughters married. Often, however, youth have no voice in such situations. In a discussion in MASUM, a young girl said, "I don't want to get married—ever! I don't like the idea of having a husband and children. But I know I will have to get married. My parents will make sure that I do."

Even among organizations, the compulsory and inescapable nature of marriage was highlighted as a norm sustained by community pressure. Across organizations, staff members discussed that if they engaged with families around the question of marriage, they would be asked, "If tomorrow my daughter runs away or if something bad happens, will you take responsibility?"

Ideas on how to circumvent that pressure emerged in conversations with organization staff and with youth. But a refusal to marry, challenging the need to be married, or exploring alternatives to marriage at a personal level were not broached or taken seriously in any of those discussions. A Kislay core team member admitted that he had managed to delay marrying but would have to find a wife in the near future. In his case, there was the additional issue of being too old to find an eligible girl. Young people mentioned people they knew (relatives and acquaintances) who had not married; but there was no discussion on alternative options to marriage. So intense is the pressure to marry that there is no space for any other possibility. As a woman in a discussion at FAT said:

"If you get married, and even if your marriage is not happy, at least your neighbors and all will not have things to say to you. An unhappy marriage you can deal with by yourself. But in case of no marriage, you have to deal with the entire society. People don't let vou live."

Concerns were expressed over arranged marriages. Girls with FAT said they had recently talked about the risks of arranged marriage in comparison with a "love marriage" (marriage of choice). Many were of the opinion that a love marriage against parents' wishes is also risky because, if a child wanted to return to the parents' home later, they would not be accepted. Even if parents did not consider it a transgression, pressure from relatives, neighbors, and other community members is immense.

Discussion with boys in Kolkata and with college students in Lucknow revealed perceptions of marriage as an avenue for young people to have sex because there are limited opportunities for sex outside of marriage. Girls had contrary perceptions of freedom and mobility through marriage. Some thought that marriage meant freedom because they would be able to go wherever they wanted with their husbands without anyone at home having a problem with it. Going out alone prior to marriage is not a possibility. Other girls cited increased control, after marrying, from the multiple permissions they would need for whatever they wanted to do.

Economic constraints

Irrespective of the economic situation of a family, dowry is perceived as a necessary part of marriage. Across locations, dowry demands increased with an increase in a girl's age. This is a primary reason for families marrying their daughters as early as possible. Many times, marriages are cancelled because families are unable to meet the dowryrelated demands. Families' disinterest in investing in the education and livelihood of girls was attributed to their low social status and the "burden" of marrying them off.

In Rajasthan and Gujarat, the custom of atta-satta was another reason given for early and forced marriage. Another was the cost-effective practice of marrying two or three girls from a family at one event, with the youngest sometimes 8 years old. For a family with more than one daughter, it is an economic bargain. In Gujarat, there is a practice among well-off Hindus and Muslim communities to obtain girls for marriage from economically disadvantaged families in Maharashtra. These girls face restrictions in their marital home but are unable to protest because they are bound by the bride price paid to their family.

In rural Maharashtra, the financial condition of the family was cited as one of the most

important factors that determine marriage; economically stable families marry their children around the age of 22-25, while poorer families marry off their children, especially daughters, by the age of 15. Among migrant workers in Delhi, the marriage practice of the region they originate from prevailed. Following the working season in the city, when migrants return to their village for two to three months, their children are married, even though it conflicts with the latter's wishes not to marry early.

In Old City, Hyderabad, the economic aspect leads to sheikh marriages and mass marriages. Mass Muslim marriages are conducted by local Muslim philanthropists and trusts, who cover the costs of the wedding ceremony and give gifts to the married couples and their families. Despite evaluation studies (cited in Save the Children, 2014) critical of cash transfer schemes to delay the age at marriage, the Telangana government introduced a scheme in 2014, known as Shaadi Mubarak. 16 Such practices motivated by families, communities, or the State do not challenge marriage as the only life option for girls but reinforce age as a marker for marriage.

Violence within families

Some families chose to protect young girls from violence within the home through early marriage. In a discussion with sex workers and their children in West Bengal, they described the home as a site of violence, and thus mothers chose to marry their daughters early or send them to boarding school. In a discussion at Amra Padatik, one woman said, "When I am drunk and pass out, I fear that my customer will do something wrong with my daughter."

The young people in the Amra Padatik group also expressed fear of rape and assault because such transgressions against a sex worker's child are not considered severe.

The issue of girls being sexually harassed by men in their families was discussed in Kolkata, Lucknow, and Baroda. In one case, elopement was a means for the girl to escape the sexual violence at home, and community members were supportive of the marriage.

 $^{^{16}}$ Literally, "Best wishes for your wedding!" in Urdu, Shaadi Mubarak is a Telangana state government scheme that provides a one-time financial assistance of INR 51,000 to a bride's family at the time of her marriage. To be eligible for the scheme, a girl should be a state resident older than 18 years, should belong to the Muslim community, and her family's combined annual income should not exceed INR 2,00,000. See www.telangana.gov.in/government-initiatives/shaadi-mubarak.

Staff members at Jeevika and Thoughtshop Foundation mentioned that children who experience domestic violence tend to elope. For them, marriage is a dream.

c. Negotiation and expression of choice

Marriage reflecting choice and desire

Resisting strong pressure to marry from family, neighbors, and community, young people sometimes run away to be with someone of their choice. These relationships sometimes lead to marriage, sometimes not. In West Bengal, women community members said that even if young people ran away from home with a lover, they were eventually accepted by their families once they returned. But in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, people who elope face high resistance. Girls from Jodhpur, Rajasthan, said that when a girl runs away with someone, the community ostracizes her family until they take strong action against her. In several discussions, various people pointed out that when a young man and woman eloped, their marriage was often not recognized or valued by the family and community. Organization staff members mentioned that many elopements do not end well and girls return to their natal home, which leads to new complications.

The fear of elopement increases restrictions on young persons. Girls in focus group discussions were emphatic that if one girl were to run away, then all girls are treated as potentially errant and restrictions increase. That fear and concern for safety prompted parents to marry their daughters early.

For some young people, eloping is perceived as the only way to escape the social structures and to exercise their own choice (sexual or otherwise). The lack of opportunities, spaces, and alternatives to pursue aspirations as well as the absence of a supportive environment influenced young people to elope at an early age.

Decision making and negotiations toward marriage

Choice was interpreted differently by young persons in other situations and was often circumscribed by the context of their lives. Women and girls found it difficult to imagine choice within marriage beyond the age at which they marry. In several discussions, they were hesitant to express whether they wanted to or could consider marrying someone of their choice. This decision, they said, is definitely to be taken by their family, based on

caste, class, or religion as well as on property and earnings. Linked to this is the opportunity to mold a girl's life at a young age, when she is unable to speak out. The staff at SSK discussed that many people think it is better to get girls married when they are young so they will fight less for their rights and have less information about life issues. The earlier a girl marries, the easier it is for her to make adjustments to married life. The longer she stays single, the more her knowledge and confidence is likely to increase, along with her demand to make decisions for herself.

Across states, young people said they were not consulted about their consent to marry. Only in a few instances did young married girls say that their parents had asked them their opinion about when they wanted to marry. Girls described numerous strategies to delay marriage. Their association with organizations and their collectives had had a slight change in their situations. Through some organizations, such as Vanangana and Sahiyar, girls have been able to get the support of their mothers to at least decide the age at which they will marry. A young woman in a Shaheen discussion said she had succeeded in delaying marriage until the first year of college, but the family pressure was intensifying. Some girls used hunger strike as a means to negotiate against marriage; others used peers and collective members to help convince their family. In several instances, girls sought help from the organization to intervene and influence their family.

In the study's discussions, women and girls thought it is generally easy for boys to refuse a proposal based on the photograph of a girl. But it is more difficult for a girl to refuse someone and requires "valid" reasons. Family members across urban and rural contexts stated that two people getting married are only allowed to meet on the day of the wedding, although in some cases, phone communication between the couple is acceptable. Despite such restrictions, young girls, and especially married girls, noted that there are ways to see the groom before marriage. In villages, girls make excuses and meet with the boy when filling water at the tube well or after school. A young mother in a village in Uttar Pradesh whispered during a discussion that she talked to her husband (in an arranged marriage) on the phone and had even met him before their marriage. Mobile phones and social media make communication easier for young people. Although access to social media was reported as far more restricted for girls than for boys, girls said they secretly accessed these resources using their brothers' or fathers' phones.

In some discussions, older women thought that, in recent times, youth had become assertive and would refuse to marry someone they had not seen and spoken to. Some women also said that they believed there should be freedom for young people to talk, to meet, and to go outside and know each other before getting married, although self-choice of partner would not be accepted by family and community.

Decision making and negotiations after marriage

The subject of decision making and negotiations in the postmarital relationship was explored in the discussions with women and young persons. Women choosing to work or study after marriage required permission within the marital home, especially from the husband and in-laws, where there is a more nuanced meaning of choice in marriage. Younger women reported increased restrictions after marriage, with permission needed from three people: the husband, the father-in-law, and the mother-in-law. At times, even a sister-in-law is involved. In some places, women said that permission is required even to visit their natal family. Whatever negotiation may have taken place before marriage, the final decision on what can be done is made in the marital home.

In Uttar Pradesh, women are allowed to work only in their immediate locality, in family-approved jobs as anganwadi workers, nurses, or teachers. Only if a woman has a permanent government job is she given permission to work farther afield, though it must be within the state. Overall, paid work is difficult for married women to pursue in these villages.

The aspect of choice in marriage regarding birth control and having children was briefly explored. It was uniformly noted that decision making around this is complicated by lack of information and lack of space where concerns can be addressed freely and without judgment. Older women in a Shaheen discussion said that the use of birth control or birth spacing could be a choice by women only after they had had one child. In some cases, couples decide together on how many children to have.

Thus, the various outcome mapping discussions revealed that the social construction of marriage goes beyond it being an institution for ensuring inheritance and patrilineal descent to having multiple meanings. The family as an institution is crucial in controlling sexuality, honor, and maintaining caste endogamy. For many young persons, marriage is a way of escaping family violence. The challenge for organizations is to confront social practices by empowering young persons and creating spaces for dialogue within communities and addressing other structural constraints of young persons' lives.

The process mapped the various structural factors or root causes that underlie early

marriage and the ways in which organizations challenge the centrality of marriage while offering support to women and young persons.

