बाल विवाह मुक्त भारत
CHILD MARRIAGE FREE INDIA
सुरक्षित बचपन, सुरक्षित भारत | SAFE CHILDHOOD, SAFE INDIA

About Our Organization

Journey of **Chaplin Club** started in the year 1987 as a local youth club at Naraharipur village of the then Medinipur district of West Bengal involved in promotion of cultural and sports programmes. The young, enthusiastic members of the club, having a philanthropic mind, endeavored towards development of the area and set to install drinking water and sanitation facilities in the villagers with support from Ramakrishna Mission, Lok Shiksha Parishad along with government departments. The club also developed close relationship with the local Church and addresses some of the local social issues. The area suffering from frequent inundation, the Club members also decided to take initiatives to combat the same with the help of community participation irrespective of class, caste and religion. It was then in 1993 that the Club got registered under West Bengal Societies Registration Act and continued further in their efforts for development of the area and its people. At present, Chaplin Club implementing series of welfare activities in five different districts of West Bengal: Paschim & Purba Medinipur, Jhargram, Purulia and Bankura, all these districts are backward in nature, inhabited mostly by tribal who belong to ultra poor families and subject to problems of recurrent drought and lack of employment opportunities due to lack of rights to natural resources and industrialization leading to migration.

Thematic area of Intervention: Child Right & Protection, Education, Livelihood Development, Women Empowerment and Water-Sanitation.
Chaplin Club is participated and organized Child Marriage Free India Campaign in Paschim Medinipur [West Midnapur] d**istrict of West Bengal, 4th Highest Child Marriage Prevalence District in India [55.7%] and covering over 50 villages under the project.**

The Campaign Activities included:

1. June Action Month: Chaplin Club conducted the action month with the objective of identify and rescue Child laborers and prevented more than 38 child marriages and, 22 FIRs got registered. The campaign was conducted in collaboration with local Panchayats, Labour Department, District Child Protection Unit, Child Welfare Committee and covered by media with an outreach of more than 7500 directly and more than 12000 through online.

2. 16 October 2023 - Child Marriage Free India Campaign Event – The campaign event was conducted in 50 villagers under Paschim Medinipur in collaboration with local Panchayats, Police, DCPU, Child Line with notifications issued by DCPU. The campaign was organized through Rally, Pledge taken, Mass Campaign, Candle light, Tribal song & folk dance, Conch play with an outreach of more than 45000 rural villagers.

Campaign Photos:

Background

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

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

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

Child Marriage Free India Campaign

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

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

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

Know more about the Child Marriage Free India (CMFI) Campaign: https://www.childmarriagefreeindia.org/

THE GOAL

Reduction of Child Marriage to 5.5% by 2030

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

DEMANDS OF THE CAMPAIGN



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



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



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



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

The Way Forward: PICKET Strategy to End Child Marriage

Addressing the issue of child marriage, requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach of different government departments, institutions, statutory bodies, and civil society organisations.

For India as a nation to end child marriage by 2030, the PICKET Strategy as proposed in WHEN CHILDREN HAVE CHILDREN - TIPPING POINT TO END CHILD MARRIAGE (Ribhu, 2023)



Policy for prevention, protection, prosecution: It is important to ensure parity in the enforcement of laws, and special laws must prevail over customary or personal laws.

The effective implementation and enforcement of existing laws and policies that prohibit child marriage along with swift and decisive justice delivery mechanism are most important steps in checking the prevalence of this crime against children. When prevention of crime is incorporated as a policy, it ensures that the state machinery as well as citizens feel responsible and accountable to prevent child marriage.



Investment in infrastructure, incentivisation and institutions: Investing in child protection institutions, education, healthcare, justice delivery, and rehabilitation framework builds layers which work to prevent and protect children from abuse and exploitation apart from providing legal and mental health support for girls in child marriages.

Infrastructure to support girls at imminent risks of marriages, like institutional alternative care and residential educational facilities are urgently needed to stop their marriages, abuse and exploitation, and provide them with resilient alternatives.

Incentives in the form of conditional cash transfers have shown impact in communities to keep girls in schools delaying marriage decisions. Universalization of these to at-risk families has the potential to stop child marriages and trafficking and abuse of girls for both labour and sexual exploitation.



Convergence of departments, governments and stakeholders in the community: All schemes and interventions geared towards the protection, prevention, education, health and awareness of children and adults affected by child marriage need to operate in sync with each other. Child participation and empowerment is at the core of such convergence aimed at child centric community development.



