



Government of Odisha

Annual Report

2018

Implementation of
Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 &
Orissa Prohibition of Child Marriage Rule 2009



Department of Women and
Child Development & Mission Shakti
Government of Odisha

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1. Introduction

The issue of child marriage has always been an alarming one. Though it has minimised with the passage of time, but still, it exists on a large scale across India.

Child marriage in India, according to the Indian law, is a marriage where either the woman is below age 18 or the man is below age 21. Child marriages often occurred throughout history and are still prevailing due to variety of reasons including- Poverty, Insecurity, Political and financial reason, Lack of education, Patriarchy and gender inequalities, Inadequate implementation of the law.

There is an immediate need to make people aware regarding child marriage and its consequences. Children should be made aware of their human rights and must be taught to refuse and speak up once such an incident is taking place or is about to take place. The media can play a vital role by broadcasting various entertainment and informative shows in order to make people aware as well as to warn them. In a way, media sensitization is required for a major change to take place. Genuine efforts, strict enforcement of the legal provisions will help to a change in the scenarios.

2. Activities Undertaken :

A. State Level :

i) National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) regional Conference and NHRC follow up meeting:

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) convened the first regional conference at Bhubaneswar on 4th and 5th of Jan 2018. Representatives from six Eastern Region States and the Civil Society organizations participated in the conference. The Women & Child Development and Mission Shakti Department of Government of Odisha organized the conference in collaboration with NHRC. State specific issues, challenges and way forward were discussed.

A follow up meeting was organized at the state level by the Women & Child Development and Mission Shakti Department, Govt of Odisha on 9th August 2018 to discuss about the action taken on the recommendations of the Regional Conference as well as preparation of a document on case studies and good practices.

As a part of this follow up meeting, the department of **Panchayati Raj and Drinking water** issued a letter to all the collectors to include plan at Gram panchayat level while developing GPDP on Campaign against Child Marriage as one of the initiative to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women and girl and to take up awareness program to make every village child marriage free village; And also use **Madhubabu Aain Sahayata Sibira(MASS)** platform to propagate the message of prohibition of Child Marriage.

The Follow up meeting also helped the CID (Crime Branch) to develop SoP (Standard Operating Procedure) for Police for checking and preventing Child Marriage by Odisha Police (Crime Branch).

ii) Formation of Committee to review PCMA 2006, Odisha Rule 2009, implementation of state strategy:

A Committee has been to review PCMA 2006, Odisha Rules 2009 and implement state strategy to prohibit Child Marriage. The Committee is chaired by the Principal Secretary, WCD & MS Dept. The committee meeting held on 29th of every alternate months.

iii) Training on Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

The 8 Batches training for all the CMPO's/ CDPO's, PO's, & DCPO's was completed in two phases.

The topic covered during the session was on : i) Situation analysis and Social Dimensions of Child Marriage – India & Odisha scenario; ii) PCM Act & Rule: Provisions and institutional mechanism, Role and responsibilities of Child Marriage Protection Officers, Offences and punishment; iii) Other legal provisions to address child marriage – Selected

provisions of POCSO, RTE, ITPA, JJ (C&PC) Act, PWDVA, IPC , CrPC; iv) Interface with Member of Odisha State Commission for Women(OSCW) and Odisha State commission of protection of Child Rights (OSCPCLR); v) PCMA2006 Rule – Form I, II and III.

The session on the “Situation analysis and Social Dimensions of Child Marriage – India & Odisha scenario” focused on the overview of national scenario which highlighted on NFHS 3 & NFHS 4 (Odisha) and the District wise analysis and also on the existing social norms and practices within the State across various social groups and How it impacts other development indicators.



The session on “PCM Act & Rule focussed on : Provisions and institutional mechanism, Role and responsibilities of Child Marriage Protection Officers, Offences and punishment” highlighted on PCMA Act and Rules, Role & Responsibility of CMP Officer; Reporting formats and process; monitoring mechanism; Data on implementation of PCMA.

