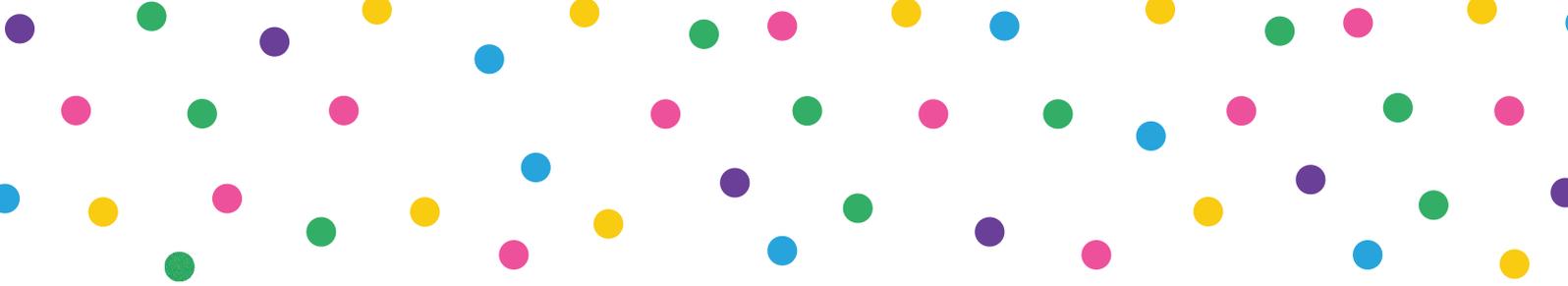


ENDING TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN JHARKHAND:

A PRIMER



This document serves to be a primer for policy makers, influencers and decision-makers on the issue of Teenage Pregnancy and adolescent issues. We hope that this document can serve to educate and provide insights from the real-life challenges of young people in Jharkhand



SASHAKT KISHORI, SASHAKT JHARKHAND

PRIORITIZING ADOLESCENTS FOR JHARKHAND'S FUTURE

With one in five or 253 million Indians being an adolescent, India is a young country.

This demographic dividend presents a significant opportunity for India make a quantum leap on socio-economic progress and development markers and requires the centre and states to prioritize the health, wellbeing, empowerment and aspirations of young people.

Jharkhand is one of the youngest states in the country, and the progress of the state rests solely on the shoulders of its youth and adolescents. 54% of its 33 million population, is under the age of 24. This includes a large adolescent population of over 7.3 million, constituting 22% of the state's population. Girls comprise nearly half of Jharkhand's young demographic dividend.

Yet, they remain challenged in many areas such as a lack of access to healthcare services, high rates of school dropouts, high rate of early marriage etc.

In Jharkhand, teenage pregnancies and their ensuing health and socio-economic implications hinder the entire generation of young adults.

The Jharkhand government is also making attempts to serve young women better through the roll-out of national schemes like the RKSK, School Health Programme and state specific programmes on nutrition, empowerment, skilling etc.

Yet, adolescents and girls in particular still face steep roadblocks. With a large rural and tribal population in the state that lacks access to services, young people and young women from these groups are doubly vulnerable.

**YOUNG PEOPLE IN
JHARKHAND FACE
SIGNIFICANT
VULNERABILITIES**



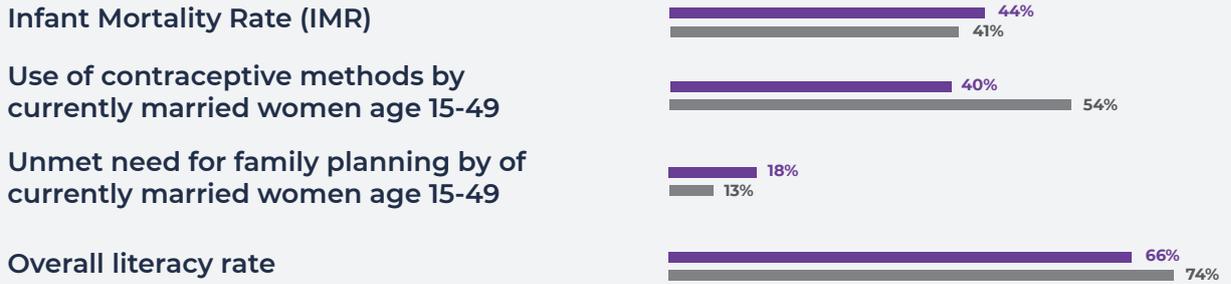
38%

of women, in Jharkhand, aged 20-24 years, got married before the legal minimum age of 18

Compared to the national average of 27%

Subsequently, ranking 5th in India for teenage pregnancies, Jharkhand faces a grave socio-economic threat with 12% prevalence of teenage pregnancies among the state's adolescents.