Distilled from the preceding discussion, the progress markers in the outcome category Negotiations around Marriage are listed in the following box, with a set each for organizations and collectives:

Progress markers: Negotiations around Marriage		
Organizations	Collectives	
 Recognize links between marriage and structures of power and control. Create spaces for young persons to discuss, support, and negotiate their choices around marriage. Strengthen collectives for young married women. 	 Facilitate opportunities and spaces to discuss rights and choices around marriage. Discuss marriage not just in individual contexts but relate it to larger structural issues as well. Provide support to negotiate with family and community members around marriage and related issues. 	



A women's collective meeting at SSK

Outcome category 4: Law, Policy, and Advocacy

This section provides insights into organizations' perceptions and use of laws to advance women's and young girls' rights in general and in relation to early and child marriage. It highlights the approaches used to build awareness about relevant laws and human rights, organizations' advocacy work, and their association with social movements.

a. Organizational perspectives and advocacy work

Organizations associated with the women's movement are grounded in the belief that the law is one of many instruments of social change and that advocating for legal mechanisms is the basis of the struggle against violence against women and for upholding human rights. However, different organizations have different points of view and approaches toward the use of the law. While those working on women's rights actively use family and marriage laws (to address domestic violence, harassment for dowry, etc.), the usefulness of the law on child marriage is questioned by many groups. Even so, because of that law's long historical lineage, a few organizations use it strategically, depending on the need to build pressure as opposed to a sustained engagement with it. Other organizations do not directly use the law but work with state institutions, such as the police and the justice system. Given the complex manner in which organizations engage with the child marriage law, it was challenging for neat categories to emerge.

b. Knowledge of and awareness about rights and legal entitlements

All the organizations use strategies to create awareness about rights and legal entitlements of individuals so that they are active and informed citizens. This builds up the membership of women and youth in the organization and enhances their participation in its activities. They ensure that their members attend training sessions and perspective-building workshops to recognize their own situations as well as those of others in need of support. As noted by a young woman in HUMSAFAR, "The women of our locality have become ferocious lions. I will not call them lionesses because they behave as bravely as men."

Members in all the collectives were aware of the legal age for marriage. In discussions

with the Dalit Mahila Samiti as well as Guftugu Manch collectives, girls mentioned that awareness of the child marriage law, backed by a fear of being arrested, prompted parents to wait until their daughters were 17 or 18 years old to marry them. However, across the states, there are many instances in which young people were married early despite knowledge of the law due to grim economic circumstances, "burdens" associated with girls, or the normative power of marriage.

Discussions on critical aspects of the law on early and child marriage are not a priority for the organizations in this study. Although MASUM, Bhumika, HUMSAFAR, MIAS, and Vanangana engage in discussions on marriage, violence, and legal entitlements, they realize the need for in-depth and critical conversations in addition to an organization's backing for young people to understand and be empowered to challenge social structures. Young people said they are not confident to intervene or take a stand in situations of early or child marriage or associated violence, particularly within their family. The lack of community support or the fear of community backlash suggests that an increase in knowledge may not always lead to an increase in young persons and women being able to address issues they face in their personal lives.

c. Working with existing state and legal mechanisms

MASUM, Vanangana, Bhumika, Shaheen, and MIAS highlighted the few occasions in which they sought legal help to stop a child marriage. MASUM staff members believe in the law's ability to curb the practice of child marriage but are also cautious of overreliance on state institutions to address the practice. The staff explained that it is useful to focus on informing youth about the law while more energy has to be expended to build pressure on the police to act in instances of child marriage, much beyond sensitizing them through training and workshops. Shaheen staff strategically use sting operations to expose sheikh marriages and use the law to prevent these marriages.

Vanangana staff noted the need for training on the use of the law in addressing child marriage. Both Vanangana and MIAS staff have used the law in certain instances to threaten families and pressure dominant groups in the community to prevent early marriage. But they acknowledged that this strategy is effective only in a few cases because entire communities collude to keep even the police from knowing when and where a marriage may take place.

The law is primarily used within communities as a preventive measure and not for

punitive purposes. As part of their mandate as women's rights organizations, Shaheen, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, MASUM, Bhumika, and Vanangana provide access to legal support to tackle violence against women. Bhumika runs a helpline for women in distress but also works with the Rakshak Police,¹⁷ protection officers, judges, and other state institutions, conducting perspective- and capacity-building workshops for them. Kislay uses trade union organizations to increase workers' awareness of their rights and legal entitlements. Although they do not typically use legal interventions in their work on early and child marriage, they use the Special Marriages Act to support intercaste marriages among young volunteers. Despite many organizations supporting the cases of intercaste marriages, they often find it difficult to use the Special Marriages Act because the one month's notice period mandated under the Act is co-opted by families to threaten young persons who want to marry. Young persons often choose to circumvent this provision by paying huge "fees" to be registered under the Act.

Almost all of the organizations use legal support both as a strategy as well as a service for their members and collectives. Shaheen has a legal center with a lawyer visiting once a week to counsel married women on issues of violence, divorce, maintenance, child custody, and child marriage. Awaaz-e-Niswaan offers counseling and conducts workshops for girls and women on laws and their use and includes a component on law in their personality development course. They also help women file a First Information Report with the police and seek legal aid. Sahiyar runs a counseling center for women that provides legal and emotional support.

In Vanangana, staff members help women and their families file a police case and seek legal assistance in court. Amra Padatik helps sex workers and their families file cases and pursue them through the court. Kislay and MJAS help people access the police and courts but not on a regular basis.

Organizations engage strategically with the law on early and child marriage, which is in line with a critical perspective on the limited role of the law in prohibiting child marriage.

 17 Rakshak literally means "protector" in Hindi. Bhumika works in close association with Rakshak Police—patrolling officers—who ensure safety of women as well as work toward maintaining harmony and peace in the locality.

d. Use of other strategies

Organizations critical of working with existing legal mechanisms and the State use other strategies, such as empowering youth to negotiate and dialogue with communities, building knowledge and awareness for collective action, and participating in networks and social movements.

Jeevika works with local governmental authorities and schools to spread awareness about the legal age for marriage and to prevent early and child marriage. It works with panchayat members and school teachers and principals to advocate for not marrying anyone below the age of 18 and also to prevent preparation of fake age documentation (which leads to many girls being married below the age of 18). Jeevika is also attempting to create spaces, within schools, for young unmarried girls under the age of 18 to provide them with a safe space that they term child friendly. Although these spaces provide these girls with an opportunity to talk and express their opinions, which is not provided to them otherwise, the term child friendly continues to make age an issue to be contended with because anyone younger than 18 is then still considered a child who lacks maturity and requires protection and guidance. Vikalp staff noted that although communities are no longer conducting marriages of children who are 8 or 9 years old, some still surreptitiously conduct marriages before the legal age. When an early marriage is reported, communities attempt to influence the police and panchayats.

Organizations like FAT and HUMSAFAR work around raising awareness while recognizing the limitations present in the current law on child marriage through their work. They work on issues of choice and consent through various activities, such as discussions, meetings, and workshops with the youth in their collectives. For instance, HUMSAFAR focuses on its counseling center and the shelter home for women, although it has now expanded to working in communities, schools, and colleges. HUMSAFAR has had critical discussions on the provisions of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act. A community collective called the Nigrani Committee trains women to take action in the event of domestic violence or deal with the police, while a network of lawyers and doctors assists them. HUMSAFAR staff members think that women who have suffered violence need support and counseling to find the confidence to make a complaint to the police and pursue their cases. Thus, while the law on age at marriage is useful for influencing decisions and action, it also has a *limiting role* due to its silence on choice and consent.

Building awareness among community members

Some organizations attempt to make communities sensitive to the needs of youth, specifically women and girls. Jeevika takes up the challenge of advocating on law and policy, especially with state and other local officials, and works with schools and teachers as well (to provide training in schools on rights, gender, and life skills). Vikalp engages with panchayat officials on the need to support girls' education, which helps delay marriage. In a discussion, one of their panchayat officials was emphatic in his position against early marriage, but he was apprehensive due to the village community's indifference.

Staff members in Shaheen, MJAS, and Vanangana remarked that they have won over caterers, priests, and other people involved in the conducting of marriages. These marriage service providers now refuse services for child marriages, and they inform the organization when they hear of an impending child marriage. In all the organizations, it is only when repeated dialogue with families fails that legal recourse is sought.

Collective action

Membership or participation in a collective or support group is one way that people can access legal entitlements, government schemes, social services, and other opportunities. Collectives also function as a pressure group in various situations. In Vanangana, members of their collectives report instances of early and child marriages. Dalit Mahila Samiti collective members narrated incidents in which they intervened via dialogue with the parents of a girl to be married. Some organizations, such as MJAS and MASUM, create platforms for dialogue between youth, adult community members, Panchayati Raj institutions (rural local government bodies), caste panchayat members, and local government officials, thus advocating for community member support for young persons' needs and aspirations. MIAS found that working with the Juvenile Justice Board¹⁸ helps young people to exercise their choice while putting pressure on a community against early marriage. The organization is now helping youth from their collectives make

¹⁸ The Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) is a board constituted under the Juvenile Justice Care and Protection Act, 2015, to look into the welfare and needs of children in conflict with the law. The IJB consists of a metropolitan magistrate or a judicial magistrate and two social workers, at least one of whom should be a woman. See http://trackthemissingchild.gov.in/trackchild/readwrite/JJAct 2015.pdf.

their way into caste panchayats to influence the older members, especially men, toward curbing early and child marriage.

In Shaheen, staff members belonging to communities that the organization works with directly intervene when cases of impending early or child marriage are reported. Amra Padatik members are part of the Self-Regulatory Board initiated by the DMSC to work with the police and take action against the trafficking of minor girls coerced into sex work (and against police harassment).

e. Engaging with networks and social movements

Organizations recognize that the law on delaying marriage does not take into consideration the needs, choices, and legal entitlements of young persons; there is greater need to represent young persons' voices in policy, advocacy, and government and civil society dialogues. Several organizations are part of networks like the Right to Food Campaign in Rajasthan, the National Alliance of People's Movements, the Right to Education Campaign, the Muslim Women's Rights Network, the National Network of Sex Workers, the Construction Worker Federation of India, the Committee Against Violence on Women, the National Network of Autonomous Women's Groups, and the People's Union for Civil Liberties. They also work on such issues as the right to work and children's rights. MIAS is an office bearer in the People's Union for Civil Liberties. Through solidarity with movements, organizations have a greater capacity to influence not just legislation but also the networks, movements, and the other organizations that they are associated with.

