

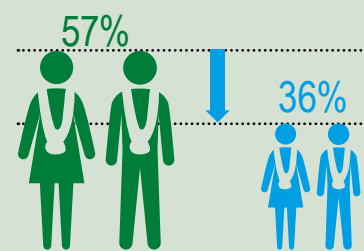
140 GRAM PANCHAYATS IN RAJASTHAN PLEDGE TO BE CHILD MARRIAGE FREE



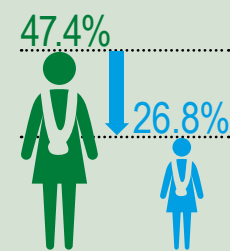
Gram panchayats own the child marriage free agenda after Government of Rajasthan launches State Strategic Action Plan (SSAP) in collaboration with UNICEF and partners

THE ISSUE

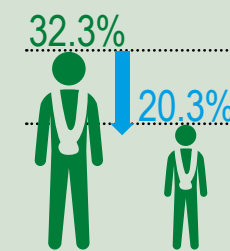
35.4% 35.7% In 2015-16, **35.4%** girls were married before 18 years and **35.7%** boys before 21 years (NFHS-4)



Child marriage declined from **57%** in 2005-06 (NFHS-3) to **36%** in 2015-16 (NFHS-4)



Child marriage continues to be high with girls getting married before marriageable age dropping from **47.4% to 26.8%** and boys from **32.3% to 20.3%** (NFHS-3 to NFHS-4)



Gram panchayats as focal points

- 1 Gram panchayats plan and implement functions related to 29 subjects including child protection and development as per the 11th Schedule of the Constitution of India
- 2 As units of local self government, gram panchayats exert considerable influence at the community level
- 3 140 gram panchayats in three districts of Rajasthan demonstrate model of 'Child Marriage Free Gram Panchayats' using a community-led approach

A gram panchayat which encourages empowerment opportunities for all children and delays marriage for girls (after 18 years) and boys (after 21 years) for three consecutive years is declared a "Child Marriage Free Gram Panchayat."

Organogram

- Government of Rajasthan** Linkages established with government programmes like Dasham and Sanjha Abhiyan
- UNICEF** Supports government to implement the campaign
- Partners** UN donors, SAVE, PLAN, Girls Not Brides and ActionAid work closely with gram panchayats
- Sarpanch** Key influencer responsible for motivating and inspiring social change
- Panchayat members** Support Sarpanch in mobilisation and advocacy on adolescent empowerment in panchayat meetings
- Local police** Address complaints and help speedy enforcement of decisions

State government budget of **INR 4.9 million** allocated per annum for ending child marriage

Funds

Partners and donors committed an additional **INR 200 million** per annum

IMPLEMENTING THE "CHILD MARRIAGE FREE GRAM PANCHAYAT" MODEL

Phase 1

Ownership of gram panchayats

- Outline costed plan of action to prevent child marriage
- Map vulnerable children and link them to social protection schemes
- Conduct awareness and mass mobilisation activities
- Create dialogue and visibility with students in street plays, music and art forms and advocate in school forums like Meena Manch, adolescent group meetings
- Involve families and shopkeepers with IEC materials ('Sapnon ka Mandna')
- Share phone numbers of Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs) and police
- Form Child Rights Clubs
- Brief panchayat members and Saathins, AWWs and ASHAs to be part of the campaign

Phase 2

Celebrating and commemorating success

- Award those who stalled a child marriage and provided timely help and support
- Create overall readiness in the panchayat to say 'no' to child marriage
- Organise large public ceremonies such as oath taking and declaring panchayat as child marriage free
- Felicitate girls who did well in school and champions of adolescent empowerment, award Garima Samman Award at state level

Phase 3

Monitoring and following up

- Ensure reported child marriages are stalled and girls/boys are not harassed
- Strengthen Child Protection Committees and child tracking mechanisms
- Facilitate community-based tracking of out-of-school children and develop monitoring dashboards
- Undertake capacity building of CMPOs, Sarpanchs, frontline workers, police and teachers
- Orient MLAs, MPs and members of Standing Committee on welfare of women and children
- Empower Lok Adalats for 'Ending Child Marriage' and providing free paralegal support
- Mainstream child protection in plans/budgets of local self-governance bodies



Sustainability

At the government level

- Prioritise the issue at department level and implement guidelines for Child Marriage Free Gram Panchayat verification
- Depute Saathins as dedicated cadre for adolescent empowerment and ending child marriage

At the community level

- Create an environment where negative sanctions are placed on child marriage
- Stall intergenerational ill-effects of child marriage
- Give communities confidence to speak up and seek support to stop child marriage
- Involve Saathins and get them to interact with households on the subject

At the school level

- Direct outreach with school-based interventions and making young people aware of their rights
- Involve parents in behaviour change process
- Set up and promote help lines to encourage youth to report cases and reach out for support
- Popularise government CHILDLINE 1098 in districts where it is available

At the donor level

- Sustain momentum to support the cause
- Increase commitment of donor agencies, NGOs and Panchayats