In Pursuit of Safe Havens

A study of harms faced by children in Jharkhand state of India

August, 2016

Reflections from an inter-agency action research initiative aimed at learning from communities in Jharkhand state of India about harms faced by children and protections available to them

<u>Acknowledgement</u>

Background of the initiative

A participatory study to learn from communities in Jharkhand about harms faced by children and other issues of protection was initiated in December 2015, as part of an inter-agency collaboration for strengthening community-based mechanisms of child protection. The collaboration, supported by Oak Foundation, is steered by a core group comprising representatives of Columbia Group for Children in Adversity Inc., CINI, Chetna Vikas, Plan India and Praxis – Institute for Participatory Practices. The intent of the process was to contribute to a process of planning of suitable interventions under the stewardship of local communities and serve as a foundation for inter-community collaborative action.

India is home to almost 19% of the world's children. It has the second largest child population in the world with nearly 39 per cent of its population constituted by children, amounting to nearly 472 million[1].Children in the country are vulnerable to a range of issues of protection, manifested in terms of some massive numbers of child labourers, sexually abused children, those affected by HIV or facing exploitation and neglect. Among various states in India, Jharkhand stands out as one of the most hazardous landscapes for children, who are at the risk of trafficking, forced servitude, child marriages, violence and drug abuse with tribal habitations being highly susceptible in particular.

According to estimates cited in Jharkhand State Action Plan for Elimination of Child Labour (2012-16), 33,000 girls are trafficked from the state every year[2]. Most victims of trafficking and exploitation are below 18 years of age and are forced to work in households, brothels, restaurants and factories. Most of such cases go unreported, as evident in the reports of National Crime Records Bureau on incidence of various forms of crime against children in Jharkhand, summarized in Table 1 below, which indicates that only 406 cases of crime against children were reported during the year 2015, including only 172 cases relating to human trafficking. According to a survey conducted by the Action Against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children (2013), more than five lakh people below 18 years of age are working as mechanics, domestic help, daily-wage labourers, coal-pickers and rag-pickers within the state itself[3]. In addition, according to the third edition of National Family Health Survey, almost two thirds of all women currently in the age-group of 18-24 years were married before the age of 18, while over a fourth of all women in Jharkhand in the age-group of 15-19 years are already mothers or pregnant. Table 1 presents a selection of indicators regarding the status of children in Jharkhand.

Table 1 – A sample of indicators related to the status of children in Jharkhand		
Indicators	**Status**	**Source[4]**
Estimated no. of girls trafficked from Jharkhand every year	**33,000**	JSAPECL, 2012-16
Estimated no. of child labourers working within the state	**5,00,000**	ATSEC 2013
Percentage of working children engaged in different types of work	**10.6%**	NFHS III, 2005-06
No. of cases of crime reported against children in Jharkhand in 2015	**406**	NCRB 2015
Cases reported of crime relating to human trafficking in 2015	**172**	NCRB 2015
Total cases recorded in Jharkhand under POCSO Act (Section 4 & 6) during 2015	**63**	NCRB 2015
No. of cases recorded under POCSO Act in which offenders were known to victims	**48**	NCRB 2015
Women aged 20-24 married by 18 (%)	**63.2%**	NFHS-III

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[1] Census of India 2011

[2] Jharkhand State Action Plan for Elimination of Child Labour (2012-16): Dept. of Labour, Employment and Training, Govt. of Jharkhand

[3] Action against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children (2013)

[4]**JSAPECL** – Jharkhand State Action Plan for Elimination of Child Labour; **ATSEC** – Action against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children; **NCRB** – National Crime Records Bureau; **NFHS** – National Family Health Survey; **AHS** – Annual Health Survey.

Mean age (years) of effective marriage of females in Jharkhand	16.2	NFHS-III
Women aged 15-19 who are already mothers or pregnant (%)	27.5%	NFHS-III
Sex ratio for the state of Jharkhand	948	Census of India 2011
Infant Mortality Rate	38	AHS 2011-12
Mortality rate among children below 5	55	AHS 2011-12

In view of the dismal state of protection available to children in Jharkhand, a baseline study was conducted in January – February 2016 to understand the ground realities facing children from the perspective of local communities. The approach to the research was community driven and not top-down, which helped in generating interest and trust in the research process among the participating communities. Overall, the study sought to identify various kinds of threats facing children and the underlying reasons thereof; besides exploring the potential of community-led actions to ward off harms faced by children.

Design of the baseline study

An in-depth, qualitative study was designed by Praxis with support from Mike Wessells of Columbia Group and other members of the inter-agency core group, aimed at application of suitable participatory methods in identification and analysis of harms faced by children from the perspective of local communities in 12 villages located in the districts of Giridih, Khunti, Ranchi and Dhanbad in Jharkhand. The intent of the study was to explore various local conditions and practices that affect the vulnerability of a child. The purpose of the study was to generate a deep understanding about the participating communities, providing both a baseline and a guide for the subsequent community-driven planning and intervention. In specific terms, the study sought to explore the following:

- Local definitions of a child;
- Local indicators of a child's well-being and identification of children in lower strata of well-being;
- Forms and drivers of vulnerability and harms faced by children;
- Forms of inequality within the selected communities;
- Snapshots of daily lives of children of different profile, especially those hailing from disadvantaged sections;
- Analysis of livelihoods – patterns, drivers of choice, variations in income flows, etc.;
- Dynamics of power and exclusion.

A total of 20 facilitators[5], comprising people from different social groups, including Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and other backward communities, besides 8 women anchored the process in parallel groups of five. Four of the facilitators were drawn from the Right to Work campaign in Jharkhand in view of their deep-rooted local knowledge and experience of working in different parts of Jharkhand.

A set of participatory methods was applied to generate insights about various dimensions of a child's life in the selected villages and issues of protection in a collaborative and non-extractive way. The study team refrained from imposing any value judgments about the conditions of children in the communities visited and stayed away from a case-management approach as well. Various kinds of harms faced by children were discussed in a spontaneous, confidential, non-judgmental and generic manner without specifically identifying any children suffering the harms. The underlying reasons and compulsions of local households

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[5]Abhay Kumar, Abhishek Kumar, Alice Topno, Anindo Banerjee, Anu Singh, Arjun Prasad, Daud Tuti, Dharmdev Jha, Kishanchand Kashyap, Lolisini Murmu, Matias Tuti, Nagendra Kumar, Nancy Priya, Nitesh Kumar, Sanjay Paswan, Shilpi Mishra, Shriya, Swati Kumari, Vijay Prakash, Vijeta Laxmi

and communities that were mentioned as the factors responsible for the harms were accorded greater focus during the discussions. Most of the participatory methods used in the process were exploratory in nature, allowing the daily lives, mobility, experiences and issues faced by different kinds of children to be identified for collective analysis. The following Table (Box 1) outlines the specific dimensions of children's lives explored through a scheme of participatory methods.

Table 2 – Participatory tools used to explore various dimensions of issues of child protection	
Dimensions explored	**Tools used**
Identification of safe and unsafe places for children, located within the trajectory of children's movements out of their home and village	*Mobility Mapping*
Hardships faced by children of different profiles and their families in their daily lives, especially during difficult times	*Daily Activity Schedule*
Status of children in terms of their own indicators of well being and factors influencing the same; aspirations of an 'ideal' and 'safe' childhood.	*Cobweb Analysis*
Identification of most vulnerable children in the community, in terms of incidence of different kinds of hardships and issues of protection	*Social Mapping*
Variations in availability of livelihoods, incidence of child labour and compulsion of distress migration etc.	*Seasonality Diagram*
Drivers of livelihood choice, e.g. availability, adequacy of income, hazards, whether a family-based enterprise, etc.	*Matrix Scoring*
Potential of local institutions, in terms of inclusiveness, accessibility, functional regularity, etc.	
Causes and underlying sub-causes of various issues of protection and their impacts on children.	*Cause and Effect Analysis*

Four clusters of villages, each constituted by three contiguous villages located within a radius of ten kilometers from each other, were selected from two dissimilar pairs of districts in Jharkhand. While Dhanbad and Giridih formed one such pair of districts, identical in terms of relatively better connectivity to urban centers and demographic heterogeneity, Khunti and Ranchi formed the other group, characterised by relatively stronger concentration of tribal communities and remoteness of the villages selected. The two clusters of villages within each pair of districts were largely comparable in terms of their geographical spread, population size, language, demographic composition, availability of basic services for children and the kinds of harms faced by children. Except the cluster of three villages in Dhanbad, all other triads of villages were drawn from the same panchayat. The three villages in Dhanbad too were largely similar in their characteristics, despite being located in three different panchayats. Table 3 presents the locations selected for the study across the four districts.