Kislay staff admitted that it is extremely difficult to take the agenda of child marriage or gender inequities to other workers' forums. Hence, influencing perspectives is not always an easy task. Their collective for youth could not sustain itself because members constantly moved away.

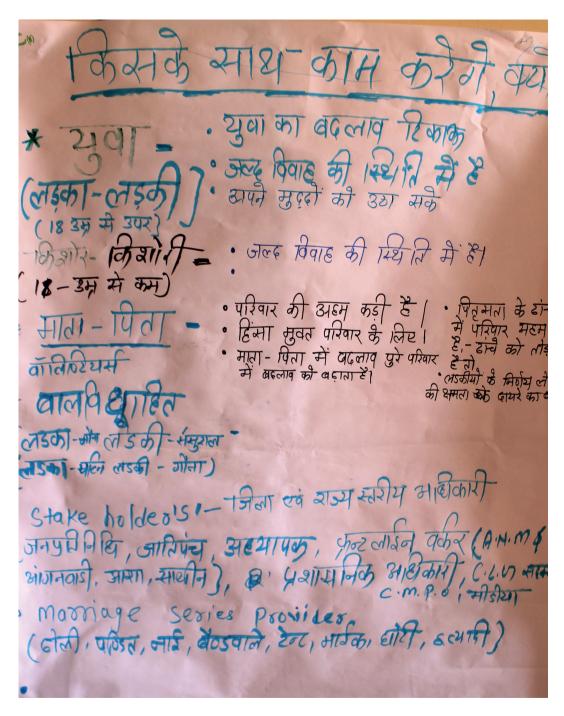
Vikalp works with other organizations, such as Thoughtshop Foundation, on common campaigns, such as We CAN India, and intervenes in platforms of children's rights groups, bringing in their understanding of working with youth. Jeevika is part of a women's rights network called Maitri and a microfinance group called Sadhan. Sahiyar is part of the National Network of Autonomous Women's Groups, the People's Union for Civil Liberties, the Muslim Women's Rights Network, and the Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti,19 which lends an intersectional value to their work on early marriage. MASUM is planning a state-wide network of organizations working on issues affecting youth. VOICE 4 Girls works with the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institution Societies, which provide residential education to marginalized girls from scheduled castes. They also work with the tribal welfare institutions of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. All organizations reported that it was not always easy to highlight issues of early and child marriage within their networks and social movements.

The outcome category Law, Policy, and Advocacy aims to capture the understanding and position in relation to laws on early and child marriage as well as relevant levels of advocacy being undertaken by organizations.

¹⁹ Translating to "environment protection committee" in Hindi, this is the name of a group formed within the organization Sahiyar in Gujarat. The group campaigns for, raises awareness around, and is involved in advocacy on issues of the environment and climate change. It also networks with other organizations and groups that work on issues related to the environment.

Distilled from the preceding discussion, the progress markers in the outcome category Law, Policy, and Advocacy are listed in the following box, with a set each for organizations and collectives:

Progress markers: Law, Policy, and Advocacy	
Organizations	Collectives
 Build perspectives and capacities on relevant law, policies, and programs. Facilitate access to existing laws and programs around securing rights of young persons and women. Develop a critical perspective of the organization's work relative to the law associated with early and child marriage. Dialogue with other organizations, networks, and/or movements on early and child marriage and related issues. Dialogue within the community on early and child marriage and related issues. 	 Facilitate awareness of rights and entitlements allowed in family law. Enable the recognition of violation of young persons' and women's rights. Enable access to support mechanisms (legal and other support systems). Support young persons and women to voice and address violations of their rights. Discuss and question notions of age and consent in relation to marriage. Dialogue within the community on early and child marriage and related issues.
	7. Represent the collectives' voices in larger networks and forums on early and child marriage and related issues.



Mapping boundary partners at Vikalp

Outcome category 5: Education

While the general perception is that organizations often use education as a strategy to delay marriage, staff members of the organizations and their collectives indicated that education reflects the aspirations of young people. Both young persons and their parents, specifically their mothers, were overwhelming in their desire and support for education, despite economic, familial, and institutional constraints. While there is no doubt that education is an avenue to employment, it enables women and girls to achieve a certain degree of autonomy in their lives. There is thus a consensus that education enables autonomy and self-fulfillment and that it is a right—which has more meaning than its role as a strategy. This also means making the State accountable for fulfilling this right.

This outcome category considers the structural aspects of education, including what it means for young people to be educated, and goes beyond the mainstream discourse of education that centers mostly on issues of enrolment and retention.

a. Organizational interventions and strategies for education

Organizations work on education in different ways, beyond merely enrolling adolescents in school. They focus on enhancing the value of education and enabling young people to negotiate and make decisions about important choices, including education. Discussions among staff take place regularly, including special workshops organized to build perspective on the varied dimensions of education, which have enabled them to create similar opportunities for their collectives.

Organizations also work with educational institutions. Sahiyar, Jeevika, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, VOICE 4 Girls, and MASUM directly work with schools to offer input on the curriculum and conduct workshops and camps in schools and outside and thereby consistently reach out to youth. FAT, Shaheen, HUMSAFAR, Thoughtshop Foundation, VOICE 4 Girls, SSK, Vanangana, and Vikalp work in out-of-school or nonformal contexts with young people and women through literacy centers in communities [SSK], through the provision of technical training [FAT and Sahiyar], through workshops on gender in schools and colleges [HUMSAFAR, VOICE 4 Girls, and Jeevika], through advocacy with the Education Department [HUMSAFAR and Sahiyar], and by enabling youth, especially girls, to go to school [Amra Padatik, Thoughtshop Foundation, and Vikalp].

Working with schools

Several organizations conduct workshops on a regular basis with young girls in high schools. The principal from one of the government schools said of Jeevika's work:

"Jeevika has been coming to our school since 2008–2009 and having conversations with the girls, particularly those of higher classes. Our students love them and feel really happy when they participate in their programs. For example, they conduct their annual program on 24th January, the Girls' Rights Day, where Jeevika sets up stalls [for] different activities [and] gets the girls to play games. There is also a cultural program and painting and photography competitions. My observation is that when girls come back to the school after this program, they are so much more enthusiastic and happy."

Sahiyar has been conducting training on health and awareness of one's body with school students, both boys and girls, as part of their school curriculum. Awaaz-e-Niswaan staff spoke of challenges in obtaining permission from schools to conduct even an hour's session with the students. The staff said that the Education Department does not always cooperate with them for permission to work with schools.

The YRCs of Thoughtshop Foundation have established rapport with local schools to seek permission for potential work with students. School authorities also echoed the concerns of girls studying in their schools and the challenges that schools face in addressing them. A government school principal said that girls tell her about matters within their families:

"The girls say, 'Didi, they aren't letting us study anymore and want us to get married. You please talk to them.' In such matters, I try to persuade the parents and talk them into at least letting their daughter take the exam. But they ask me, 'Didi, will you find us another good match if we let this boy go away?' Some listen to me; most don't. Even if we try to contact local political leaders or the police, they are on the side of the parents."

Nonformal education

Organizations working within schools and in out-of-school contexts often adopt

components of nonformal education in their curriculum, workshops, and camps. They facilitate camps, workshops, and regular discussions around knowledge of the self, puberty and growing up, body anatomy, body image, reproductive health, love and attraction, and addiction as well as critical thinking around democracy, secularism, the environment, gender, religion, and caste. Apart from these, literacy classes are conducted, and awareness of rights, including marriage-related entitlements, as well as decision making and negotiation skills are covered in such discussions.

Using technology

Several groups use computer training or training in videography as modes of empowering women and youth. FAT has set up a tech training center in which young women learn the basics of computers and also create their own films and videos on aspects of their dreams. They also learn about enhancing their choices, building confidence, and learning to negotiate, which leads to empowerment. Awaaz-e-Niswaan conducts computer training sessions for young women. Vikalp has a component of computer literacy through which it organizes monthly camps with young girls that include self-defense, creative writing, art, and spoken English classes. Sahiyar has, in collaboration with FAT, established a tech center of their own for young girls. Kislay trains their young girls and boys in videography. The digital media thus has potential to unfold new worlds and also build up the confidence and skills of young people.

Sexuality education

Sexuality education is often provided to young people in the guise of adolescent sexual and reproductive health in schools, although it is not addressed holistically. This was apparent from a discussion at MJAS in which a male school teacher explained:

"As far as issues of sexuality are concerned, they are discussed in the form of two chapters in science—reproduction and genetic transfer. We also speak to students about AIDS, the dangers associated with sex, and thus the need to exercise selfcontrol. The value of self-control is emphasized every morning in the assembly and moral science class. It is appropriate to talk about matters of sexuality only at the right time, after class 10, and from the 'right people'—the female elders in the family, such as the mother or the elder sister, because they know how to talk to daughters about the changes in their body in an indirect, subtle way. When women

in the family have conversations with girls around these issues, they don't come to us for advice or help and that is a good thing. The discussions should be through a government-authorized syllabus [at present, there is no provision for this] else the entire village will protest."

Sahiyar works with schools and conducts sessions with girls in class 8 and above on issues of gender, including the body and reproduction. In some of the classes, introductory sessions are conducted for boys and girls together, after which girls in higher classes have separate sessions. While the curriculum of organizations like VOICE 4 Girls engages with sexuality, the focus is largely limited to sexual and reproductive health. Organizations have a limited time with young people, which can be difficult in terms of establishing the conditions in which to convey a comprehensive positive understanding of sexuality and its link with other issues (the need for sexuality education for youth is reflected in the outcome category Gender and Sexuality).

Supporting education

Organizations provide much support to ensure that young people can access and complete their education. Each organization provides basic knowledge on rights and information on financial schemes and opportunities to the communities and groups they work with. The experiences of Kislay, Amra Padatik, and Vanangana reflect that many families miss out on registering children in school due to lack of sufficient supporting documents. The organizations help them obtain the needed identity documents. With children in school, especially girls, organizations work to keep them there through class 12 and to ensure that they are linked to the relevant scholarships and financial schemes. According to a member of VOICE 4 Girls, many girls drop out after class 10 because they lack the finances to continue.

Through their volunteers, Vikalp works toward the re-enrolment of young children, especially girls who have dropped out. The volunteers reach out to married girls in either their natal or marital homes. According to one of the volunteers:

"These days, it is not impossible to see girls studying after being married. As volunteers, we also sometimes intervene if there is resistance from families. And once when the husband of a young girl who was interested in pursuing her studies was visiting the village, we asked him to let her continue her education."