Knowledge which equips all the stakeholders to combat child marriage: Enhancing knowledge empowers children, especially boys, to say no to child marriage. When a young man refuses to marry a minor girl, he breaks the cycle of generations of conditioning. It also gives agency to girls to raise their voice and complain when they are forced for marriage against their will or in violation of law. When children, parents, community members and stakeholders participate in decision making equipped with correct and latest knowledge, it can lead to collective action to prevent child marriage.



Ecosystem where child marriage does not thrive: Central to the PICKET strategy is an ecosystem where child marriage is non-existent. In a society where child marriage is pervasive, multi-pronged intervention at all levels is required. To change the societal perception, behaviour and acceptance towards child marriage, the response at scale requires and ecosystem level retaliation.



Technology for monitoring and deterrence to combat child marriage: Enabling real-time attendance data analysis will help reduce child trafficking, child marriage and drop-out rate in schools. Different states are already using technology for awareness campaigns, supporting and monitoring programme interventions, augmenting education and skills outreach. The use of machine learning and artificial intelligence needs explorations in support of child protection and creating a safe and harm-free ecosystem for children.

Tipping Point to end child marriage

WHEN CHILDREN HAVE CHILDREN - *TIPPING POINT TO END CHILD MARRIAGE* Book authored by Mr Bhuwan Ribhu is an action plan to eliminate child marriage in India by 2030. It looks at the existing data on child marriage and lists 257 districts in India where the issue of child marriage is worst, which means where the occurrence of this evil practice is highest as compared to national numbers.

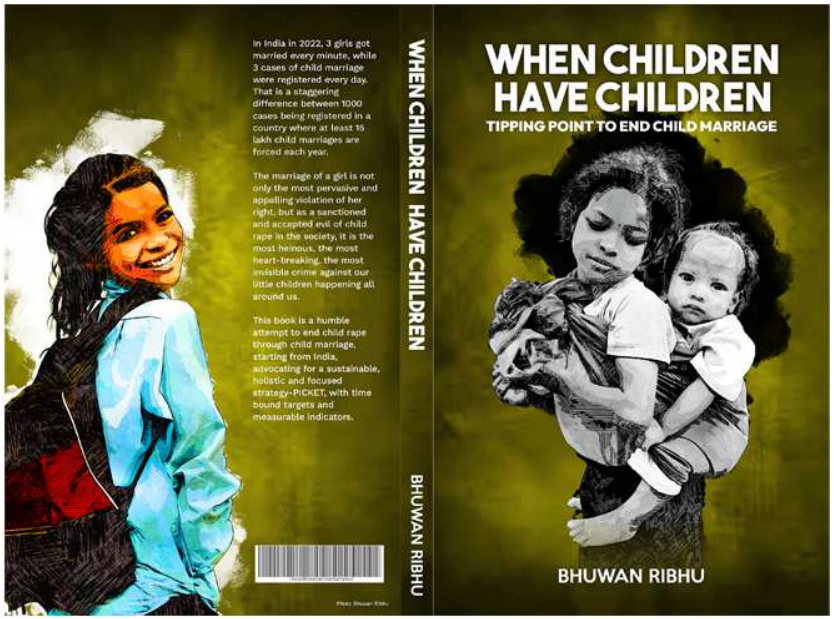
Tipping Point is the threshold required in an ecosystem needed to tilt the scale of the problem towards a point of no-return. The Tipping Point of Child Marriage is the critical point after which the society does not accept child marriage.

Tipping Point Methodology

The aim of reduction of 60 percent of child marriage is assumed to bring down the incidence of child marriage to **5.5 percent** in the next nine years from 2021, from the last available estimates i.e., NFHS-5, till 2030. An additional assumption is that such a focused and elaborate intervention against child marriage would have a ripple effect.

In order to reach the Tipping Point, the Author proposes strategy at national and district level.

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



Case Study – Preventing Child Marriage

- **Back Ground of the Child:-**

Priyanka, a 16 years old girl child, lives with her family, inhabitant at Vill- Andharkuli, P.O-Hiradihi, under Jurisdiction of Kharagpur (Local) Police Station of Paschim Medinipur district,W.B. Father's name Sri. Nitai Sen (Name change) and mother's name Anjali Sen (Name change). She has two brothers namely Jayadev Sen & Lokesh Sen aged about 20 years and 13 yrs accordingly. The elder brother of the child is working as a technician of a company in Kharagpur. Another little brother reads in class VIII of Kharagpur Talbagicha High School. The elder brother has contributed little amount in the family, so the family is being maintained by her father through daily labour, and mother is a house wife.

