



RAKSHAN

Creating Safe Spaces for Children in Rajasthan

A young girl with dark hair tied back, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, is pointing her right index finger upwards. She is looking in the same direction. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a person in a dark shirt partially visible. The text is overlaid on the image in white and yellow colors.

Deep in patriarchal India, a little village celebrates its **girl children.**

In that village, **girls wear beautiful dresses and make up.**

In that village, **girls are the bread winners.**

In that village, **girls are all 'employed'.**

In that village, men mostly sit back and live off **the earnings of their girls.**

In that village, **girls have no dreams.**

They are **born with a destiny** bestowed upon by centuries of tradition.

THEY ARE ALL BORN TO BECOME COMMERCIAL SEX WORKERS.



In the western Indian state of Rajasthan, in the middle of India's tourist triangle, just 100 kilometres away from the pink city of Jaipur a community has beaten all of modernity's quests to preserve an abysmal practice: to force all its girls into sex work. Girls as young as 10 years old, dressed in bright clothes and amateur make up, stand outside single-room shacks lining the road.

Each day, for as long as this region remembers, girls of a particular tribal community have been doing just that: With tutored body language they negotiate with strange customers payment for each act of sex.

Thanks to the nearby highway and unbelievable cruelty, this community has had a relatively affluent existence—concrete houses, cars, bikes, and lazy men.

This was until 2018 when iPartner India introduced Rakshan. But our efforts are mere drops in an ocean without your help.

CHANGE IS COMING,
BUT THE REVOLUTION IS FAR AWAY



WHAT WE DO

iPartner India, through Rakshan, is trying to break the institutionalisation of sex work within the community, to whisper values of equality, dignity, education, progressive values into the blinding darkness at the heart of the community.

THE INTERVENTIONS ARE AT VARIOUS LEVELS:

SCHOLARSHIP

Providing Rakshan scholarships, and also linking girls and boys to existing government and private scholarships, to encourage girls to stay back in schools.



BAL PANCHAYAT

Children's collectives formed to discuss issues concerning them, especially to identify the drop out children and get them back to school. Adults are encouraged to attend as well.



YOUTH GROUPS

Those between 18 and 25 years of age participate in these groups where they discuss issues concerning them.



HORTICULTURE/ KITCHEN GARDEN

Encourage vegetable cultivation, kitchen garden and horticulture through distribution of seeds. An additional income source for families.



SEED BANK

A seed bank established in a village to promote organic, indigenous seeds.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT

With a focus on creating employment opportunities for family members and to draw girls away from sex work, women, men and girls are taught different skills to help them earn a livelihood.



SELF HELP GROUPS

21 SHGs have been formed in 20 villages with 242 members. During monthly-meetings, members are taught vegetable cultivation, kitchen garden, horticulture and savings, in addition to providing easy loans.



STRENGTHENING LOCAL BODIES

Working with village-level child protection committees, panchayats, child welfare committees, police and anti-human trafficking units. Strengthening existing governance bodies like the village protection committees, child welfare committees and child helpline numbers is among the focus areas.





Women take the bulk of all **domestic responsibilities** hence the burden of unpaid work falls disproportionately on women across India.



Aarti has a dream, finally

All women in Aarti's family for several generations have only done one work: sex work. Her grandmother recalls her days, and her mother is in Jaipur, offering services to clients. From what she earns, the mother sends money back home to Aarti and her grandmother, who live in a shanty in the village.

Aarti's grandmother with the help of some women in the village have revolted against tradition to ensure that Aarti stays in school. Thanks to Rakshan's intervention, Aarti is the first girl from her village to enter Grade 10 in 2019 and is continuing with her education.

Aarti does not stand with her friends on the roads, luring customers in the evenings, but sits at home reading textbooks. The village youth committee also extends support to Aarti's efforts.

SHE NOW HAS A DREAM.

WHAT RAKSHAN WANTS TO ACHIEVE

Make many more girls dream. Make the villages in this region safe and secure places for children.

- 1** Make government and service providers accountable for child protection.
- 2** Engage with policy makers and advocate for better implementation of existing policies on trafficking and child marriage.
- 3** Ensure that youth have access to alternate livelihood opportunities and create an environment where women and girls exercise autonomy over their lives.
- 4** Create an effective network of adolescent girls and boys for peer learning and building leadership skills.
- 5** Facilitate knowledge sharing to ensure replicability of Rakshan's model in other Indian districts.

HELP THOSE GIRLS DREAM

WHO WE ARE

iPartner India is a registered Charity (Registered No. 1114944) in the UK since 2007 and a Registered Trust in India (Registered No. #5454) from 2009. We have over 12 years of experience working on **education, health, women and livelihood, vulnerable children, anti-child trafficking and climate change** with grass-roots partner organizations in India. Through our work, we have transformed the lives of over 900,000 marginalised people, helping them move to the mainstream through targeted interventions.

Celebrating
10
Years

