



OUR MISSION

‘Veerni’ refers to a woman of strength and courage. Our mission is to educate and empower girls living in villages in the outskirts of Jodhpur that they may live healthy and fulfilling lives free from social and economic discrimination.

Our intention is to make every young girl admitted to our program a ‘Veerni’ in her own right, capable of making independent and powerful life choices. We consider education to be the pillar from which all empowerment begins.

To this end, Veerni provides a safe, secure and nurturing environment in which girls receive an excellent secondary and high school education, alongside nutrition, health care and a balanced physical and extra-curricular regimen. We endeavour to provide viable vocational options, so that Veerni girls are capable of leading independent lives and being actively involved in their communities.



OUR VISION

Veerni believes that true democracy depends on the full participation of women in their communities, and that education is the most effective instrument to secure this end. We prepare our girls for a life in which they are capable of exercising their basic human rights and make independent life choices.





BACKGROUND

In India 27% of girls are married before their 18th birthday, the legal age for marriage. 7% are married before the age of 15. Rajasthan is among the top 12 states in India where child marriage is prevalent. Almost 90% of child marriages in Rajasthan take place in rural areas. Child marriage is significantly related to educational and poverty levels, most prevalent amongst poor, low-income and backward caste communities in rural Rajasthan.

Yet the situation is not without hope. A recent report by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) based on data collected by the National Family Health Survey (NHFS) reveals that there has been a 20% reduction in child marriages in Rajasthan over the last decade between 2005-2006 and 2015-16. The report concludes that “the completion of secondary education is found to be significant in delaying the age at marriage.” This is precisely where efforts like Veerni come in. By providing secondary education to the most vulnerable of populations, Veerni both delays child marriage and works towards eliminating it by creating viable socio-economic alternatives.



“ I want to finish college and become a police officer. Then I can prevent child marriages which are illegal in India.” ~ Durga, a Veerni high school graduate and child bride

MEET SOME VEERNI GIRLS

Kaushalya Talniya

Wants to join the Air Force

"It has been my dream to join the Indian air force since Grade X. My parents and brothers also support my dream. This will enable me to help my family and my country.

I was married as a child. My in-laws are not very nice people - they don't treat me well. I do not want to go back to my in-laws. My husband is much older than me. He does not hold a steady job and is no match to me. I want to break up with my husband. I want to go for higher studies and have a career."



Krishna Kanwar Bhatti

Wants to become a doctor

"My grandfather was very progressive and he took me to Veerni and got me admission. I had never stayed away from family and it was a new experience for me to stay in the hostel. My interest in sports led me to take part in state tournaments. I and some other girls were

selected to take part in the tournament at Alwar. This experience taught me that in addition to studying sports are also equally important."



Anu Kanwar

Wants to be a teacher

"When I joined Veerni in Grade VI, I was not very happy. We had to stay with a lot of girls. There were a lot of restrictions we were not allowed to go out of the campus .. I have completed 12th grade I will be going home soon. I am happy to see my family but am not happy with their financial situation. It

will give me lot of happiness when I can be of help to my family financially with the education I received from Veerni. I will never forget these seven years spent at Veerni."



Nirma Talaniya

XII grader at Veerni

"I am married but will study and fulfill my dream. Once I am able to achieve my dream I will go back to my in-laws village. Once I reach the village I will talk to all the girls of the village to pay attention to studies. My in-laws village is very remote and backward. They pay no attention to the girl child...We are five siblings. We are three sisters and two brothers. My dad is a mason. We all three sisters received our high school education at Veerni. My older sister

finished school and college and is studying towards becoming a police officer. I have finished grade twelve exams and am awaiting my result."

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

We at Veerni firmly endorse the right of all children to have the right to a happy and fulfilling childhood with the opportunity to lead a dignified life free from violence, exploitation, neglect, deprivation and discrimination.

We are fully committed towards safeguarding the rights of every girl at the Veerni Institute and the Veerni Balika Project. We treat with the utmost seriousness the protection of our girls and have a zero tolerance for anyone not in compliance with this policy. No one within the organization, or anyone representing us, or visiting the facility will in any way harm, abuse or commit any act of violence against the girls or be responsible for placing them at risk. Immediate and appropriate action will be taken in case of any infraction.

We pledge to create a safe, supportive environment and to respect, recognize and respond to specific needs regarding safeguarding and nurturing of the girls at Veerni while at school, during leisure and during their boarding experience. All staff at Veerni are personally hired and trained by the Director with elaborate background checks. We actively promote the involvement of our young Veerni wards in their own protection. We empower and educate them on their rights and personal safety.

We pledge to respond expediently to any child in distress, whether in need of medical attention, physical protection or psycho-sociological support, and to keep their welfare and best interests as our primary consideration. When lacking in our own resources, we pledge to seek help from external experts and networks.

We recognize the fundamental rights of children and adolescents to privacy. We use photographs of our Veerni wards solely for fund-raising and awareness building purposes and with the consent of their parents/guardians.

We solemnly decry child labor and do not employ our Veerni wards in any form of income generation activities. We fully stand by the articles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and India's National Child Protection Policy.

ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

At Veerni, we do not tolerate harassment or intimidation of any kind including sexual harassment. We define sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexually determined behavior, such as physical contact or making sexually explicit comments or overtures. This behaviour is uniformly condemned whether committed by man or woman towards man, woman or child.

No one in our organization by virtue of their power will make any demands for sexual favours. A demand or request for sexual favors, whether verbal or non-verbal where the submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or promotion/evaluation of work is not tolerated.

An act or conduct by a person in authority which makes the environment hostile or intimidating to a person or unreasonably interferes with the individual's privacy and productivity at work is not tolerated.

Verbal harassment of a sexual nature, such as lewd comments, sexual jokes or references, and offensive personal references; demeaning, insulting, intimidating, or sexually suggestive comments (oral or written) about an individual's personal appearance or electronically transmitted messages (Jokes, remarks, letters, phone calls) is not tolerated. Eve teasing, making innuendos and cat calling are not tolerated.

Any infractions will be reported to the Head Nurse who will immediately notify the Founder, the Managing Director and the US and Swiss Boards for immediate action.



Your contributions go a long way in empowering the Veerni girls.

- \$ 2000 – Supports one girl for 1 year
- \$ 1000 – Support one girl for 6 months
- \$ 300 – Covers 1 year of school fees
- \$ 100 – Supplies for one girl for 1 year



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