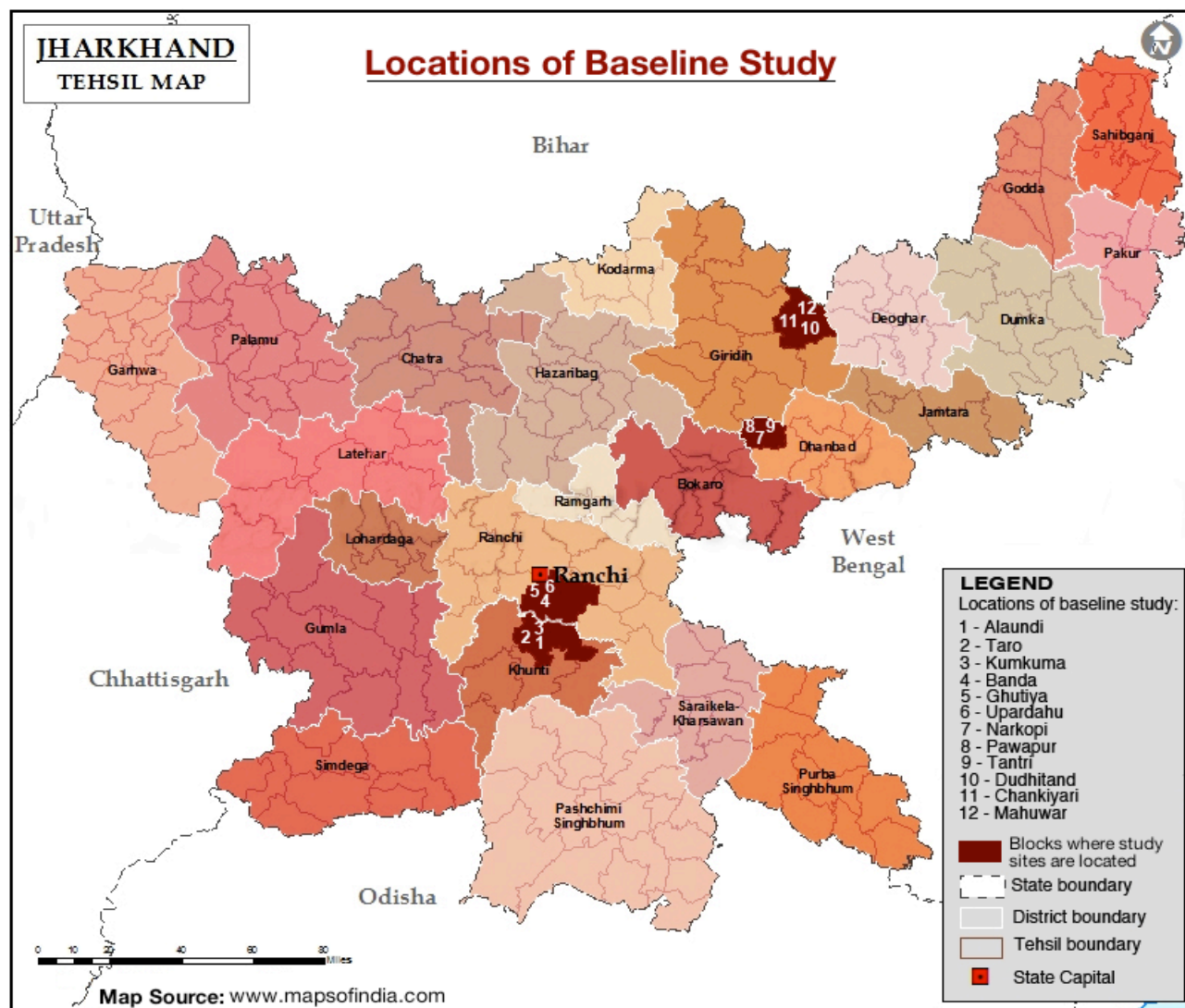| Table 3 – Locations of the study	
Remotely-located cluster of villages with a strong concentration of tribes	**Demographically heterogeneous cluster, with relatively better connectivity to urban centres**
Villages in Cluster 1	**Villages in Cluster 3**
Banda, Ghuthiya, Upardahu	Narkopi, Tantri, Pawapur
(Sohdag panchayat / Namkum block)	(Dumdumi, Tantri and Pawapur panchayats /Topchanchi block)
District – Ranchi	**District** – Dhanbad
Villages in Cluster 2	**Villages in Cluster 4**
Kumkuma, Alaundi, Taro	Chankiyari, Dudhitand, Mahuwar
(Siladon panchayat / Khunti Sadar block)	(Mahuwar panchayat /Bhengabad block)
District – Khunti	**District** – Giridih

Figure 1 – Geographical locations of the study

An intensive field process was undertaken across the twelve villages to reach out to different groups of villagers and members of local institutions, including groups of men, women, girls and boys of different profiles and age; members of Self Help Groups, leaders associated with traditional institutions and service providers, among others.

A carefully identified combination of participatory methods were facilitated with communities to get an in-depth understanding about the villages, daily lives of people and children; customary norms and practices and key issues of protection. The flow of the exercises was mostly spontaneous and depended on the profile of groups consulted. The facilitators were allowed the flexibility of planning their time in the field suiting the availability and convenience of villagers. On the first day, they would typically float around, reach out to different sections of the village-community, introduce themselves and try to set up appointments with different groups of people, including children. It wouldn't be uncommon to come across households badly occupied in their daily chores. In such situations the facilitators would pro-actively offer to help out in the activities of people, e.g. to clean the harvesting yards or to mop floors, and request their

time for discussions. Children would be consulted only after their return from schools; or, occasionally, within the school campus during hours of recess. The study focused on socially excluded and marginalized sections of the communities in particular.

Synthesis of learnings vis-à-vis key issues of child protection

Child Labour

> The study was conducted before amendments were made by the Government of India to the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act. The amendment allows children (even those below 14) to support family based enterprises, leaving many common forms of child labour go unseen and turning a blind eye to a large section of marginalized children who end up working most of their time with irregular school attendance and lower levels of learning. Learnings from the baseline study bring up strong arguments against the amendments.

Usually, children are no longer considered children in villages of Jharkhand after they attain 10-12 years of age. As soon as they are at the threshold of puberty, they are expected to support parents in regular family work and livelihood activities, which emerged as the commonest reason behind child labour across the villages of study. In most cases, it is children who are out of school, or those belonging to marginalized communities or families run by single parents who bear the compulsion to work in order to survive. In addition, peer influences and the desire for maintaining sufficient out-of-pocket funds for buying alcohol, cigarettes and other intoxicants prompt children to undertake labour works.

The rural economy of Jharkhand thrives on agriculture and the largest share of working children is employed in the farm sector. Although children are not always physically forced into taking up work, the local environment conditions them to begin supporting the family as early as at the age of 6 years in some of the Scheduled Tribes (ST henceforth)-populous habitations, and a year or two later in locations having mixed population. In tribal areas, children were mostly found to be working on the fields of their own families and neighbours as there exists a practice of labour sharing. In villages where disparities are wide with one section owning most of the production resources and others being dependent on their patronage, children work on exploitative terms as well on the fields of their landlords.

In most of the villages of study, it was found that children are preferred for carrying out unskilled and repetitive types of work, e.g. sowing paddy, washing utensils, making bricks etc. (Ref. Box 3). Employing children brings down the cost of production substantially; for instance, children were found to be working for more than five or six hours sowing seeds for a meager wage of Rs. 20. In several communities boys commonly take up daily wage activities, including loading or unloading materials, while girls seem to work mostly as agricultural labourers. Other common types of work that girls carry out include unpaid chores of collecting firewood, fetching water, babysitting younger siblings and cooking food, among others, which consume most of their time and cost them opportunities of accessing education and recreation.

Box 1 – What many children in Jharkhand do for a living?

