



130 million
girls in South Asia
will be **married** as
children by 2030.



Women are significantly undereducated and disadvantaged in South Asia.

46% of girls are married before age 18, ending their education and resulting in early pregnancies. As adults, they often must ask permission from their husbands to leave home for reasons other than child care or farm work. Sex trafficking and violence against women are common in many South Asian countries.

A majority of the countries in South Asia have less than 50% participation of women in the labour force. This inequity prevents generations of women from lifting themselves out of poverty.

PROVIDING A SAFE SPACE AND RESOURCES FOR WOMEN

READ Centers give women a safe space to gather, learn, and advocate. READ provides specialized educational resources and programming for women and girls, because we know that investing in women increases family income, leads to better child and maternal health, and increases girls' access to education.

- **Leadership development:** Trainings in confidence-building and civic participation equip women with skills to become leaders in their families and communities.
- **Gender sensitization:** Training and focus group discussions for men and women are offered on gender social norms and women's legal rights.
- **Health:** READ Centers provide information and workshops on hygiene, nutrition, family planning, and sexual and reproductive health for women.
- **Livelihood skills:** Vocational training in textiles, agriculture, livestock, and home-based skills enable women to start businesses and earn an income.
- **Literacy:** Adult literacy courses, reading and study groups give women a second chance to learn basic skills to drastically improve their independence and self-confidence.
- **Savings cooperatives and self-help groups (SHGs)** teach women to save money, often for the first time, and give them access to a support network.



"Before joining the Center I thought that women were bound to be in the house as housewives. Later I realized ... women are also capable of doing everything. Now you can see a change of roles in my family."

— Nepali READ Center user



75%

of women surveyed in India and Nepal reported being able to travel outside of their home freely more often because of their local READ Center.

OUR IMPACT

Our monitoring and evaluation metrics show that READ Centers and their programs significantly empower women:

- **A majority of women** surveyed (83% in Nepal, 66% in India, and 58% in Bhutan) report that since coming to the READ Center their **confidence has increased**.
- **Women's decision-making power** in healthcare, family planning, and children's education has increased for 68% of women surveyed in India, and 62% in Nepal.
- **One in five women** in Nepal (24% of women in India) report that they are now **leaders in their communities**.
- **One in five women** surveyed at Centers with savings cooperatives have started their own micro-enterprise.

FEATURED PARTNERS



The **National Mission for Empowerment of Women** of the Government of India is partnering with READ to provide livelihood training programs and educational workshops to 400 women and 200 children in India. Topics include vocational skills, technology, health, literacy, gender rights, and early childhood care.



The **Norwegian Amateur Theatre Association** has partnered with READ in Nepal to conduct a puppetry and theater project to increase awareness about child marriage, domestic violence, and sex trafficking. The partnership also sponsors livelihood skills trainings for women, and the establishment of women's savings cooperatives.



Walmart India and **CAF India** have partnered with READ in rural Rajasthan to provide education, leadership development and livelihood training to women. The two-year project has reached 2,500 women, enabling them to read and write, take the lead in various village forums, and increase their livelihoods by stitching dresses and cloth shopping bags.



HomeNet South Asia and the **SAARC Business Association of Home based workers** (SABAH Bhutan) is partnering with READ in Bhutan to conduct an outreach program to educate women and create livelihood options for home-based workers across all READ Centers in Bhutan in 2013-2014.