Jeevika negotiates with schools to enroll married girls and ensure that they do not experience any discrimination, while also working to create platforms for discussions on sexuality. The Thoughtshop Foundation's YRC collectives attempt to re-enroll children from their communities. Vanangana reaches out to girls through their Guftugu Manch collective and provides information related to education opportunities. Given the strong traditional norms and strictures restricting them to either class 8, or at most, class 12, girls are unable to negotiate with their parents for further education.

Awaaz-e-Niswaan gives scholarships to young girls if their mothers are unable to cover the education expenses. Kislay and Amra Padatik ensure that Right to Education norms are met by schools. Amra Padatik plans to survey children of sex workers to assess their access to formal education, to ensure government or private hostel facilities for children of sex workers, to tackle issues of safety within their communities, and to promote access to educational facilities, sports, vocational training, and schemes provided by the state government. They work with community members, parents, and the Education Department to improve the infrastructure and quality of education in their area.

b. School as an enabling space

Most young people look forward to going to school. Girls in the Sahiyar discussions said they love to go to school because of the supportive and friendly teachers and their own motivation to study. Going to school and attending tuition classes (where special, paid tutoring for school lessons takes place) allows girls to access a space outside the home without restraint from families and to find friendships, find avenues to speak to boys, and explore their aspirations. In several organizations, girls said it is easier for them to meet and speak with boys in tuition classes and schools than within their community. In some reported cases, a hostile environment in school and discriminatory behavior by teachers led to students dropping out. The discrimination occurred with children of sex workers and even with married girls—school authorities feared the married girls would speak with unmarried girls about sex. Young girls across the states reported experiencing harassment either in the school by certain male teachers or by boys, or in some instances, on the way to school [Awaaz-e-Niswaan, VOICE 4 Girls, and Kislay].

c. Gendered narratives of aspirations of young people

Across all organizations, young people, irrespective of whether they are pursuing their aspirations or not, expressed their desires—often influenced by media and television shows—to become teachers, actors, fashion designers, doctors, engineers, IPS officers, and dancers; in other words, to do something different. Young women's desires to be independent and self-reliant echoed through all organizations. As one girl explained, "Our wish is not to be dependent on any one but to stand up for ourselves."

One young girl associated with Vikalp said she wanted to be a police officer so she could wear clothes like men and walk around with her head held high. Another girl wanted to become a writer and would do anything to pursue her dream. Another aspired to play soccer professionally. Gender differences in young persons' articulation of aspirations emerged strongly in the discussions, with girls needing to negotiate heavily for what they wanted and boys being able to pursue whatever they wanted to do. For instance, in a MASUM discussion, boys said they can do many things and often change their minds about their choices. Parents tell them they can do whatever they want as long as they stick to one thing. They ask them to keep up the family honor in whatever they pursue and to put the money being spent on their education to good use.

The study's discussions revealed that boys are more focused on getting jobs or earning money, which is mediated by class differences as well as individual situations. As a young boy at Amra Padatik said:

"Once there was a meeting like this and they asked us what we wanted to do and we said that we think that studying is a waste of time and we do not feel the need to go to school, so we dropped out. We said then that we would like to learn a skill—anything that would help us get a good job and earn good money in future, save money, and take care of our families. But so far we have not got to know of anything."

Another boy in the same discussion said he wanted to study, get a good job, and live a middle class life. However, he was told that he was weak in his studies, having failed class 9, and was unable to study further. But he feels responsible for bringing money into the home and taking care of his sister and mother. In communities where Thoughtshop Foundation works, boys are more interested in earning money by engaging in small

business.

Boys also have responsibility for earning for and supporting their family. In economically disadvantaged families, there is immense pressure on boys to start earning by the age of 15 or 16, based on discussions at MIAS, Vikalp, and Amra Padatik. For girls, continuing their education is the only opportunity they have to realize their aspirations. This was extremely telling during the focus group discussion with the girls of the Guftugu Manch collective; many of them were unable to articulate any aspiration, and among those who did, many chose to limit it to what they knew was the only choice—becoming an Arabic teacher in the local *madrassa*. This could be associated with the limited number of choices available to them and the reality of their context, which made alternate imaginations difficult. It was also inferred from discussions with girls that, if they did not study, they would have to marry. Thus, the aspirations of young persons appeared to be limited not just by restrictions and family pressure but also in their own imagination of what they could actually dream of achieving, particularly bereft of anyone to discuss options with. Often, collective spaces are seen by organizations to fill this gap. The extent to which organizations enable young persons to realize their aspirations depends on the strategies they adopt and the resources available.

d. Structural limits in pursuit of aspirations

Economic constraints

One of the significant reasons for young persons being unable to access education is economic constraints. Despite being supportive of their children's desire to pursue education, several families are unable to support it beyond a certain point. In a Vikalp discussion, one mother recalled that her daughter had dropped out due to her inability to cover the expenses but a teacher offered to pay for a year so the daughter could resume her studies. VOICE 4 Girls members said that large numbers of students drop out after class 10, when the free education ends.

Lack of family and community support

There was a great difference between young persons' aspirations and family members' perceptions of them in the discussions. Even when girls can talk about their aspirations with their parents, support to achieve them is not always forthcoming. As a

young girl in a Vikalp camp explained:

"My parents think that girls cannot do anything because we are girls. For example, brothers are sent to private school, whereas we sisters do not go to school and stay at home and help mother. It is a belief in many families auestioning the investment on girls because in the end they will have to get married. I feel sad when these things happen. Why is it that brothers can study and not sisters? Why is it that boys go out and play and not us?"

Parents are supportive of conventional professions but are unlikely to support alternative ambitions and approach young persons' aspirations in terms of what they think is appropriate for girls and boys separately. This chasm emerged in conversations with girls in a school where VOICE 4 Girls works. While some of the girls dream of becoming singers or dancers, they know that these professions are better off as hobbies and that their parents prefer that they become doctors and engineers. In the Vikalp camps, girls dreamed of being models and film actors, while their families wanted them to take up conventional jobs.

The issue of higher education for girls is intrinsically related to the age at marriage. In several organizations, girls are unable to pursue higher education because they have to marry. In discussions with MIAS in Ajmer, Rajasthan, and in conversations with older women, the mothers were in support of educating their daughters, but they had to resist pressure from the family and community against it. As one woman said, "No matter what, I will support my daughter to pursue education."

After puberty, girls are considered grown up, and families fear that, in school, they will interact closely with boys and be considered "bad girls"; hence, school access is restricted due to the potential for interaction. Girls are divided between the anticipation of meeting and speaking with boys in schools and tuition classes and the fear of being labeled "bad" or "immoral" if caught speaking with boys.

Access and infrastructure related to schools

Being located far away from schools and lack of access (not just in terms of distance) to them appear to be major obstacles in pursuing education at higher levels. In the study's discussions, girls said that parents are supportive of education when the school is in the village or they can travel in a group of girls. Beyond the secondary level, parents are often reluctant to send their daughters out; this is especially true in rural areas, where colleges are located at a distance and issues of safety are paramount. Often there are no transport facilities available, making it harder for girls and women to access higher education, adding to parents' reluctance to send them to college. In a discussion in Udaipur, Rajasthan, one older woman said that girls need to study only up to class 8, which is the uppermost class taught in most village schools. But there are also parents who support higher education for their daughters, though they only permit them to pursue a bachelor's or master's degree through distance education in a private college they attend only for exams. Despite this access, the quality and value of the college education is debatable.

The lack of female teachers is also an obstacle to access. For instance, in Sakariya village in Ajmer, there is just one woman teacher in the government school because of poor access and infrastructure; the school is far away from the village, and transport is inadequate. The teacher travels by scooter, but due to the bad state of the road has had two accidents. Schools that are located on a main road have more women teachers because of the availability of direct transport. Another issue is the lack of separate toilets for women and girls in most schools.

Safety-related concerns

In several discussions with young girls and their parents, a concern for the safety of children in public spaces was expressed. In the Kislay discussions, for instance, girls explained they often go to school or tuition class in a group. Women sex workers said in a focus group discussion that young girls' safety is a concern for them because their neighborhood is considered a "red-light area," which is why they prefer to send their daughters to boarding school. Young girls said that, although going out alone is restricted, going to school and tuition class is not a problem, and these are spaces for meeting friends.

The issue of safety is complicated by the conservative attitude of communities that conflict with the aspirations of young girls. For instance, the female principal of a government school in Kolkata found this to be a frustrating challenge [Jeevika]:

"I think one of the major issues is that the families of these girls, and the society in general, are too conservative. While they really want their daughters to go to school and get educated, they are hesitant to give them other freedoms. When we

take these girls out for tours, the parents agree to send them only if they will come back that very evening; a night stay is not allowed by them, even when the teachers are accompanying them. They have a problem even if I especially rent a bus for our school girls alone and I am personally accompanying them. It really bothers me that I can never open them up to new ideas and ways of thinking."

e. Education after marriage

Although this larger section mostly centers on the experiences of girls prior to marriage, girls across organizations in several states said that once married, the chance of continuing their education is slim and that it typically depends on the willingness and support of their husbands and in-laws. These women have the greater difficulties of having to manage household work and take care of their children while they continue their education. In states like Uttar Pradesh, girls who are married but live with their parents are typically able to continue their education until their gauna, at which time they move in with their husbands.

Organizations realize the challenge of reaching out to married girls and try to include them in their activities. Vikalp had some young married girls participating in their sixweek training camp. In West Bengal, however, some schools are unwilling to enroll married girls; even when they do, school officials are fearful that the married girls will "spoil the minds" of the unmarried girls by talking to them about sex (which, according to the officials, would encourage the unmarried girls to have sex).

Resistance to enrolling young married girls is not uniform. In a school in Lucknow, the principal and teachers are not only supportive of married girls studying there but also encourage them to be more assertive and confident. According to one of the teachers, education is helping girls make their lives better:

"One girl, after having a child, has now started studying because her husband's business was not going well. So she wanted to secure her son's future and is now looking to [at] completing graduation. Girls realize later that, unless they study, they won't be able to make their lives better."