· Work in agricultural farms (sowing and harvesting in particular)

· Wash utensils during marriage ceremonies

· Work in brick kilns

· Construct electricity poles in village

· Push cycles loaded with sacks filled with coal

· Attend to cattle

· Work in stone quarries

· Sell fish

· Collect rags/metal scraps/ glasses	·Work in construction sites in places like Delhi, Goa, Chennai
· Collect and sell pieces of coal	·Work in textile industries in Surat and Gujarat
·Sell wood	·Work in lac cultivation
·Brew alcohol at home	· Work in hotels

Like adults, children also face discrimination based on caste and gender in pursuit of work. In Dudhitand, children from SC communities that are perceived to be 'untouchables' are not provided work in agriculture and are into collecting rags, metal scraps and glass-pieces, washing dishes in hotels and selling gleanings of coal collected from the mines.

Unsafe migration to urban centres among children is a common phenomenon in rural areas. Minors as young as 14 and 15 manage to get fake identity cards and migrate to cities for work, without any registration of their whereabouts at any level. Children usually work in the village until they turn 14 and thereafter they start migrating to cities. Boys mostly migrate with neighbors and family members; which at least ensures that they have some social protection available. The scenario is a little different for girls. They are allowed to migrate only in tribal communities where societal restrictions are comparatively weaker. Importantly, it appeared difficult for some of the tribal communities participating in the study to differentiate between migration for work and trafficking, because they do not have sufficient information about the places, modalities and terms of employment of girls in the cities. In one of the villages in Khunti, incidents of several girls going missing after they migrated a few years back were reported; leading to a decision made by the local gram sabha to prohibit employment of girls outside the village if sufficient information wasn't available about the terms of employment.

It surfaced that after the age of 6 in tribal habitations and after 10 in non-tribal habitations, work forms an integral part of a child's daily routine in most of the communities. However, in case of girls, the share of household chores increases with her age and they are responsible to take care of most of the household chores such as fetching water, taking care of siblings, helping mother in household chores, cooking and carrying fuel wood. Due to the excessive workload handled by girls in ST communities, a girl on an average attends school for less than 15 days in a month. School absenteeism is high among girls and as they grow up, their education is hampered due to increased work load and perceptions of threats to their safety, which also costs them time to play. The following diagram (Box 4) presents the daily activity schedule of a group of girls for the busy agricultural season of the year as well as during non-agricultural months.

Table 4 – Daily Activity Schedule of a girl in village Banda		
During agricultural season		**On other days**
• Waking up	4:00 am	• Waking up
• Brooming the house; cleaning utensils	5:00–6:00 am	• Freshening up
• Fetching water and freshening up	6:00 – 7:00 am	• Fetching water and freshening up
• Helping mother in kitchen	7:00 – 8:00 am	• Helping mother in kitchen; preparing for school
• Bringing firewood from forest	8:00 – 10:00 am	• Studying at school
	10:00 –11: 00 am	
• Fetching water	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	

• Taking care of siblings	12:00 –1:00 pm	
• Having food	1:00 –2:00 pm	
• Going to farm; taking cattle for grazing	2:00 –3:00 pm	
	3:00 –4:00 pm	• Returning home and having food
• Returning home	4:00 –5:00 pm	• Fetching water and taking care of younger siblings
• Helping in cooking	5:00–7:00 pm	• Bringing cattle to shed; studying
	7:00 – 8:00 pm	• Helping in cooking
• Eating and Going to sleep	8:00 pm	• Eating and going to sleep

Child Marriage

Most communities seem aware that child marriage is a punishable offence, but the practice continues unabated on the pretext of protecting girls from potential threats such as sexual violence. The study identified several traditional customs surrounding child marriages. People have their own rationale to continue the practice.

In locations where child labour is rampant, children are perceived to be ready for marriage as soon as they start contributing to the income of the family and appear physically grown-up. Several factors were identified to be responsible for early marriages, including the fear of girls indulging in sexual relationships or eloping with someone, apprehensions of violence, societal pressure and dowry, among others. Children are married as early as at the age of 12 in a few villages. A good number of families in the villages of study are nuclear, requiring both the parents to go out for work in order to make both ends meet, which often deprives children of parental care and exposes them to risks of violence. As a matter of fact, concerns of safety of young girls from threats of sexual violence emerged as a common reason of early marriages of girls, at times arranged as early as at the age of 12 or 13.

During the study, as many as three varied types of arrangements leading to child marriage were identified. One entails marriage under parental and societal pressure where children do not have any say; in the second the decision of marriage is made by the children against parents' consent; and the third entails children's initiative of marriage being accepted and upheld as part of traditional norms. Several traditional norms are practiced in the villages of study, especially *'Yangadi'* in Giridih and *'Dhuko'* as witnessed in villages of Ranchi and Khunti, that endorse the marriage of children on their own initiative, usually by the age of 15-16 years. According to these norms, a boy usually brings a girl to his house, keeps her for couple of months and the couple marries later with the blessings of the family and the community. Another scenario, where children take the initiative about their marriage, was seen in villages located near urban areas, such as Chankiyari and Tantri, where early initiation of children in relationships and sexual activities is common. When they turn adolescent, many of them want to marry the person of their choice, and because they are working (child labour) and are able to take care of their needs, they opt for marriage without bothering to secure the consent of their parents. At times, parents also give in to the wishes of their children to avoid unwanted consequences as a result of denial, e.g. suicidal attempts.

Norms of gender and patriarchy significantly contribute towards early marriage of a girl child. A girl is seen as a burden as soon as she grows up. Such norms have become stronger over time and several economic factors are also attached to the same. Even if a family feels that child marriage is not right, it tends to inadvertently subscribe to it because delaying a daughter's marriage often comes at a cost. The rates of dowry are often proportional to the age of a girl. Parents prefer to marry off girls early so that they would incur less expenses on their development and would have to give less money in dowry. Many

people borrow loans at high rates in order to meet the cost of a marriage. In such scenarios, a child's consent is not sought and parents tend to marry off their children at a young age. Also, girls are restricted from interacting with boys as it could bring a bad name to the family in the eyes of the community. Often, girls are married off early so that the 'honor' of the family stays intact. Box 5 below presents the story of girl who was married off early because her sister eloped with a boy.

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Box 2 – Case of the girl who was married off early because of her sister eloping with a boy

A 15-year-old girl migrated out of her village for work with the help of a local contractor. She was the eldest child in her family. She got employed in a hotel in Patna. She eloped with a boy who was her co-worker and later married him. Hearing about this incident, her parents married off her younger sister, who was barely 14 years old, fearing that she might also run away with some boy. Soon after the marriage, the younger sister gave birth to a child who died in only a few days. The elder sister is back in the village but she looks very weak and dull unlike her earlier self.

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Child Abuse

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Child abuse was found to be taking place in both tribal and non-tribal communities; across all socio-economic categories and within homes as well as outside. Different forms of physical and mental abuses faced by children were identified during the study, often leading to serious emotional and behavioural disorders such as alcohol abuse, addiction to drugs and harmful substances, and juvenile delinquencies such as stealing and gambling.

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Corporal punishments in schools, beating of children and instances of eve-teasing or sexual harassment are key forms of abuses that are common across all the sites. Children are commonly subjected to punishments at school, home and places where they work. Child beating at home or at school is often perceived as a necessary measure to prevent children from getting into bad habits or deviant activities. In addition, children from marginalized communities are commonly harassed by employers hailing from dominant sections of the local communities.

"If we fail to complete homework, we prefer not to go school because of fear of punishment."

Consuming intoxicants and alcohol is a common phenomenon among boys above the age of 10, especially in tribal communities where it is a part of their culture. Some children start consuming some of the locally available addictive substances like *Bhang* (cannabis), *Ganja* (weed) and *Paan* (betel leaves) even before they turn 10 years of age. However, as they grow up, their preference changes from locally available substances to branded products like beer and whisky, which they access from the local markets.

It is common for girls to face eve-teasing and incidences of sexual harassment irrespective of caste or class. Such incidents also restrict opportunities of freedom for girls, whose mobility is limited to deal with fears of sexual assault and restrictions upon them are made stronger as they grow up. Initiation in sexual activity at a young age was observed especially in villages located close to urban centres. There appears a significantly high prevalence of premarital sex among adolescents (in the age of 15- 16); coupled with lack of awareness about safe sex and abortions. Noticeably, in one of the habitations in Chankiyari village in Giridih, over two-thirds of all girls below the age of 16 have undergone abortion in a private clinic located in Bengabad. Most of them do not let their parents have any clue about it because that would be another tormenting experience for them, as sometimes they suffer unpleasant situations such as social ostracism.