COMPARATIVE HEALTH INDICATORS



■ JHARKHAND ■ INDIA SOURCE: NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY- 4



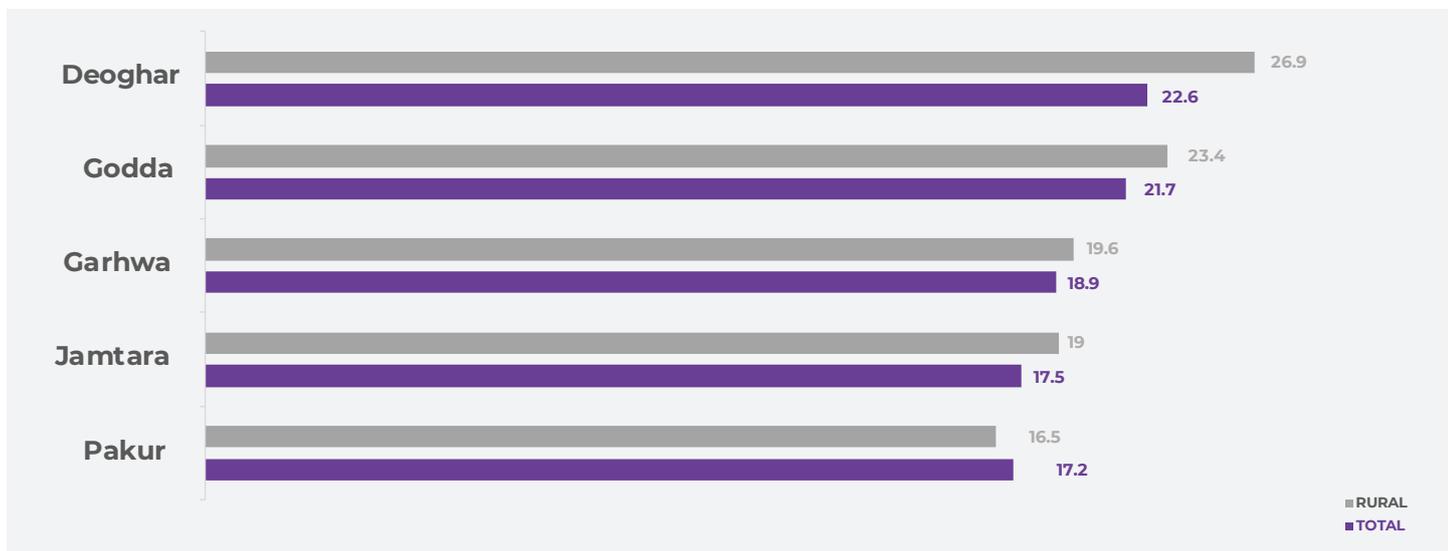
INDICATES THE GENDERED ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN THE STATE.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES

20 of Jharkhand's 24 districts have higher percentage rates of teenage childbearing than the national average of 7.9%. This includes 16 districts that have been classified as "Aspirational Districts" by NITI Aayog, including the state capital Ranchi.

TEENAGE PREGNANCY⁴ (IN %)

	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN
INDIA	7.9%	9.2%	5%
JHARKHAND	12%	13.9%	6.5%



³ NFHS 4

⁴ <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/jharkhand.html>

in absolute terms, the data reveals that

**1 IN 8
GIRLS**

in Jharkhand
aged 15-19



**are
teenage
mothers**

85% of these cases are concentrated in rural areas

The population projections show that the state will continue to have one of the youngest populations in the country up until 2050.

This window of opportunity must be channeled strategically to ensure an increase in overall savings, higher productivity and economic growth. However, there is no road map to capitalize this opportunity by overcoming the twin issues of child marriage and teenage pregnancies. Therefore, to realize the potential of this young population, the state needs to ensure this demographic, especially girls, are healthy, educated and enabled.

For the state to truly realize its demographic potential, special focus should be given to enable the girl child.

The lack of healthcare facilities, high prevalence of early marriage and consequent teenage pregnancy and a lack of opportunities pose a great risk to the development of girls, recently further exacerbated by the COVID crisis and subsequent lockdowns. Health ministry⁷ estimates show

**THE ECONOMIC BURDEN
OF TEEN PREGNANCIES
AND CHILD MARRIAGE**

measured by the mother's foregone
annual income during a lifetime

₹12%

**OF ANNUAL
GROSS
DOMESTIC
PRODUCT OF
INDIA**

By addressing the issue of teenage pregnancies and multi-faceted causes and impacts, Jharkhand can empower its girls as well as usher socio-economic development for the state.

YUVA JHARKHAND HAS THE POWER AND POTENTIAL TO ACCELERATE THE STATE'S FUTURE PROGRESS

Political champions can help secure Jharkhand's future by addressing the needs of young people through their platform and voice.

- Use your platform and voice to raise the demands of Jharkhand's adolescents and girls in particular and advocate for their right to health, education and well-being in public and influential forums
- Raise the issue and hazards of teenage pregnancies to create awareness and reduce stigma about sexual and reproductive health among the community and the adolescent cohort
- Support the proposed statewide targeted programme – **'Sashakt Kishori, Sashakt Jharkhand'** – across party lines for the overall empowerment of Jharkhand's young people

The 'Sashakt Kishori, Sashakt Jharkhand' initiative is proposed to be a detailed communication and roll out plan on a comprehensive effort to prioritize young women, while looking at gaps and recommending actions across health, employability, education, and safety to create a holistic plan of action to empower young people, with a focus on young women since teenage pregnancy has a multi-faceted impact on the individual, community and state. For the well-being of the populace, future electorate and the state, the government, leaders and society should do their bit to address this issue at hand.