From the above discussion, we can see how the transformative potential of education is understood and tapped by organizations in multiple ways. Distilled from the discussion, the progress markers in the outcome category Education are listed in the following box, with a set each for organizations and collectives:

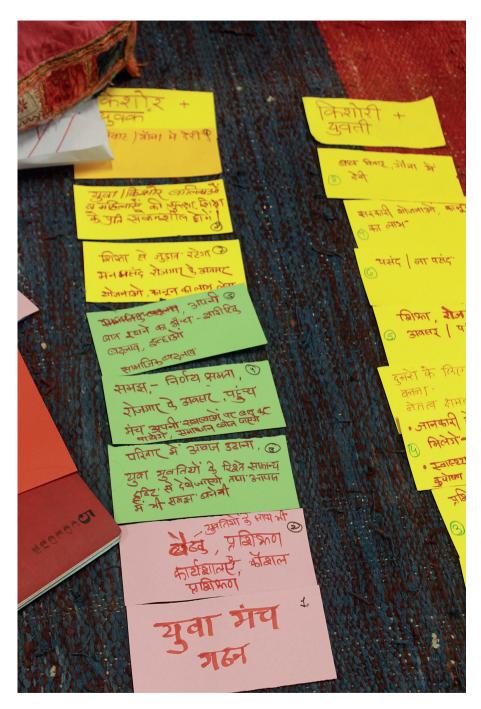
Progress markers: Education	
Organizations	Collectives
Actively work on barriers to young girls' and women's education (formal and nonformal opportunities).	Enable young persons and women to reflect on and confidently articulate their aspirations.
Create support mechanisms to build enabling learning spaces.	Build leadership skills among young persons and women.
3. Understand education as a transformative tool.4. Enable young people and women to negotiate with family and community members around opportunities and aspirations.	 3. Enable young persons and women (married and unmarried) to negotiate with family and community members around opportunities and aspirations. 4. Facilitate support mechanisms for young persons' and women's access to learning
5. Facilitate opportunities that are available for girls and women after marriage.6. Create spaces for reflection and critical thinking, both within the organization as well as in the collectives.	spaces. 5. Support youth and women to pursue aspirations of their choice.



Young girls of Vanangana participating in sports



Young girls in the community with FAT members



Progress markers developed by the staff members at MJAS in their work with young persons

Outcome category 6: Livelihood

While a livelihood is typically essential for survival, it also offers the potential for entry into a world of opportunities for autonomous expression and control over one's life. Young persons and persons in situations of marginality experience this as a "need." The organizations in this study translate that need in various ways in their activities, which this outcome category captures. The discussion in this section also covers access to various livelihood options and how they impact on individuals' negotiation capacities, including the possibility of moving beyond early or forced marriage. The premise here is that it is imperative to understand labor and livelihoods to understand women's lives and the ways in which the intersections of gender, collective action, and labor play out.

In this study, the issue of livelihood and labor was three-fold: (i) the use of collectives as a space for skill-based training; (ii) the violation of rights in the workplace; and (iii) a critical understanding of organizations' work on women's labor, including unpaid care work and reproductive labor. The discussions established links between the valuation of a woman's work within the home and in marriage with the control of her labor and mobility.

a. Livelihood opportunities provided by the organization

A few organizations work directly on certain aspects of livelihood, such as providing access to livelihood opportunities as well as training to access and sustain these livelihoods. For instance, Jeevika organizes women through savings and credit groups as part of its long-standing work on rural transformation and women's empowerment. Other organizations, such as Shaheen, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, and Sahiyar, help women seek access to employment or entrepreneurship by providing information. Most of the organizations that focus on women's rights and prevention of violence against women have attempted in varied ways to provide information to women for seeking and sustaining a livelihood.

A core focus of most of the organizations has been to enable and support women to access the public domain, and if they choose, work outside the home. The nature of support provided varies, from Awaaz-e-Niswaan offering a personality development course and computer training to women and girls, to FAT enhancing leadership skills of adolescent and young girls through technical training in computers and filmmaking that should enable them to seek employment opportunities. Their activities work to help girls

and women find employment so that they have more opportunities and experiences. Most of the organizations also provide job-related information and assistance in finding a job (training on writing a résumé and interviewing) as well as training for confidence building and negotiating choices with their family.

Some organizations encourage women to take up unconventional career roles. For instance, Thoughtshop Foundation has partnered with Azad Foundation's Sakha Cabs to train women as taxi drivers. Vanangana refutes traditional livelihood roles by providing training on masonry and hand-pump mechanics. Some organizations see value within traditional livelihood choices—MASUM and Shaheen conduct tailoring and embroidery classes, noting that having such a skill contributes to a sense of self-worth and provides women with a "legitimate" reason to be sent outside the home. Some organizations are exploring new terrain; Thoughtshop Foundation, for instance, recently ventured into social entrepreneurship with skill-building, computer, art, and dance classes that can be turned into entrepreneurial activities for the collectives.

Organizations also work to spread awareness and assist with access to government schemes and grants as well as speaking out against violations of rights in the workplace. SSK, for instance, works with Dalit and tribal women to help them avail of the benefits of rural employment through schemes under MNREGA and to spread awareness of sexual harassment in the workplace. SSK and Vanangana staff members articulated what it means to be marginalized at several levels, such as for Dalit women, and to access livelihood opportunities.

Organizations support and engage with livelihood needs and opportunities despite their focus on other issues. For instance, although Vikalp works primarily on education access, they provide opportunities to girls who want to acquire unconventional skills that can be translated to livelihood opportunities in their work in the interior villages of Udaipur and Jodhpur, such as the staff member who has trained girls to ride a motorbike. HUMSAFAR offers car-driving training for women who come to them with experiences of violence (with cars being expensive, the point is to prepare them for driving jobs). An older woman in a discussion echoed that she had joined HUMSAFAR to learn to be a driver.

Organizations also help collective members plan for their goals. For instance, the YRCs of Thoughtshop Foundation mentor members and show them avenues to achieve their goals. Many other organizations, such as MASUM, work with microfinance, savings groups, and self-help groups.

b. Synthesizing the understanding and work on women's labor

While assisting with accessing livelihoods directly or indirectly, many organizations challenge the gendered division of labor. Shaheen staff articulated the importance of the value of unpaid care work by women and girls, which is devalued within marriage; the issue is discussed in their training programs. The volunteers from Kislay, which works directly on labor issues, were vociferous in their recognition of the unequal division of women's labor within the household and in the workplace. Staff members with Vikalp, Vanangana, and MIAS noted the role and exchange of women's labor in marriage and such practices as atta-satta and reflected on the reproductive labor of women. All of them reflected on the ways in which the labor of young women is brought under greater control of the family due to early marriage.

The integration of perspectives on women's labor and relating it to the work of an organization is not easy. Jeevika, for instance, is at a crossroads in integrating its work with women and microfinance with its work on gender and empowerment. The senior officers are thinking of reviewing their perspectives around both kinds of work conventional and unconventional-integrating economic empowerment and notions of autonomy and independence. This transition is of critical importance because Jeevika began as an organization centered on economic empowerment through incomegeneration training for women. In the early 1990s, when adding the microcredit model, they worked to extend notions of economic empowerment into discussions on autonomy and resistance. In 2007, a microfinance agency restructured the Jeevika program, leading to the formation of Swayamsampurna in 2008. Volunteers from the microcredit groups formed the Alor Disha collective in 2002 to address issues related to violence against women, with the Alor Barta collective formed in 2011 to address issues of early and child marriage.

Amra Padatik has a unique position in its perspective on women's labor. Its emphasis is to strengthen the sex workers' movement and advocate for recognition of sex work as work. It also works to instill in its sex worker members a sense of self-respect and dignity and to reduce the discrimination their children might experience in school. They additionally help the children of members pursue employment opportunities and aspirations. Some Amra Padatik members are also members of Komal Gandhar, which seeks to promote dance as a profession and is open to anyone.

Organizations such as VOICE 4 Girls, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, and others work with young

girls to envision alternative livelihood opportunities that they might never consider. For instance, during their camp program, VOICE 4 Girls helps participants choose backup plans and exposes them through their curriculum to unconventional role models, such as Sabyasachi, a fashion designer, and Mary Kom, a boxer.

c. Pursuing and negotiating livelihood-related aspirations

Along with the need to earn money, the desire to be independent strongly relates to young persons' aspirations for a livelihood. It also motivates them to pursue a career of their choice and to do something meaningful in their life. Family expectations and societal norms constrain these desires, especially for young girls.

Within this context, certain forms of work are considered respectable. In an Awaaz-e-Niswaan focus group discussion, women spoke of teaching as a safe job preferred by parents and in-laws. Some women also said that schools are considered safe for women because there is little possibility for interaction with strangers. However, girls must heavily negotiate the pursuit of their aspirations, whether relating to education or livelihood. Many of the study's discussions revealed that girls have unconventional aspirations, such as becoming a model, air hostess, photographer, or even a sports teacher, which are considered either risky or far too modern or simply not feminine enough by their families as well as society.

The discussion with young girls associated with Amra Padatik indicated that they are more interested in becoming teachers or doctors than in modeling or working in films. However, one girl said that her mother wants her to complete her education first and then she can pursue modeling if she wants to. Their mothers seemed more supportive of their children's education and aspirations than mothers in other discussions, primarily to avoid the stigma of being a sex worker's child. In other organizations, such as Shaheen and MASUM, girls and women rejected certain professions not associated with being "good girls." As one girl in the MASUM discussion explained, "I don't want to be an actress. Look at the kind of clothes they wear. They don't even think how it will affect the children and old men who watch them on TV."

Availability of opportunities in urban and rural areas impacts individuals' aspirations as well as their powers of negotiation. Young people can seek a variety of livelihood options, including nontraditional ones, in cities or towns. In a city like Lucknow, for instance, girls can study through college and then work as sales clerks or call-center employees because these options are more accessible. Several married girls whose husbands are supportive were either studying or working, such as the young woman with a panchayat job that paid her INR 10,000.

To pursue their aspirations, young people in rural areas must move out of their villages. For girls, families (or communities) restrict their mobility and ability to continue their education. For boys, financial constraints in the family may restrict their aspirations, even forcing them to drop out of school to work.

Some organizations help young persons or women find jobs through referrals or placements. FAT, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, HUMSAFAR, and Sahiyar use a model in which volunteers from their programs are recruited as staff members. Staff at HUMSAFAR and Jeevika, however, raised the concern that the idea of volunteering is increasingly being replaced with professional demands for monetary compensation. They attributed this shift to the appearance of several NGOs with the resources to pay their volunteers in order to retain them for longer periods of time. They also acknowledged that such attitudes are dependent on the volunteers' aspirations; after a certain period of involvement with an organization, many volunteers feel the need to support themselves by earning a living, but they also want a stronger role in the organization.

d. Collectivizing for safety in the workplace

Organization staff working in the livelihood space expressed the need for systems that ensure a workspace is safe and free of violence. Organizations need to work with employers as well as employees to ensure that a committee for prevention of sexual harassment is put in place. Kislay staff noted that dialogue with employers through its union members had been the most effective tool for addressing these needs. Kislay and Vanangana discovered, through their initial experiences, the need to collectivize at the workplace to ensure that the rights of workers are safeguarded and to create a support network. Shaheen is part of a Deccan-level²⁰ collective of domestic workers.