Girls as young as 10 years old are subjected to eve-teasing. According to some of the groups consulted during the study, the vulnerability of a girl child to sexual abuse is inversely proportional to her age, i.e. higher when she is younger. This is because a small child doesn't speak out being abused and often, she doesn't even understand what wrong she has been subjected to. Also, in many cases, her own relatives are the ones who are the perpetrators.
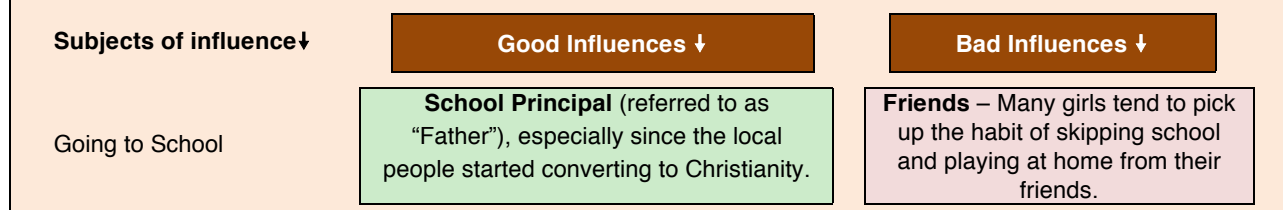
During discussions with girls, those who could differentiate between good touch and bad touch preferred not to disclose instances of being touched inappropriately, because of fear that fingers will be pointed towards them and their character would be questioned. Box 6 presents a cross-section of voices of girls on the menace of eve teasing.

Box 3 – Voices of girls in rural Jharkhand on the menace of eve teasing

- *"If our guardians come to know about taunts and comments we face every day, they will think the entire fault is ours; so if something happens, we do not talk about it."*

- *"People living in the neighborhood start spreading rumours about the character of girls if they come to know they are being eve-teased by boys."*

- *"If a boy is troubling us we would take help from our brothers and try to sort out the matter. We would make sure it doesn't come into the ears of our parents."*

- *"We girls in the village cannot talk to even our elder brothers or cousins outside home. If any girl is found talking to her male cousin her name is defamed"*

According to one of the local groups consulted during the study, children's behaviors are the reflection of the environment in which they are born and brought up. In the course of their upbringing they are influenced by various people, such as their friends, parents, neighbours etc. Some influences help them to get better while some prompt them to commit unlawful activities like gambling and stealing. The following diagram (Box 7) presents a range of influences on a child from the perspective of a group of children in Chankiyari (Giridih). The analysis of children points at a substantial clout of their friends in shaping their behaviours, who influence good as well as bad habits. Besides one's peer group, key influences include family members and elders, besides school authorities that form part of a child's social ecologies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Dawes & Donald, 2000). Several of the deviant behaviours of children, including bunking school, drinking alcohol, using foul language and connecting with friends of opposite sex were attributed to influence of peer groups. At the same time, children tend to pick up aspirations of doing well in studies or tendencies of helping out in household chores from their friends. The influence of elders was felt to be significant in helping children inculcate good manners, especially regarding the importance of paying respect to others and behaving well.

Box 4 – 'Who are the Influences on a child?'

Subjects of influence⬇	Good Influences ⬇	Bad Influences ⬇
Going to School	**School Principal** (referred to as "Father"), especially since the local people started converting to Christianity.	**Friends** – Many girls tend to pick up the habit of skipping school and playing at home from their friends.

Working in the fields	**Friends** – Children like accompanying friends at work.	
Household work	**Friends** – Children pick up household work when they see their friends doing the same. Often, mothers, too cite examples of other children who help in household chores as role models.	
Paying attention to education and being competitive	**Friends** – Girls are influenced by their peers, especially when they see friends doing well in examinations or acting as a class monitor.	
Having boyfriends		**Friends** – Many girls aspire to have a boyfriend when they see their friend having one. Talking with boys on phone or eloping with them also become trends accordingly.
Learning good manners	**Elders** – Children commonly pick up good manners from their elders, e.g. paying respect or behaving well.	
Speaking abusive or foul language		**Parents, siblings and friends** – Family members are the biggest influence on the language of children and they learn abusive language mainly from them.
Consuming toxicants, like *toddy* or local liquor		**Family members** – Some children become addicted to *toddy* or liquor by following alcoholic family members or people in their surroundings.

Denial of critical rights and entitlements

Issues of children's protection and development are closely linked with each other. It was evident during the study that issues of protection are highly prevalent in pockets inhibited by marginalized and excluded communities. Due to various socio-economic vulnerabilities, children from these communities are unable to access developmental opportunities. The inability to avail critical rights and entitlements, such as education, health facilities, survival needs and recreational opportunities further heightens their vulnerabilities, either directly or indirectly. Social safety nets too depend upon a community's social and economic stature.

Children are often treated as adults, especially in economically poor families. For some communities, a child is one who is as young as less than 6 years of age, while some others do not consider anyone above 12 years as a child at all, particularly after she/he attains signs of puberty. Due to such perceptions, children are often deprived of due care and affection at a very young age. Not only are they expected to take care of themselves, but also urged to support the family by starting to earn or cooperate in livelihoods of their parents. Children also migrate to earn bread for the families and are exposed to various risks, including abductions, bondage as slaves in cities and sexual exploitation, among others.

In villages composed of heterogeneous groups, children from marginalized communities have to often face discrimination, at times even in schools. This creates a feeling of humiliation and children tend to drop out from schools. In one of the villages, named Dudhitand, children from *dalit* communities told that the teacher in the school asks them to maintain distance and does not even touch their workbooks.

The outputs of several participatory exercises like *daily activity schedules* and *cause-effect analyses* suggested that when a child is not in school, either they go to work or are exposed to vulnerabilities like alcoholism, abduction or sexual harassment because of lack of parental care at home during working hours. The following diagrams (ref. Box 8), for instance, present an analysis of how a school drop-out child is susceptible to turn alcoholic or take up daily wage work at a young age.

In the eyes of people as well as children, education is relatively less important than working in farms or shops or supporting in household chores because 'ultimately education does not bring up any opportunity for upward mobility for a disadvantaged family'. Learning something which can bring income to the house is accorded greater importance. Two inter-related factors emerged to be causing denial of education to children: one, parents expect children to support in livelihood activities of a family from a very young age, and two, perceptions of futility of education imparted in government schools, while private schools were felt to be out of bounds for poor families due to their high fee structure. Also, unavailability of institutions for higher studies in nearby areas are other responsible reasons behind children not studying beyond school level. In case of girls, in the wake of safety concerns (because of eve-teasing, sexual exploitation), they are deprived of education as it requires to step out of the house.

> *"Those having a graduate degree are also working as daily wager like the ones who dropped out from school"*
>
> *"Not having a single penny in hand is quite stressing; we don't like asking for money from parents."*

Moral obligations of 'being a good girl'

> *"We eat only after feeding our siblings, particularly the younger ones, as we have been brought up in this way. Mother says that we should first feed our younger sibling and male members because this is the moral duty of a woman"* – a group of girls.

While issues of protection harm children in some way or the other irrespective of caste, creed, class or location, girls suffer the most due to prevalent gender stereotypes that operate in the society. The vulnerability of a child multiplies in case of a girl and she hardly gets any support at her home or outside. They tend to live under the constant fear of being abused, physically as well as verbally; and are denied their rights, entitlements and justice on the pretext of preservation of 'family honour'. They are expected to make sacrifices voluntarily, which also shapes their conduct and behavior. Over time, girls also internalize the restrictions imposed upon them by the society and start acting as agents of reinforcing the same.

Gender-based obligations start playing out from early childhood itself. A 'good' girl is judged by two key parameters: how good is she in her household activities and how limited is her interaction with the opposite sex. While children are expected to assist their parents in farming, a girl child is overburdened with additional set of expectations relate to discharge of household chores. It is generally perceived that since a girl child would anyways be expected to take care of household chores in future, they should master the art in their childhood itself, lest it should cause them difficulties at the in laws' house.

People perceived that it is the moral duty of a girl above 10 years of age to do cooking, harvesting or sowing of paddy and assisting male members of family in their work. Their conditioning is such that most girls deem it right to have food only after feeding their younger siblings and after male members of family

have finished eating. Like other women in family, a girl child is often expected to carry food for their male members to work sites.