- **Distress Situation /circumstance:-**

Prinkya, hailed from poor socio-economic back ground. They have no any cultivable land for agriculture and they spent their livelihood in a mud house with "Tali". Priyanka reads in class IX of Kharagpur Talbagicha High School. During her adolescent period she involved in a love affairs with a young guy. For that reason the parents of the girl child were organized of their daughter's marriage with her beloved on 11.06.23 in their residence but the child has not completed 18 years of age.

- **Intervention by Chaplin Club:-**

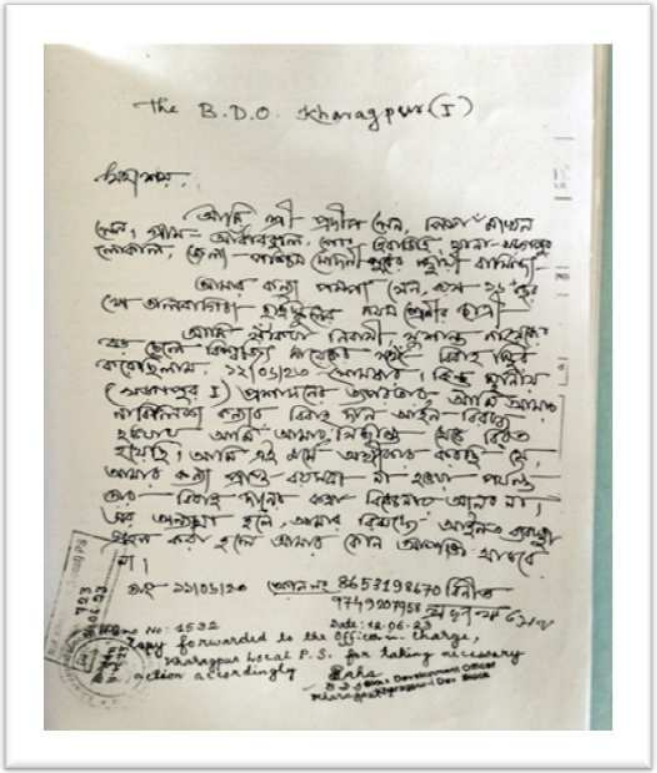
On that day i.e 11.06.23 we got information through our reliable source regarding a Child Marriage incident. After getting information at first we informed to CHILDLINE and concern Police Station. Then our one team member reached to the Priyanka's house along with police, representative of BDO, CHILDLINE staffs & Panchayet member. After reaching this place Police personals & others talked with parents about it and collected data such as Birth Certificate, School Certificate, Marriage invitation card, Aadhaar card and additional information collected from neighbor. From visit it was found that the age of the girl child is 16 years 6 months. After conversation with her parents & villagers about the CHILD MARRIAGE Act & his demerits even told them that, Child Marriage is unlawful which is prohibited. Later parents were written declared that they will arrange marriage of their daughter after 18 years of age. After finished all formalities we backed Police Station & registered this incident in the GDE which No- 723

After stopped the marriage we have taken fallow-up and counseled her with our expert counselor on 16.06.23 that, now the child is residing with her family with happy life & start her study. We are regularly follow up the case and interacting with the victim girl.

Some evidence of the stopped marriage

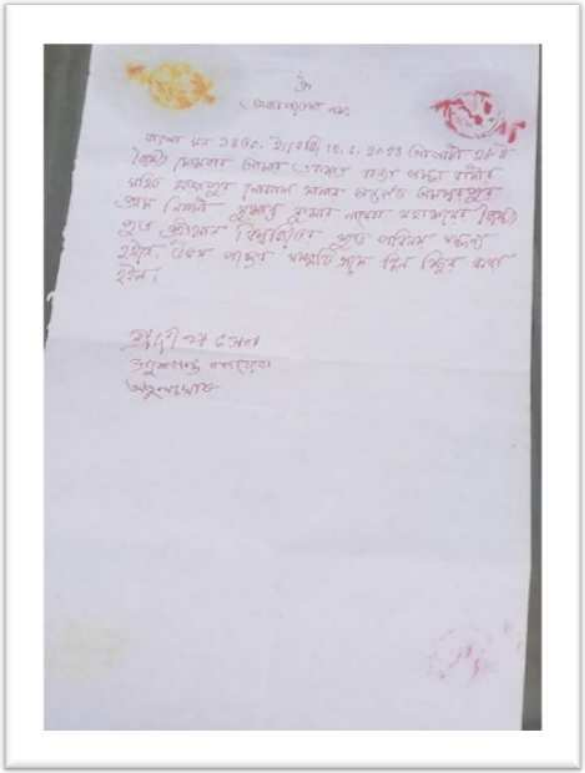


Jointly movement to stop Child Marriage



The B.D.O. Kharagpur (I)

Declaration paper with written by her father & registered GDF



Agreement paper by both parties before marriage