²⁰ A geographical reference to the region that covers south-central India.

Distilled from the preceding discussion, the progress markers in the outcome category Livelihood are listed in the following box, with a set each for organizations and collectives:

Progress markers: Livelihood	
Organizations	Collectives
 Enable access to livelihood opportunities for young persons. Facilitate discussions with members of the community on livelihood access for women and girls. Assist women in seeking redress for violations of rights in the workplace using current systems. Engage with issues around women's labor in an intersectional manner. Ensure access to opportunities of livelihood for women. Build capacities and systems to address 	 Identify and make choices about aspirations and opportunities related to livelihood. Enable access to schemes, services, rights, and legal entitlements for young persons. Enable redress of violation of rights in the workplace. Build an understanding on labor and gender. Negotiate with family members on issues around the divisions of labor. Support negotiations with family and
issues of violations of rights in the workplace.	community members on livelihood opportunities, especially after marriage.



A group discussion among young girls at Sahiyar

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The AJWS-TISS Early and Child Marriage Initiative was undertaken as a participatory exercise to monitor change in organizational work addressing early and child marriage in their communities. The awareness of the complexity of the nature of change in organizational work with communities, and recognizing the limitation of existing discourses on early and child marriage dominated by age, led to the need for an alternative framework that is participatory and that aims to understand and draw parameters to measure change in the work that organizations undertake, located within structural and contextual factors. Outcome mapping as a methodology was adopted to understand and articulate this change and crystallize the framework. This framework was intended to comprise outcome categories that are meaningful yet challenging and that would capture incremental change brought about by organizations in their work. The six outcome categories that emerged were: Collectivization; Gender and Sexuality; Negotiations around Marriage; Law, Policy, and Advocacy; Education; and Livelihood.

At the outset, the study mapped the dimensions of work of the 16 organizations across eight states and the multiple ways in which they connect with women and young persons to bring about change in their lives. All organizations were engaged in such work several years prior to participating in this study. Hence, the work on early and child marriage fit into existing structures, and in addressing early and child marriage, they expect to move beyond just delaying age at marriage. Engagement with preventing violence against women, understanding the local structures of power and control that operate within their diverse contexts, rising to the challenge of young persons' needs and aspirations, and participating in legal action and working with networks and social movements led to the sensitive appraisal of structures and practices. For example, organizations observed across states that there was a shift in the perceptions of parents and members of communities regarding young women's sexuality: earlier restraints were rooted in fear of young girls' honor being violated, but the rationale has now shifted to fear of young women expressing and exercising their own choices.

This does not mean that organizations did not use the notion of age strategically to negotiate and push the boundaries of what is possible in their specific contexts. As illustrated in the instances when organizations are confronted with the pressure of the inevitability of heteronormative marriage, even members within the organizations attempt to delay their own marriage as a means to circumvent this pressure and use the

opportunity to discuss the matter within the organization. In such discussions, members acknowledged the inevitability of marriage but were often not able to discuss alternative options to marriage.

As organizations turned their gaze inward, they began discussions on the gaps in their own understanding, for instance, on issues of gender and sexuality and the need for further opportunity to build perspective and to translate this into strategies to engage with communities. Even as they did this, they recognized their own contributions toward strategies to bring change in the lives of women and girls, thereby highlighting their own capacities for self-assessment. This was indicated in the case in which the organizational space was strategically conceived as a space for increasing mobility and a space for freedom, as experienced by girls who came to the FAT office for training or the women in MASUM who found freedom in the office space.

In the process of recognizing complex change, within the methodology of outcome mapping around early and child marriage, the focus settled at two levels: at that of the organizations and of the collectives that they worked with.

Mapping the organizations' work highlighted certain domains that were cross-cutting and that emerged as outcome categories. When the measures of change were conceptualized through the outcome mapping framework, the limits of the existing modes of measurement were self-evident, such as being quantitative and external to the context of their work. Additionally, it was critical to measure relationships of trust and confidence built within collectives of girls and women rather than just tracking the increasing number of groups formed. The sense of autonomy that the organizations experienced in being able to conceptualize, reimagine, and subsequently measure change was empowering. For instance, a young volunteer in an organization in Rajasthan, although disappointed that he could not enroll a dozen girls in a local village school, realized that the effort that went into reaching out to the girls, talking with them, and negotiating with their families about their re-enrolment was a definite change that would eventually reap rewards.

The framework that contained the outcome categories thus simultaneously encompassed the range of all possible work that organizations did while being focused on early and child marriage. Within each outcome category are progress markers mapping change. Change in organizational work was not restricted to a positive value. Rather, change qualified the measure; the measure did not limit the understanding of change. For instance, all organizations stressed the need and relevance of a safe space for their

collectives. However, the issue of safety was defined based on such factors as the context and need. Women from MASUM said their space had emerged as one where all their woes and concerns, especially those stemming from their lives within families, could be discussed and their problems solved. For young girls and women of Vikalp and MJAS, the collectives and their meetings were spaces of freedom where they could wear clothes of their choice brought secretly from home or sing and dance as they pleased. Thus, several organizations had distinct definitions of safety. This is the challenge of envisaging change from below, and it will mandate the adaptation of frameworks to look at and capture change in multiple contexts. It is then imperative to capture such nuances for change to be seen as responsive to structures of power and control.

Distilled from the experience of a subset of organizations, this framework will be adopted by nearly 30 organizations who engage with similar questions of early and child marriage in the communities where they work. Each will use this framework to capture the complex nature of change by assessing their work across selected outcome categories. Within each category, organizations define the boundaries of their category and specify their progress markers. Over the next couple of years, these organizations will track changes using the progress markers within each chosen outcome category.

In this manner, self-monitoring of one's own work opens up new possibilities in assessing change in young girls' and women's lives that is not circumscribed by impactbound evidence and results. This framework therefore provides an alternative method to conceptualize and capture structural change that reflects in processes and shifts in women' and girls' lives. We think this methodology thus contributes to the discourses and practices on monitoring and evaluation by expanding the scope of encapsulating complexity.

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Glossary

- Ati-Dalit (Hindi): Subcaste-based communities further marginalized within the community of Dalits.
- **Atta-satta** (Hindi): Literally, "give and take," this is a local practice of bride exchange followed in some districts in Rajasthan and involves the simultaneous "exchange" marriage of brother and sister pairs from two households. The brides or daughters are seen as being exchanged between the two households.
- **Bidai** (Hindi): Hindu wedding ritual where the bride bids farewell to her natal family after the wedding.
- **Caste panchayat**: A caste-specific council of elders or made up of individuals belonging to caste communities in India. These groups are assumed not to be part of the State but can also be quasi-State institutions deriving impunity from the State.
- **Chhapri** (*Hindi*): Derogatory term used colloquially to denote worthlessness.
- **Faltu** (*Hindi*): Derogatory term used by people to denote worthlessness.
- Gauna (Hindi): A North Indian custom that is linked to a special ceremony to begin the consummation of marriage, when a girl moves to live with her husband. Prior to this ceremonial event, the engaged and/or married girl stays at her natal home.
- Kanyadan (Hindi): Literally, "donation of the girl." A ritual within Hindu weddings, in which the father is supposed to "give his daughter away" to the husband.
- **Khap panchayat** (Hindi): The caste council of elders spread over villages, mainly in north-west India, which many times emerges as a quasi-judicial body to uphold patriarchal customs and traditions within a community. (Also see glossary entry for **Panchayat**.)
- Madrassa (Urdu; noun): An Islamic religious school or college for the study of not just Islamic texts but also Arabic and Persian; Unani medicine; and other subjects such as math, social sciences, and so on. In the country, Madrassa boards exist for every state.

Mela (Hindi): A fair or carnival.

- **Naata** (Hindi): Naata is a practice in parts of Rajasthan wherein a man can pay a large sum of money to the parents of a girl who is divorced or separated from her husband. This is a socially sanctioned practice but not considered on par with remarriage. Instead of saying that two people have remarried, it is referred to as "isko naate mein laave hain" (Hindi; "We have 'brought her' through naata").
- Panchayat: An elected council of members at the village level in India as an organ of rural local self-government.
- Salwar (Hindi): A pair of light, loose, pleated trousers, usually tapering to a tight fit around the ankles; worn typically with a khameez (the two together are referred to as salwar-khameez).
- Sehariya (Urdu): Name of a particular tribal community. They are also categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.
- Sheikh marriages: Marriages in which families of young girls in Hyderabad, especially those coming from economically marginalized sections, marry them to men from West Asian countries, who pay significant sums of money to the parents as a bride price. Most of these men are much older.
- Valmiki: A community that is assumed to occupy the "lowest position within the caste system" because of their "traditional," caste-based occupations of sweeping, manual scavenging, etc.

Annexure I: Profiles of Organizations in the Study

Amra Padatik

Amra Padatik is a community-based organization of the Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) in West Bengal. It was founded in 2006 by the children of sex workers, with the support of DMSC. Amra Padatik was formed to work against the stigma and discrimination that children of sex workers experience. The strong rationale behind the formation of Amra Padatik was to fight against the amendments of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 2006, which criminalized children who lived with their mothers and were dependent on their income as sex workers. Amra Padatik now works as a platform for children of sex workers for their education as well as their livelihood. The organization also extensively works with the sex worker community to spread awareness against child marriage through meetings, discussions, street plays, and cultural activities.

Amra Padatik has enabled its members to assert their identity as sex workers' children and helped them to fight for their mothers' dignity in various forums, including through cultural and sports activities. The organization established a residential school for the boys of the community, and a sports academy has also been set up. They also play an active role in DMSC's Self-Regulatory Board to prevent trafficking.

Awaaz-e-Niswaan

Awaaz-e-Niswaan is a community-based organization located in Mumbai that began its work three decades ago, in 1985. The organization works for the rights of women who experience violence and focuses on the rights of Muslim women and young girls. The work of the organization grew from individual cases of supporting women who were facing violence in their everyday lives to supporting women who experienced communal violence during the Mumbai riots in 1992-1993, the Gujarat carnage of 2002, and the 2013 Muzaffarnagar communal violence (in Uttar Pradesh).