Mr. Prafulla Samal, Hon'ble Minister WCD & MS also witnessed the training and gave his valuable time in interacting with participants in dealing the issue of Child marriage.

The session on "Other legal provisions to address child marriage – Selected provisions of POCSO, RTE, ITA, JJ (C&P) Act, PWDVA, IPC, CrPCetc." was to make participants understand different child related acts, and provision of the IPC and CrPC and inter linkages with PCMA.



There was an interactive session with the Members of State commission for women (OSCW) and Member of Child Rights commission (OSCPCR). The members of each commission described briefly the functions & role of commissions and their experiences in combating Child Marriage in the state.

B. Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child rights (OSCPCR)

The Commissions for Protection of Child Rights deal with varied issues related to child rights in the course of their work. The OSCPCR conducts meetings of experts eliciting their views on how to improve upon the implementation of different Act/laws related to child in the State, take cognizance of reports of any violation or deprivation of child rights including child marriage and act on complaints reported to the Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR), organize State Level multi-stakeholder consultations to deliberate upon the matter and recommend ways and means of improving statistics on child marriage, organize Awareness programme in collaboration with development agencies on the adverse implications of child marriage. Monitor the efficacy of such interventions.

- A. State Level Convention on Combating Child Marriage was organized by OSCPCR in collaboration with Save the Children on 29th August 2018 at Bhubaneswar, the convention aims to initiate yearlong campaign across the state to combat the social evil. Six child champions had shared their experiences in combatting their own marriage along with that of their peer's marriage. 25 child champions were felicitated by the Honorable Minister of W&CD & Mission Shakti, Govt. of Odisha.
- B. Organized a program on Campaign against Child Marriage for PRI Representatives at Puri in association with Save the Children. NCPDR Member Mrs. Rupa Kapur addressed the programme and interface with PRI members on 9th Oct 2018.



- C. A Knowledge platform created under the leadership of OSCPCR and hold regular meeting on Child Marriage in collaboration with Action Aid, UNICEF, OXFAM and Save the Children.
- D. Zilla Balya Bibaha Pratirodha Manch, Kandhamal was felicitated by Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR) for their contribution to stop child marriage in Kandhamal district during 8th foundation day of OSCPCR.



ବାଲ୍ୟବିବାହ ନିରାକରଣ ଲାଗି ରାଜ୍ୟସ୍ତରୀୟ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ

• ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର, ୧୮-୦୮-୧୮

ରାଜ୍ୟର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଭାଗ ଏବଂ ସେବାୟତ ସଂଗଠନ ଚଳିତ ବର୍ଷ ଶୁଭ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପରିସରରେ ଏକ ରାଜ୍ୟସ୍ତରୀୟ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ଆୟତ୍ତ ହୋଇଛି । ଏହି ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ସ୍ତରରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଉଚ୍ଚ ମାଧ୍ୟମିକ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ତରରୁ ଉପସାହାୟକ ଭାବରେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ରହିବାକୁ ସମର୍ଥନ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି । ଏହି ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଭାଗର ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସଂଗଠନର ପ୍ରତିନିଧିମାନଙ୍କର ଉପସ୍ଥିତି ଥିବାରୁ ଏହା ଏକ ଉପଯୋଗୀ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ଭାବରେ ଗଣ୍ୟ ହେବ । ଏହି ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଭାଗର ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସଂଗଠନର ପ୍ରତିନିଧିମାନଙ୍କର ଉପସ୍ଥିତି ଥିବାରୁ ଏହା ଏକ ଉପଯୋଗୀ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ଭାବରେ ଗଣ୍ୟ ହେବ ।



ନିରାକରଣ ନେଇ ମାନସମଗ୍ନନ

୨୦୨୦ ପୁଞ୍ଜା ବାଲ୍ୟବିବାହମୁକ୍ତ ହେବ ରାଜ୍ୟ !