Box 5 – Analysis of causes and effects of addiction to alcohol and school dropout
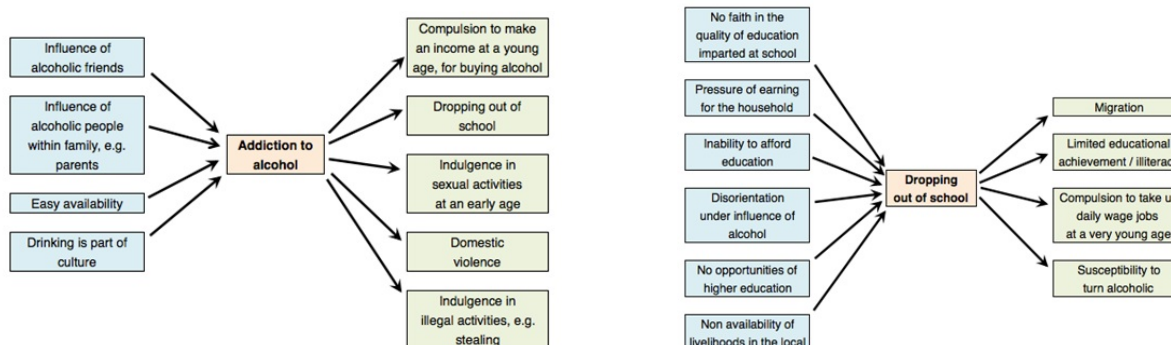
If a girl is laughing and talking to a boy or if she is even looking at a boy and laughing at his words, she is believed to be a 'bad' girl. A girl who accepts the invitation of a boy and goes to meet her alone is not of a good character at all. Any girl who talks to boys is considered to be of bad character, even if she does so in the presence of elders. Box 9 presents a sample of typical advices received by girls from their parents about being 'good girls'.

Box 6 – Parents' advice to daughters on 'being a good girl'

- Girls are told not to roam around without any work because they are young and it doesn't suit them.
- Girls are also instructed to have friends who are well behaved with elders and are willing to help in times of need.
- Girls are taught by the parents to speak sensibly without exaggerating facts and not have boys as friends.
- Girls are told to preserve their dignity because she is a girl; once she loses it she can't face anyone in the village. A girl has to be careful, unlike boys who can go out and do anything without being worried about such issues.

Box 10 presents a bird's eye view of the relative prevalence of key issues of child protection across the twelve locations of study. It is evident that child labour, child migration, eve teasing and addiction of children to harmful intoxicants are prevalent across all locations of the study. The practice of child marriages too is common in most villages, with girls commonly married off in the age-range of 15 – 18 years or even earlier. Instances of physical or sexual abuse were found to be common in most locations as well, and so were instances of discrimination on the basis of caste or gender. Not many children were identified to be in conflict with law, barring a few instances of playful thefts, though as many as five villages reported incidents of abduction or trafficking of children. A few children were stated to be recruited by anti-establishment armed outfits in one of the villages of study.

Table 5 – Relative prevalence of key issues of child protection across locations of study			
Indicators	**Degrees / Variations**		
Prevalence of child labour	**High** (at least one in every 3 children)	**Medium** (between one-tenth to one-third of all children)	**Low** (Less than 10% children)
	Khunti - Taro, Alaundi and Kumkuma	**Giridih** - Dudhitaand **Ranchi** - Ghuthiya	**Dhanbad** - Pawapur (Thakur Tola, Mahto Tola)

	Giridih - Mahuwar, Chankiyari **Dhanbad** – Pawapur (Majhri Taar, Pipra Taar and Ranwa Taar) **Ranchi** – Banda, Upardahu	**Dhanbad** – Narkopi	**Giridih** – Mahuwar (Upar Tola)
Age of entry into work	**Before 10 years of age**	**Between 10 – 14 years**	**After 14 years**
	Giridih - Chankiyari **Dhanbad** - Tantri (work in kitchen gardens), Pawapur (Majhri Taar, Pipra Taar) **Ranchi** - Banda, Upardahu	**Khunti** - Taro, Alaundi and Kumkuma **Dhanbad** - Tantri (in brick kilns, farms), Narkopi **Ranch**i - Upardahu, Ghuthiya **Giridih** – Dudhitaand, Mahuwar	**Dhanbad** - Pawapur (except Majhri Taar)
Engagement of children in hazardous work (mines, quarries, etc.)	**Commonly reported**	**Sporadic incidents reported**	**Not reported**
	Ranchi - Ghuthiya	**Giridih** - Dudhitaand, Mahuwar (Neeche Tola and Pasi Tola) **Dhanbad** – Narkopi	**Ranchi** - Upardahu, Banda **Dhanbad** – Tantri **Giridih** - Chankiyari, Pawapur **Khunti** - Taro, Alaundi, Kumkuma
Prevalence of child marriages	**High** (at least one in every 3 children)	**Medium** (between one-tenth to one-third of all children)	**Low** (Less than 10% children)
	Dhanbad - Tantri (Das Tola, Turi Tola), Pawapur (Ranwa Taar, Majhri Taar) **Giridih**–Chankiyari, Mahuwar	**Khunti** – Taro, Kumkuma **Dhanbad** - Narkopi (mostly in Turi/ Dalit community) **Ranchi** – Ghuthiya	**Giridih** - Dudhitaand (among Kol, Kumhar and Dom castes) **Khunti** - Alaundi **Ranchi** –Upardahu, Banda
Age of initiation of child marriages	**Before 15 years of age**	**Between 15 – 18 years**	**After 18 years**
	Khunti - Kumkuma (14-15 yrs) **Dhanbad** – Pawapur (Majhri Taar and Ranwa Taar), Narkopi (among dalit communities), Tantri	**Khunti** - Taro and Alaundi (15-16 yrs) **Ranchi** – Ghuthiya, Upardahu (ST communities) **Giridih** - Mahuwar, Chankiyari **Dhanbad** - Narkopi, Banda	**Dhanbad** – Pawapur (Thakur tola and Mahto tola) **Ranchi** – Banda, Upardahu (comunities other than ST)
Prevalence of physical or sexual abuse	**Commonly reported**	**Sporadic incidents reported**	**Not reported**
		Dhanbad – Tantri, Narkopi, Pawapur **Giridih** - Chankiyari, Dudhitaand, Mahuwar **Ranchi** - Upardahu **Khunti** - Alaundi	**Khunti** - Taro and Kumkuma **Ranchi** – Banda, Ghuthiya
Prevalence of unsafe sex among children	**Commonly reported**	**Sporadic incidents reported**	**Not reported**
	Dhanbad – Tantri	**Giridih** – Chankiyari **Khunti** – Alaundi	**Giridih** – Dudhitaand, Mahuwar **Khunti** - Taro, Kumkuma, **Ranchi** - Banda, Ghuthiya, Upardahu **Dhanbad** – Narkopi, Pawapur

	Commonly reported	Sporadic incidents reported	Not reported
Addiction to harmful intoxicants	**Giridih** - Chankiyari, Mahuwar **Khunti** - Taro, Alaundi, Kumkuma **Dhanbad** – Pawapur, Narkopi, Tantri	**Ranchi** – Upardahu, Ghuthiya, Banda **Giridih** – Dudhitaand	
Prevalence of child migration	**Khunti** - Taro, Alaundi, Kumkuma (Reported for Boys only) **Dhanbad** – Pawapur (Majhri Taar), Tantri (among Dalit communities) **Ranchi** - Banda (boys and girls above 13 yrs old) **Dhanbad** - Narkopi (only boys)	**Giridih** - Chankiyari, Dudhitaand, Mahuwar **Ranchi** – Upardahu, Ghuthiya (in Muslim community)	
Practices of discrimination against children from specific social groups	**Giridih** - Dudhitaand, Mahuwar **Dhanbad** - Tantri, Pawapur **Ranchi** – Ghuthiya	**Giridih** - Mahuwar **Dhanbad** - Narkopi (Turi community)	**Khunti** - Taro, Alaundi, Banda, Kumkuma **Ranchi** – Banda, UparDahu **Giridih** -Chankiyari
Practices of gender-based discrimination between girls and boys	**Dhanbad** – Tantri, Pawapur **Giridih** – Mahuwar **Ranchi** – Banda, Ghuthiya	**Khunti** - Taro, Alaundi, Kumkuma **Dhanbad** - Narkopi	**Giridih** – Dudhitaand, Chankiyari, Mahuwar **Ranchi**- Ghuthiya, Upardahu
Instances of abduction or trafficking of children		**Khunti** – Alaundi **Giridih** –Mahuwar, Chankiyari **Dhanbad**– Pawapur **Ranchi**– Banda	**Ranchi** - Upardahu, Ghuthiya **Dhanbad** - Tantri, Narkopi **Giridih** – Dudhitaand **Khunti** – Taro, Kumkuma
Instances of female foeticide		**Dhanbad** - Tantri, Pawapur **Giridih** - Mahuwar	**Ranchi** - Upardahu, Banda, Ghuthiya **Giridih** - Chankiyari, Dudhitaand **Khunti** - Taro, Alaundi, Kumkuma **Dhanbad** –Narkopi
Eve-teasing	**Giridih** –Chankiyari, Mahuwar **Khunti** – Kumkuma **Dhanbad** – Pawapur, Narkopi, Tantri **Ranchi** – Banda	**Ranchi** – Ghuthiya, Upardahu **Giridih** - Dudhitaand **Khunti** - Taro, Alaundi	