Awaaz-e-Niswaan is known for their innovative approach of mobilizing women and girls, for example by setting up a library called Rehnuma center, at Mumbra in Thane district, in response to the demands of young girls of the community who would visit the organization's counselling center. Awaaz-e-Niswaan also works with the local communities and tries to reach out to larger groups and networks to create and strengthen these groups with secular, feminist, and human rights perspectives. The main aim is to have a better understanding of the issues faced by them and negotiate the challenges they encounter at the community level. The organization is well versed—and provides training and support—in constitutional law and continuously deals with issues of gender discrimination within the Muslim personal laws. Awaaz-e-Niswaan supports and shows solidarity in the local as well as national women's movement struggles. Awaaze-Niswaan created the Muslim Women's Rights Network as an advocacy platform. They also mentor, collaborate with, and support other organizations within the network.

Bhumika Women's Collective (Bhumika)

Bhumika initially began as a feminist magazine in 1995; it started first as a quarterly magazine and then became a bimonthly magazine. Today, it is published as a monthly magazine.

In 2006, Bhumika began a helpline for women in distress, offering counseling and connecting women to support services. It set up Support Centres for Women in the women's police stations in Hyderabad and Karimnagar. Through these interventions, Bhumika has reached out to more than 55,000 women and girls across the state and provided them with counseling services and useful information. They also educate them on their rights and provisions for protection in certain laws, such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, and provide support systems and free legal aid.

Support Centres for Women tries to sensitize men and family members of women and to negotiate to end violence and empower women by counseling them to demand their rights. Bhumika advocates with the government for proper implementation of laws and regulations and influencing policy changes and budgetary allocations for the protection of women under the Domestic Violence Act, 2005. They have built a civil society alliance at the state level.

Over the past three decades, Bhumika has also come to be viewed as a gender training and resource organization. They undertake several gender sensitization and training workshops for various stakeholders, including the judiciary and the police. Bhumika also sensitizes and trains journalists and youth from local colleges each year.

Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT)

FAT came together in 2007 and was registered in 2008 in New Delhi. It began as a reaction to what the founder had seen and experienced in her work as the technical support person at a women's rights organization. FAT initially worked with women to provide training on technical skills where they discussed the gendered aspects of technology.

After initial research and knowledge building through networking, in 2011, FAT identified the critical gaps that result in the absence of women's voices in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and prepared its strategic plan. Thus emerged an innovative strategy for working with adolescent girls from underprivileged backgrounds. The aim is to promote the use of technology as a tool for emancipation as well as to promote higher education in the STEM fields. Since 2012, FAT has mostly worked with adolescent girls while also doing advocacy to break the stereotypes that restrict women's participation in STEM. The work with adolescent and young girls is being undertaken through their tech centers, which are set up in the communities they work in. This space is provided for girls to learn and create and is envisaged as a shared space for the girls where they can support and build peer networks, friendships, and solidarities.

Recently FAT set up Jugaad Labs, which engages girls and young women with innovative ways of working around STEM fields. FAT has an extremely interesting and well-structured model to ensure building leadership within the adolescent groups they work with, thereby ensuring sustainability in the organization.

HUMSAFAR Support Centre for Women (HUMSAFAR)

In 2003, HUMSAFAR started as a crisis support center for women who had faced or were facing violence. It was formally registered in 2008 in Lucknow. HUMSAFAR was formed to ensure a holistic feminist response to women's human rights violation in Uttar Pradesh. HUMSAFAR believes in creating an enabling environment in society wherein a woman in crisis gets support in her struggle for justice, rehabilitation, and reintegration. In order to achieve this, HUMSAFAR had initially worked through their crisis centers and then expanded to create awareness among various groups they worked with. It was with this aim to create awareness that HUMSAFAR embarked on their extensive work with young people in colleges. Based on the emerging need, they also branched into training and sensitizing the local government department officials on various laws and legislation related to women. To achieve their objective of violence prevention, justice, and rehabilitation of women facing violence, HUMSAFAR provides various kinds of support, including paralegal, legal, medical, social mediation, counseling, rescue, shelter, and rehabilitation, in addition to livelihood training. HUMSAFAR helps women access justice through a casework unit, a public education program in educational institutions and urban bastis (slums), and advocacy and networking for better implementation of laws for women. HUMSAFAR actively participates in the campaign for the right to choice within relationships among various networks and coalitions. It is also part of the women's rights network, not just at the state level but also at the national and international levels.

Jeevika Development Society (Jeevika)

Jeevika was registered as an organization in 1994. However, Jeevika began its work in 1989 through its income-generation program for women. It came to be established as an organization working to further the rights of underprivileged women and girls by improving their access to livelihoods and financial resources as well as challenging patriarchal norms. Jeevika works with nearly 10,000 women and girls living in 54 villages spread across three blocks in the South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal. These villages lie on either side of the Diamond Harbour Road and the Bakhrahat Road, the two principal roads that link South 24 Parganas to the city of Kolkata. There is a significant representation of marginalized and scheduled caste communities in the organization.

From its inception, one of the goals of Jeevika has been to build transparent, selfsustaining, and democratic institutions and to transfer their ownership to rural women. Jeevika believes that to achieve women's and girls' empowerment, it is necessary to amalgamate the economic and social rights of women and girls. In 2002, Jeevika mobilized, established, supported, and nurtured Alor Disha, which is their collective of women volunteers that take up preventive work around violence against women and provide support to survivors of violence. In 2011-2012, Jeevika formed Alor Barta, which is a collective of women volunteers working to prevent early marriage of girls and campaigning among schools to discuss issues of sexuality while promoting their education. In 2008, Jeevika registered their rural credit program, leading to the establishment of Swayamsampurna, an independent financial federation. Jeevika also works on other income-generation programs, such as the strengthening of the traditional craft base and the system of rice intensification.

Kislay

Founded in 1992, Kislay works to promote the rights of urban poor communities in slum areas of New Delhi. The organization's programs focus on the rights to housing, food, and education and the regulation of employment and social security for domestic workers. The organization is better known by the name of Delhi Shramik Sangathan, which began within Kislay in 1994. It has taken the form of a federation of five tradebased unions. The organization began its work within seven slums in the resettled colonies of Vikaspuri and has now expanded to work across 92 slums in Delhi. These slums predominantly comprise migrant workers, especially from the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan.

The organization, until 2008, worked on a variety of community issues, based on the needs arising from the community. Prior to 2008, the focus was on creating an inclusive environment for education that included aspects of enrolment, creating infrastructure for and access to basic schooling in the community, and conducting sexuality education for young adults. With respect to livelihood, the focus was on ensuring economic security through self-help groups promoting savings, better wages, employee negotiations, and grievance redress. Other issues addressed over the years include sanitation, basic infrastructure, and working with and sensitizing service providers. Kislay also works on issues of caste and religious intolerance. With the beginning of active slum demolitions in Delhi from 2008, Kislay began to focus on issues of the right to housing and living standards of the communities. The organization's main strategy is focused on community mobilization and awareness building.

Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM)

Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal, popularly known as MASUM, was established in 1987. It is a community-based organization working primarily with rural women in the perennially drought-prone areas of Pune and Ahmednagar districts of Maharashtra. The organization in the early years of its work addressed women's health concerns and focused on training community health volunteers. It was from this work that a number of issues related to women's rights, such as violence against women and women's livelihood concerns, emerged.

MASUM now focuses on issues related to women's access to health, low-interest credit, and on issues of violence against women. Over the years, the organization began working with youth and children on issues of gender and caste discrimination. Political participation of women, both as elected representatives and as empowered citizens, and strengthening children's rights through village-based children's councils (*Bal Panchayats*) are other arenas where MASUM is progressively making inroads. In the last few years, MASUM has been undertaking extensive work on early, child, and forced marriages.

MASUM is now recognized as a credible training institute on gender, health and the rights frameworks, violence against women, and Dalit and minority rights. MASUM thus focuses extensively on training and building capacities of organizations on economic, social, and cultural rights at both the state and national levels. MASUM is also extensively involved with campaigns and networks that strengthen women's rights from the local to the international levels.

Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS)

Based in Aimer, Rajasthan, MIAS started as a collective of women that came into being as an organization in 1995, working on issues of violence against women. MJAS aims to work directly with rural communities around the concerns of young women and girls to address issues around child marriages. It was formally registered as an organization in 2000 to ensure gender justice to women in both urban and rural areas. Prior to its registration, MIAS worked for several years (1995-2000) to collectivize women and understand their needs through various research initiatives. MJAS now works against normative traditions as well as inhuman practices, such as naata, "witch" hunting, and bigamy, and for women's right to property. MJAS enables access to gender justice within livelihoods by working with local and legal bodies. Another major area of focus is on women elected as representatives in Panchayati Raj institutions. They have conceptualized and implemented several programs in the past for building the capacity of elected women in the panchayats. Various programs have been implemented by documenting their experiences, which have helped in influencing state policies for ensuring protection of women. In collaboration with village committees, MJAS also works on children's right to survival, protection, participation, and overall development. It has recently started working on the issue of early and child marriage and organizing young persons' collectives to ensure that they are able to make their own choices regarding their aspirations, education, work, and marriage.

Sahiyar (Stree Sangthan)

Sahiyar began its work in 1984 through the initiative of a group of students at MS University, Vadodara, Gujarat. As a women's rights organization, Sahiyar's broad objective is to build awareness on injustice against women and campaign for the rights of all marginalized groups. The organization addresses the issues of inequality, oppression, and violence faced by women within the patriarchal structures of family, society, the State, and market. Issues such as domestic violence; sexual violence; legal inequalities; and lack of opportunities for education, awareness, and development have been part of the organization's fight against inequality. The organization also creates awareness among communities about the effects of environmental deterioration on women.

Sahiyar has a general awareness program that addresses issues of women who are affected by communal violence within the communally sensitive areas of Vadodara. They use various modes of building awareness through plays, songs, public demonstrations, research, publication, and documentation. In addition, they conduct training programs and workshops with professionals, government officials, and students. Counseling in cases of violence and providing legal support is a major part of their sustained work with women. In building leadership of women on issues of peace and justice, Sahiyar mobilizes women in the low-income areas of Vadodara, where they also work with youth and adolescents. In recent years, they have revived a center for youth, Manthan, which is a space for learning technical skills, building leadership among youth, and creating a community space for young women and men. Sahiyar has also begun work with children in primary-level government schools, especially those from Dalit and minority communities, on issues of gender and sexuality. Sahiyar's strength lies in the fact that it is also connected with various networks across the state and country and takes up several campaign-based activities on women's rights.

Sahajani Shiksha Kendra (SSK)

SSK came into being as an organization since 2002 with the help of Nirantar, Delhi, and is based in Lalitpur, Uttar Pradesh. Lalitpur is one of the 200 most impoverished districts of India and is fraught with economic and social inequalities. It is here that SSK has been working for the past 14 years with adolescent girls and women on issues of literacy, livelihood, and empowerment.

That SSK is a community based organization is reflected in the fact that the majority of

its staff members are not just women from the local communities but also belong to the marginalized groups of Dalits and Adivasis (mostly Sehariyas) the organization works with. SSK's work began with focusing on education and creation of literacy centers; it was from this work on education that their other need-based interventions took root. Some of the areas in which concerted work began were on issues of violence against women, livelihood, and intervening and providing support in cases of violations of rights at the work place (including extensive work on sexual harassment at the work place). Over the years, SSK has formed samitis (women's groups) of women who are or have been educated in their literacy centers. One of the major highlights in SSK's work is their successful residential schools for adolescent girls, which ran between 2008 and 2011. These schools served as a space for girls not just to receive quality education but also to become aware of other equally important issues and themes, such as issues concerning their bodies, sexuality, rights, and entitlements.

Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association (Shaheen)

Located in the old city Sultanshahi area of Hyderabad, an area that frequently experiences communal conflicts, Shaheen came to be formally registered as an organization in 2002 and works primarily in 20 bastis (slums), specifically with Muslim women, Dalit women, and women from Other Backward Classes.

Shaheen's work is spread across a range of diverse issues. The main area of their work is on gender and sexuality, which spans the themes of: vocational training for young women (tailoring, embroidery, mehendi [creating floral designs using henna paste], flower-making, and basic computer literacy); health (conducting health camps and free health check-ups and conversations around general and sexual health, puberty, and menstruation); and violence against women (providing emotional and physical structures of support such as shelter homes and legal counseling). It is through these spaces of their work that they have created dialogue with the women in various communities. Visits to the bastis are the organization's means of outreach, mobilization, and collectivization. Shaheen also has six learning centers, where they have conversations with women and girls around rights, entitlements, and sexual health. Shaheen also has regular trainings and workshops that focus on gender sensitization as well as on breaking gender norms and stereotypes. Most of these trainings focus on the needs of young girls and women. Shaheen also makes use of cultural activities like qawwali and drama to discuss issues around women's rights. In 2003, they went on to perform a play called *Purdah* in Mysore

and have composed a *qawwali* on the 2012 Delhi gang rape case. From 2012, Shaheen began to work actively on the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, and the varied usages of the Right to Information Act, 2005.

Thoughtshop Foundation

Thoughtshop Foundation was established in 1993. It started working with the mission of creating and increasing access to strategies and resources that would aid social transformation and empower individuals—specifically youth—groups, and communities. Thoughtshop Foundation has two broad streams of work: social communications and youth development. The core areas within social communication have been innovation of effective ways to challenge social inequalities; empowering young persons by making relevant knowledge accessible; finding ways of bringing about an attitudinal shift on sensitive issues; and facilitating change by creating interactive tools (games, pictures, models, films etc.) that aid dialogue especially at the community level. Thoughtshop Foundation believes in the potential of young persons to become agents of social change and works on holistic development under its portfolio of youth development, which has been a sustained theme across their area of work.

Thoughtshop Foundation has engaged with youth resource cells (YRCs) that are situated in urban slums, peri-urban areas, and remote rural locations. Some groups are from predominantly Muslim communities. Engagement with youth over the past few years has given the organization a chance to have a deeper understanding of the diverse realities of youth within the YRC universe. Through an intensive "listening process" of case studies, self-exploration sessions, field visits, focus group discussions, counseling, and support group sessions, they have realized the extent to which young persons' especially girls'—rights are being violated. The YRC model attempts to evolve a sustainable and community-based approach to address gender inequality and reach out to the most vulnerable adolescents in the community, enabling them to grow up as active citizens.

Vanangana

Vanangana was established in 1993 in Bundelkhand in Uttar Pradesh. Its major area of work has been on human rights, violence against women, and administrative and legal work with women from different communities. Vanangana focuses on working against

violence against women; spreading awareness among women about their rights; consent for and within marriage; and on working women in rural communities. Issues of sexuality have been central to their work in the rural communities. Vanangana has reached out to inculcate leadership among women from Dalit, Adivasi, and Muslim communities and created platforms such as Dalit Mahila Samiti, Sangharsheel Mahila Sanghathan, and Guftugu Manch. It has mobilized women toward accessing livelihood options mainly assumed to be for men through technical skill building as hand pump mechanics and masons, campaigned against violence against women as a human rights issue, and mobilized young girls from marginal groups for access to education via Dalit Mahila Samiti, Sangharsheel Mahila Sanghathan, and Guftugu Manch, respectively.

After 2002, Vanangana has focused on issues of communalism and the marginalization of women from Muslim communities. It also focuses on working against the rigid norms of the caste system with the participation of women from Dalit and Ati-Dalit communities in their community kitchen program. Within the organization, women are collectivized to ensure access to safe spaces, enabling them to speak about and claim their rights. Vanangana has strived for greater opportunities for education among girls. It has helped women with adopting livelihoods that are unconventional, seeking to break traditional gender norms.

Vikalp Sansthan (Vikalp)

Vikalp was registered in 2004 by a group of youth with a steadfast commitment to creating a violence-free society that is based on equity, peace, and justice. The organization works in two districts of Rajasthan: Udaipur and Jodhpur. The organization believes in accomplishing projects through the democratic system already in place, instead of investing in new, parallel systems. Since 2004, Vikalp's understanding and involvement in issues related to empowerment, sustainable development, literacy, and gender equality has inspired members to articulate the needs and aspirations of youth to create a new generation of agents of change.

Vikalp has a unique model of working with the entire family as a unit within a village. Vikalp effectively uses a number of campaign strategies to reach out to youth at the village level. It is their very effective model of investing in local volunteers that has aided in their outreach. Over the years, the organization has come to use a variety of extremely innovative methods to mobilize and create awareness among the communities they work in, such as bike rallies, comic-strip making, sport competitions, and *melas*. Vikalp raises

awareness among communities and creates a space for dialogue around girls' and women's rights with different community members—such as parents, panchayats, health and marriage service providers, and the administration—with the help of volunteers, who have been exposed to the realities on the ground. Vikalp strongly believes in the transformative potential of education and has over the years worked on ensuring access to girls' and women's education. This has included not just enrolment of girls in school but also providing bridge classes and ensuring that there is support even to those outside the school system at all levels of education.

VOICE 4 Girls

VOICE 4 Girls was founded in 2011 and registered as a trust in July 2012. VOICE 4 Girls works with marginalized adolescent girls who live in low-income communities across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Uttarakhand and works to enable them to overcome economic, social, and gender inequalities by advocating for themselves and to seek educational opportunities and pull themselves, their families, and communities out of poverty. It helps these girls take charge of their futures by imparting critical knowledge, communication, and life skills through an innovative activity-based camp model.

With this underlying belief, the organization focuses on working with young girls who attend government schools or affordable private schools. VOICE 4 Girls works with partners to gain access to networks of adolescent girls. It focuses on providing access to critical information around basic health, safety, rights, future planning, and selfawareness as well as life skills through the lens of a gender empowerment curriculum. The organization is moving toward developing a sustainable peer mentoring model known as the Sakhi program within these residential schools. An important aspect of this innovation in peer mentoring is the use of activity-based models wherein the camps are led by college students as intern counselors who are just four to five years older than the girls they work with. Hence, though the ultimate beneficiaries of VOICE 4 Girls are the adolescent girls, there is a significant impact on other beneficiaries who are part of this process. Additionally, the teachers, school officials, government officials, and even parents are impacted in the process.

Annexure II: Collectives

Alor Disha: A collective of women volunteers formed by Jeevika in West Bengal. Its members belong to self-help groups and work together on issues of violence against women in the community.

Alor Barta: A collective of women volunteers formed by Jeevika in West Bengal. Its members belong to self-help groups and work together on issues of early and child marriage in the community.

Bal Manch: A community collective of youth facilitators from Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti in Rajasthan.

Dalit Mahila Samiti: Women's collectives formed by Vanangana in Uttar Pradesh whose members primarily consist of Dalit women who address issues related to the violation of the rights of women in their community.

Guftugu Manch: An adolescent girls' collective formed by Vanangana in Uttar Pradesh that offers space for young girls to express themselves, learn about their rights and entitlements, and forge friendships and solidarities.

Komal Gandhar: The cultural wing of Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) in West Bengal that offers a space for the children of sex workers. Its membership is now open to anyone, and members perform at various places.

Larzish Manch: An adolescent boys' collective formed by Vanangana in Uttar Pradesh. The group was unable to sustain activities as its membership heavily declined due to the migration of young boys outside the district for education and employment.

Nigrani Committee: A group associated with HUMSAFAR in Uttar Pradesh that trains women in directly taking action in cases of violence at the community level. Members are trained and familiarized with the required government systems and departments, such as the police.

Sakhis: Sakhis are the trained young adolescent girls who are in grades 8 and 9 and have undergone the various levels of VOICE 4 Girls training camps. For a girl to become a sakhi in the Social Welfare Schools in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, they must have participated in the VOICE 4 Girls Parichay, Disha, and Sakhi camps. Sakhis also serve as

peer mentors and regularly conduct the VOICE 4 Girls sessions for grade 6 students in their schools

Swayamsampurna: An independent women's federation of self-help groups formed by Jeevika in the early 1990s. In 2008, it established itself as functionally independent and registered as a federation.

Sakha Cabs: An initiative of Azad Foundation that works on women's livelihood by providing driving training. They train women taxi drivers in Delhi, Lucknow, Kolkata, and Jaipur.

Self-Regulatory Board: A collective formed by Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) to work for prevention of trafficking of underage girls into sex work, it also addresses issues related to women who are unwilling, duped, or coerced into sex work. The sex workers associated with DMSC are the members of the Board and are vigilant in combating trafficking.

We CAN India: A campaign led by Oxfam GB from 2004–2011, We CAN India was a part of a six-year, six-country initiative to end violence against women.

Youth Resource Cell (YRC): A collective of young people in a community (both rural and urban) functioning under the mentorship of Thoughtshop Foundation in Kolkata. Some of the YRCs have chosen to register as independent community-based organizations. Nobo Disha is one such YRC.