	Commonly reported	Sporadic incidents reported	Not reported
Corporal punishment		**Ranchi** - Upardahu **Dhanbad** – Tantri **Giridih** – Dudhitaand, Mahuwar	**Khunti** - Taro, Alaundi, Kumkuma **Dhanbad** – Narkopi, Pawapur **Ranchi** – Banda, Ghuthiya **Giridih** – Chankiyari
	Commonly reported	Sporadic incidents reported	Not reported
Children recruited by armed outfits		**Ranchi** - Ghuthiya	**Ranchi** - Upardahu, Banda **Giridih** - Chankiyari, Dudhitaand, Mahuwar **Khunti** - Taro, Alaundi, Kumkuma **Dhanbad** – Narkopi, Pawapur, Tantri

Local responses to harms faced by children

Instances of child labour and child marriage are seen as normal practices in most of the communities where the study was conducted, and therefore the local communities do not feel the need to initiate any special measures to curb such practices. One issue for which the local communities seem concerned and willing to initiate protective measures relates to the threat of abduction or trafficking of girls, often resulting in controls being exercised on their movement. In one of the villages, a local community norm prevents girls from taking up ambiguous job offers in the cities. In addition, religious institutions were identified playing a role in controlling the sexuality of children, especially in locations close to urban centres where children are initiated in sexual activity from a very young age.

It emerged from the discussions that incidences of sexual violence are usually not reported by the family and justice is not sought; instead, such matters are swept under the carpet so that the family does not face any backlashes. Often the society ends up criminalizing the victims of sexual violence and undermines the gravity of the crime itself, especially when they are perceived to bring disgrace to the family and community. In heterogeneous communities, when a family belonging to a marginalized group faces a crime, it is usual for the matter to be flared up to such an extent that the entire family of the victim ends up facing social ostracism, whereas if the same were to occur with children belonging to well off families, then either the matter does not come out in the open, or girls are put under so much stress that it often causes suicidal tendencies among them to deal with the difficult situations.

Implications for design of a community-led mechanism of child protection

The strength of a participatory and community-driven approach to research lies in its ability to bring up local and contextual knowledge and capture views of people who are positioned in different ways. For such a deep engagement with a community it is essential that discussions are facilitated in an open and non-judgmental manner. There are several challenges and concerns that need to be addressed in the design of any community-driven intervention to strengthen the mechanisms of child protection.

With regard to 'who is a child', while a number of definitions have been attempted in literature based on age, behavior, cognitive intelligence, etc., the baseline study suggests that communities have their own understanding in this matter (ref. Box 11), which shapes their responses towards a child. Since a community's understanding is based mainly on its own historical and empirical evidences, there seems a

significant need of engaging them in a discussion around constructs of a child, without contesting or overlooking any pre-held notions, while designing intervention to address issues of child protection.

Box 7 – Who is a child?	
According to local communities in Jharkhand	**According to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Child (CRC)**
"A toddler or one below six years of age is a child. Children above this age group can take care of themselves and do not require parental care." *"We do not consider anyone above 12 years as a child, as by this time they start appearing like a 'grown-up'."*	*"A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years"*

Ideally, no child should be subjected to work. Every child has a right to be provided with adequate opportunities for holistic development. However, due to various social and economic constraints children end up working in brick kilns, stone quarries, coal mines, agricultural farms and in various other occupations. In the wake of recent amendments to the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, according to which children supporting the family in household work is not child labour, children are bound to face serious consequences. In such a scenario, the situation for children might worsen in a serious way due to absence of regulation of work conditions and minimum wages, especially in the informal sector.

There cannot be a one single way to deal with issues of children, as different communities have different issues and challenges. The study identified instances where children of marginalized communities are exposed more to hazardous work such as rag picking, coal mining, etc., face discrimination or work under exploitative terms of employment due to economic compulsions. The study observed that concentration of issues of protection, especially child labour, underage migration, child marriage and violence were relatively high among children of families belonging to scheduled castes. Restrictions on account of social norms and denial of entitlements were high among Muslim girls as well in a few villages. In some of the dominant communities girls were found to be more vulnerable to sexual exploitation at the hands of relatives, which tend to go unreported for the sake of 'honour' of the family. Therefore, any community-driven child protection system would need to recognize the multiplicity of the issues, their social sensitivities and complex demands; and would need to include a wide range of stakeholders at the level of family and community in developing mechanisms to provide protection of children as per their differential needs.

In rural areas, migration of children to cities is common, though information in the village regarding the whereabouts of such children is extremely scant. There seems an urgent need of registration of movement of children out of a village, possibly by maintaining a record at the Panchayat. Any community based mechanism of child protection would need to play a pro-active role in preventing unsafe migration of children. Importantly, whenever traditional bodies of governance have had opportunities to understand the adverse effects of any issue, collective actions have been taken to protect the children from the same. For instance, people now maintain vigilance over entry of strangers in Ghuthiya village of Ranchi, where several incidents of trafficking took place in the past under the guise of marriage arrangements. A number of unregistered placement and marriage agencies operate in rural Jharkhand, which often bring up offers of job and marriage.

Issues of vulnerability of girls require greater attention due to the wide prevalence of gender-based discrimination and unfavourable social attitudes towards their rights. Often, birth of a girl child is not

welcome, leading to the practice of female feticide within some families. When daughters are treated as a liability, also due to prevalence of the dowry system, arranging their marriage becomes a tough deal. Many families prefer to avoid the hassles by eliminating them at birth itself. Girls face the threats of physical abuses, sexual harassment, excessive workload and early marriage across castes and locations. They operate in different spaces, including family, schools, neighborhood, peer-groups etc., each of which have their own dynamics. Because of patriarchal settings governing such spaces, it is highly unlikely that issues faced by girls would naturally surface or they would speak up about their concerns. Learnings from the baseline research suggest that any top-down approach would not be effective in understanding such complex and sensitive issues and therefore, important programmes such as ICPS or other mechanisms of child protection would need to pro-actively involve primary stakeholders (in this case children) and reach out to them in a proactive manner. Such mechanisms would also need to identify people of significant leadership potential who can influence the adverse norms of gender.

Importantly, wherever girls have availed of opportunities of higher study, instances of child marriages were found to be relatively lower regardless of caste and class. Also, in ST-populous villages like Banda, where migration of girls to cities is relatively higher, girls who could study beyond matriculation level were found to be preparing for government jobs rather than opting for menial and exploitative jobs in cities.

Concern for safety is often used as an alibi for restricting mobility of girls. There is a need of initiatives to ensure safety of spaces, e.g. by identification of unsafe places and establishment of systems of community-led vigilance to bring about more and more safe places for girls.

Taboos attached with sexuality were learnt to be severely affecting the lives of children. Such taboos, coupled with norms of patriarchy and practices of caste-based discrimination, actively contribute to psychological problems, often leading to suicides, depression, rapes, murders, teenage pregnancy and abortions. Because many of these cases tend to go unreported, any community-based mechanism for protection must initiate responses in a sensitive and confidential manner, possibly by collectively agreeing upon a feasible policy of deterrence. Given the growing prevalence of pre-marital sex and teenage abortions in a few locations, a community based mechanism of child protection could initiate steps towards bringing about opportunities of sex education and creation of spaces where one could acquire perspectives that can help one to come to terms with her/ his sexuality.

Participatory methods seem to make it easier for children to engage in discussions about issues. Any community-based mechanism of child protection needs to conceptualize suitable approaches to dialogue with children around their issues using interesting methods. Children are more powerful when they are together, and more relaxed when with a friend than when alone with an adult (Graue & Walsh, 1998; Greig & Taylor, 1999; Mayall, 2000; Parkinson, 2001; Eder & Fingerson, 2003; Einarsdóttir, 2003). Also, when discussions are not bound by rigid structures, it facilitates a free-flowing exploration of all relevant strands of an issues. For instance, during interactions with children in Jharkhand over their span of mobility, the conversations often flowed into discussions around how they manage to generate money for addiction, or how they tend to come in conflict with law, demonstrating the strengths of participatory exercises. Children have different ways of communicating and therefore it seemed helpful when facilitators approached them in low-key manner and used visuals and playful activities to generate insights about issues that affect their lives. The following diagram (Box 12) provides a snapshot of hardships faced by children, identified using a straight-forward card sorting technique.

Box 8 – Children analyzing their daily activities in Alaundi village (Khunti)

	Activities	Remarks↓
Activities liked / preferred by children (in descending order of preference)↓	Watching TV	
	Studying at home	
	Going to school	
	Playing	*
	Going to Market	G
	Going to relative's place	
	(green line)	
	Ploughing	B, M, *
	Eating meal	
	Collecting fruits and sell	
Activities neither liked, nor disliked by children↓	Going to fair *(Mela)*	
	Transplanting (*ropnikarna*)	M
	Fetching drinking water	G
	Cutting and collecting fire wood	
	Lah processing	B, M, *
	Brooming	G
Activities disliked by children (in ascending order of dislike) ↓	Cooking	G, *
	(red line)	
	Cattle grazing	*, M
	Working in canteen	B, M
	Bird hunting	
	Getting beaten up	*
	Fighting with friends	*

Symbols

*	Activities that cause injuries
B	Activities performed by boys
G	Activities performed by girls
M	Activities that fetch income

Activities above the green line are the only ones performed by children from privileged background, while activities below the red line are performed only by children belonging to extremely disadvantaged households

Process brief:
- The exercise was conducted with boys in the age of 12-17 years.
- First they were asked to list all kinds of activities done by them.
- Then they filtered out activities they like and ranked such activities in descending order.
- Thereafter, they were asked to filter out activities they disliked and ranked in ascending order, meaning the more they dislike an activity, lower would be its position in the list.
- Lastly, they were asked to draw a line where they feel that such activities were undertaken by all children no matter how privileged they are (the green line)
- Also, they were asked to draw a line where they feel that children engaged in such activities do not get much opportunity in engaging with activities appearing above the green line (the red line).

Mechanisms of child protection would be more sustainable if community owns them and also the decision making powers are positioned within them. For child protection mechanisms to be effective, it is important that planning of interventions, including selection of issues that a community would like to address – is carried out under the stewardship of local communities with support from facilitation agencies. Such initiatives would align with approaches known as 'comprehensive community initiatives' (CCIs), representing one of the recent genres of community-level interventions (Kahn & Kamerman 1996; Pawson & Tilley 1998; Kubisch et al. 1998).

Also, it would be extremely important for approaches of participatory research to not overlook views or practices that might look mundane on the face of it, but might offer rich insights about underlying factors when delved into. It is not uncommon for commonplace issues to be caused by unusual reasons or dynamics stemming from prevalent cultural practices or societal beliefs, e.g. beliefs attached to consumption of indigenous alcohol, perception of child marriage as a protective mechanism to prevent sexual exploitation of girls, or viewing workload of a girl child as essential preparation for her to become a good daughter in-law, among others.

One of the most crucial learnings from the baseline study was regarding the critical importance of empathic listening. Being willing and open to listen to communities without judging them not only helps in winning their trust but paves the way for discussing even complex issues that are usually swept under the carpet. It was due solely to the rapport struck by study facilitators with the local communities that enabled discussions over sensitive issues such as indulgence of adolescents in sexual activities at an early age, or about the difficulties faced by mothers in keeping daughters away from drunken relatives to prevent sexual exploitation. Another uncommon perception that came to light was regarding the definition of a child. In one of the ST-populous villages of Ranchi, a child was described as one who is below the age of 6, and that children above six do not require parental care. The study found clear evidences that suggested how caste-based discrimination in school was one of the key reasons of drop-out and pushing children into child labour. Box 9 presents an analysis of children in one of the villages in Dhanbad regarding modalities of generating money for buying intoxicants, besides other interesting observations.

The opportunity cost of time contributions of local people needs to be accorded due importance while planning processes with them. During the baseline study people were requested to suggest timings for interactions suiting their convenience. Whenever needed, separate sessions were conducted with groups of people who were not comfortable participating in the discussions in the presence of people from dominant social groups. Most of the exercises were conducted in small groups giving due importance to the confidentiality of the contents of each session. Due caution was exercised during the discussions not to delve into case-specific details, to avoid creating dependencies and to focus more on the issues. The team of facilitators made all possible attempts to include as much diversity of voices as possible in the community, pro-actively reaching out to those with a higher likelihood of exclusion due to social hierarchies, gender norms, physical disabilities or any other local dynamics. Approaches to facilitate emergence of community-based mechanisms of child protection need to be geared upon similar principles of inclusion, emphasis on the agency of local people and community empowerment.

Box 9 – How do children mobilise money to buy alcohol or other intoxicants?

The exercise was conducted with students of class 1 to 5 in Narkopi village, Dhanbad. They were asked to tell about places they visit frequently. However the conversation gradually flowed into a discussion around how do they

manage to raise money for their addictions, as most of them indulge in some or the other kind of addiction.
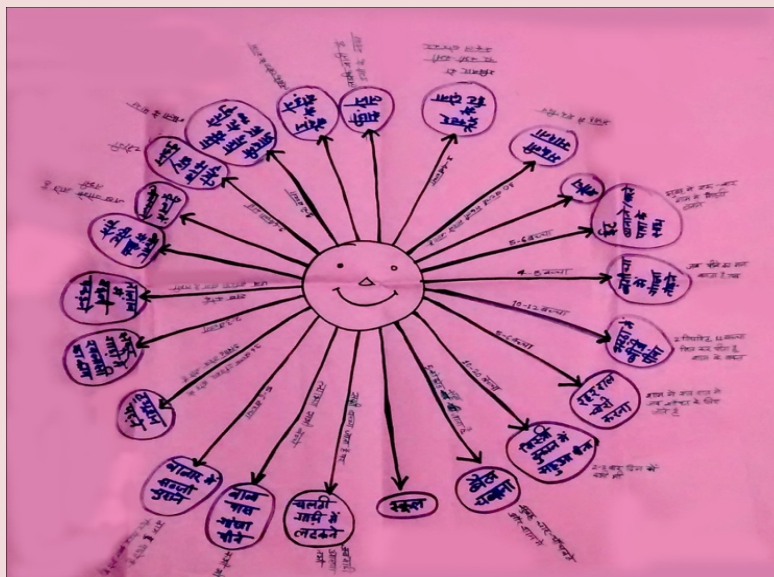
For each location mentioned in the exercise, children identified the number of children visiting the location on a scale of 36, i.e. their universe of the number of school mates familiar to them.

- 5-6 children go with their parents to work in brick kilns, in morning and then in the evening.
- 3-4 children go to brick kilns alone on Sundays and work for 8 hours in return of which they are paid Rs. 120/-, which they distribute among themselves.
- 4-5 children go to load bricks on tractor and earn Rs. 20 each.
- 4 children go to Topchanchi to work in hotels and wash utensils, in return of which they are given Rs. 500/- per month.
- In school, they buy alcohol with the money received for purchase of bags and shoes.
- 1-2 children go near a cremation site (a drainage channel) to collect money distributed during cremation ceremonies.
- 10 children, including 2 girls, work in hotels (wash utensils) on Sunday.
- 2-3 children work as conductors in local buses.
- Almost every child goes to take tuition classes.
- 5-6 children go to steal vegetables on days of market and sell them.
- Several children sell the eggs distributed at school during lunch and use the money raised from sale to buy *Ganja* (weed) for Rs. 10 and share among themselves.
- On the day of *Saraswati Pooja* (i.e. a festival for worshipping the goddess of learning), they consume *Bhang*(a suspension of cannabis) distributed as *prasad* (the blessing of the goddess).
- Almost every boy and some girls are addicted to *beedi* (cigarette filled with tobacco flake and wrapped in a *tendu* leaf tied with a string at one end)
- 5-6 children, when they go out for defecation, steal pulses from the fields and sell them for money.
- Those children who work in brick kilns receive their wages on Wednesday, with which they buy meat and beer.
- Children even steal ducks from the pond and sell them for money.
- Children also steal cigarettes from market and sell the same to other children in the village.
- 26 children are such who either steal at home or in the market (one child had stolen Rs.450/- from the market just two days before the interaction).
- A boy whose father is in jail lives with his grandparents. His mother lives in Gomo and he often visits her

hanging on the footboard of trains without ticket.

Participatory approaches aim at empowering people to explore, analyse, share and enhance their knowledge of conditions governing their life, and to collectively act to bring about feasible improvements. As suggested by Paulo Frierie in his much-celebrated writings in 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', all people are capable of playing an active and influential role in shaping decisions that affect their lives. Approaches that enable people to self-mobilise and address issues of concern serve the purposes of community empowerment and sustainability most effectively, and should be the cornerstone of any community-led process of protecting children.

Annex. 1 – Snapshots of harms faced by children in Jharkhand

The participatory baseline study conducted across twelve villages in Jharkhand identified a number of harms faced by children, including compulsions of child labour, child marriages, alcoholism, sexual abuse, eve-teasing, kidnapping, suicides and teenage pregnancy, among others. The following table presents a distribution of key issues of protection faced by children across the 12 locations of study.

District	Location	Key issues of child protection				
		Child Labour	Child Marriage	Child Abuse	Denial of rights and entitlements	Other issues
Khunti	Alaundi	Almost every child above 12 years of age works as an agriculture labour Children also work in order to manage their personal expenses, which include mobile recharge, sports accessories, etc. Underage migration (mostly in the age range of 15-16 years) is reported to be very high in the village	Adolescents take decision on their own regarding marriages	Boys start consuming locally made alcohol as early as by the age of 10 Children are burdened with household works and are often beaten up in case of any mistake	Due to pressure of work children do not concentrate on studies, which lead to increase in school dropouts after 7th or 8thstandard. It is higher among boys as compared to girls. Perceptions of poor quality of education and addiction to alcohol cited as key reasons of dropout.	Children indulge in sexual activities from a very early age. 2 out of 5 children suffer domestic violence.
	Taro	Children after 10-12 years of age are not treated as children any more by their family members and are expected to support parents in regular family work and even earn for the family.	Girls are commonly married by the age of 15-16.	Addiction to locally made liquor is very common.	About 30% girls and 40% boys dropout of school after 7thor 8thstandard. Household work pressure is the main cause of dropout among girls.	Gambling is highly prevalent among young men and boys above 15 years of age.
	Kumkuma	Children above the age of 12 start engaging actively in work, which include economic as well as household work.	50% girls get married by the age of 15-16 years.	Market place and the grazing field are the most common places where eve-teasing happens with girls	Children do not get to complete even basic level education. Only about 20%	

		Girls migrate at an early age of 13 years; much early as compared to boys. .		Consumption of country liquor is very common and culturally accepted.	children complete their education up to 10th standard. Unavailability of basic amenities put much pressure of household activities like fetching water and firewood, on children particularly girls.	
Ranchi	Banda	More than 90% children work with parents on farms. A few children sell woods and work as helpers in local shops. Underage migration of boys as daily wage labourers and of girls as domestic help common.		Eve-teasing is highly prevalent. Unscrupulous marriage proposals were reported, offered by strangers. Children consume cigarette, beer, *gutkha,mahua* and other addictive substances from the age of 10-12 years.	Close to 50 percent of boys and more than 80 percent of girls are out of school. Excessive work load on girls.	Passing mention was made of cases of trafficking of girls to Delhi/ Mumbai.
	Ghuthiya	Child labour prevalent in families having non-working male members and extreme economic hardships. Children are engaged in hazardous occupations like work in stone quarries; construction sites and brick kilns.	Early marriage is common among both Muslim as well ST girls. Practice of *Dhuko*[6] system drives early marriages.	Alcoholism becomes common among boys after they cross 12-13 years. Several places were identified as unsafe, e.g.routes to school, market, defecation area, forests etc., on account of high incidence of eve teasing and instances of molestation.	Most of the children drop out from higher education. In Muslim community, when a girl reaches class 9, she is expected to wear *purdah*. Such girls usually stay at home and study through distance education.	
	Upardahu	Participation of young boys and girls in farming activities by bunking school is		Country liquor is produced in many households and is easily available.		

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[6]It refers to a system wherein a tribal girl starts living with the boy of her choice in his home and later marries him.

		very common.		During marriage functions in the village, girls are often touched inappropriately by visiting male guests. Many children suffer from lack of confidence and low self-esteem because of continuous verbal abuse by their guardians. Several cases of eve-teasing and rape were reported.		
Giridih	Chankiyari	Children undertake agricultural works, work in brick kilns and wash dishes during marriage ceremonies. Boys migrate outside the village and take up works related to construction. Girls go to work in big hotels of the missionary with local contractors.	Early marriage is prevalent among girls of 15-17 age-group.	Addiction to country liquor is common. Instances of eve-teasing and molestation by a school teacher and a doctor were reported. A few rape cases were reported.		80% of the children use abusive language and learn it from their parents, siblings and friends. Children steal money to buy snacks and sometimes steal grains and sell in the market for buying alcohol. Reportedly, over two-thirds of girls in the age-range of 15-16 years in two habitations of the village have had physical relationships with boys and 80% of them have undergone abortion.
	Dudhitand	Children take up a range of livelihoods, e.g. rag picking,	Early marriage seems highly	every year 1-2 cases of rape	High prevalence of School Dropout among	

District	Village					
		collecting and selling coal pieces and agricultural labour, besides work in brick-kilns and construction sites, etc.	prevalent among Kol, Kumhar and Dom castes. Girls are married off by the age of 15-16 years.	Children are often beaten up by their parents.	marginalized sections (Study team did not come across a single school going child *Dom* community. The issue of female foeticide was mentioned during discussions in the Mahuri community.	
	Mahuwar	On the scale of 10, about 7-8 children in the village work as child labourers in the village.	The average age of marriage for girls is 14-16. Few instances were reported of girls getting married as young as 12 and 13.	Rape of a minor girl was reported during the study.		Children indulge in criminal activities, e.g. stealing to arrange money for alcohol.
Dhanbad	Narkopi	Children are engaged in a range of occupations, e.g. working at crushers, brick kilns, hotels and agricultural fields, besides in selling fish. Most of the children start migrating to cities after attaining the age of 14	*Dalit* community which includes Turi, Chamar and Mahar castes usually marry off their children at the age of 13-14 years.	Eve teasing of girls is commonly prevalent. An alcohol factory located close to the village was reported to be playing a major role in 'spoiling' the children. Rape cases are common with 6 to 7 cases occurring every year.	Gender based discrimination manifests in terms of excessive workload on girls.	4-5 cases of adolescents attempting suicides related to love-affairs and cases of elopement. Villagers mentioned that it is quite common during summer season that kidnappers roam around the village and attempt to kidnap children. However, no case of kidnapping was reported to have happened in the recent past.
	Tantri	Almost every child from poor and marginalised background works on the farms of rich and dominant landlords.	99% of girls are married off by the age of 15-16 years across all social groups of the village, except in	Vulnerability of a girl to sexual abuse starts at the age of 11 or 12 years, irrespective of class or caste, both inside and		Practices of endogamy and caste hierarchy are responsible for suicides by girls; most incidents of suicides take place in the wake

		Bhumihar and Brahmin communities. Among these, 90% girls are married off as early as at the age of 13-14 years.	outside her home. Incidents of rape are common. Consumption of tobacco products and marijuana leaves is high among boys; they usually get addicted by the age of 8-10 years. Children are often subjected to corporal punishment by parents and teachers.		of social rejection of inter-caste love affairs. Incidence of underage pregnancy and abortion are on the rise.
Pawapur	It is common for children to start working as soon as they are about 10 years of age.	High prevalence of early marriage was reported from Majjhri Taar and Ranwa Taar localities in particular. It is common for a girl's marriage is fixed before she turns 16.	Often inter-family rivalries manifest in the form of sexual violence on girls. 3-4 cases of sexual exploitation and rapes have taken place in the village in the past 3-4 years. Problem of drug addiction is alarmingly high among adolescent and young boys.	Female feticide is practiced in families having several daughters. Villagers reported that that families having 3 daughters tend to opt for sex determination of the child. High incidence of school dropout among girls was reported in economically weaker habitations, i.e. Majhri Taar and Ranwa Taar.	

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28

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28