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C. Odisha State Commission for Women (OSCW)

The Government of Odisha setup the Odisha State Commission for Women to protect, preserve and safeguard the rights and interests of women and deal with atrocities on and offences against women in the State of Odisha. The Commission takes up cases of dowry desertions and deaths, domestic violence, rape, sexual and workplace harassment, property rights and other violations of women rights. The Commission's counseling cell schedules a number of counseling sessions to resolve issues in a mutually beneficial manner. The Commission organizes Camp Courts to reach out to people living in remote corners of the State and resolve their disputes at their door steps. And also, organizes Legal Awareness Programmes to educate the female population about their rights & Govt. schemes.

The commission has taken following strategies to create awareness on causes & consequences and legal provisions against – child marriage:

A. By organizing Legal Awareness and Gender sensitization programmes

The Commission organizes a number of legal awareness and Gender sensitization Training programmewith a **special session on Child Marriage** at district, Block and village level for all stake holders including DSWO, CDPO, Elected representatives of ZillaParishad Panchayat Samitis, Gram Panchayats and municipalities, Teachers, ASHAs, Anganwadi supervisors, Anganwadi workers, SHG members, Civil Society organizations, NGOs, Paralegal volunteers, opinion leaders , community members parents and under graduate & post graduate students of both rural and urban educational institutions.

B. Development and Dissemination of IEC materials

For better understanding of the common people OSCW has developed brief handbook on frequently asked questions on Child marriage Act, simplified version of the Act in both English and Odia language and 20 wall paintings in 20 different places of the Gram Panchayat. OSCW has also developed IEC materials like Poster (1000 nos.), Leaflets (5000 nos.) and Stickers (2000 nos.) printed and widely distributed in the area for mass awareness.

C. Convergence in Departments

The commission develops a network among CWC, DCPO, CDPO, Police and legal professionals by organizing interface programs.

D. Rehabilitation of rescued children

The commission has stopped the child marriage in the spot and those children are continuing their education. Their parents are counseled about the consequence and the legal provisions against it. Besides they are also linked with various schemes available for education and livelihood of girl child.

D. UNFPA

A. Technical support for strengthening programmes for adolescent girls and addressing vulnerabilities of adolescent girls including child Marriage in two tribal districts of Odisha :

UNFPA is providing technical support through dedicated district level consultants to two districts namely Gajapati and Rayagada. One Project Associate has been placed with the District Social Welfare officer to strengthen programmes for adolescent girls including addressing child marriage. This includes support towards organizing training and capacity building programmes, streamlining review, reporting and feedback mechanism and advocacy for convergence with Education, RKSK, RBSK, and Skills Mission. The program also strengthens activities related to child marriage, promoting girl's education and enrollment of girls and young women in skill development programmes.

Additionally, in Gajapati, to strengthen program on adolescent girl and child marriage, technical support was provided to District Child Protection Unit for organizing training programme on prohibition of child marriage in Gajapati. The district child protection unit organized one-day training programme for the different stakeholders on the prohibition of child marriage act- 2006 at conference hall of the collector Bungalow, on 21st May 2018. The delegates such as Secretary DLSA, Chairperson CWC, DIPRO, Family welfare, DSWO, CDPOs, DCPO, NGO and representatives from District Child Protection Unit were present. 42 participants were present in the training programme.



B. District level orientation of tribal leaders in two districts with focus promoting value of girl child and addressing child marriage



There is a practice of marrying girls and boys at a very young age among tribal communities. Besides, different socio-cultural practices, and traditional beliefs pertaining to marriage exists which is important to understand. A one-day consultation for tribal leaders and other gatekeepers in the tribal communities was organized at Gajapati and Rayagada districts to discuss the issues of child marriage

and orient them on the adverse effects of marrying girls and boys at a young age and other sexual reproductive health issues.

Around 160 tribal leaders and key stakeholders of the two districts attended the district level orientation. This provided an opportunity to document different socio-cultural practices that exist in tribal communities and to discuss measures to address it.

As per plan, both districts completed two batches of sensitization meeting. 68 (Male-30, Female-38) tribal leaders were oriented at Dr. Ambedkar Agricultural Training Centre, Chandragiri on 29th Sep 2018. In Rayagada, 92 leaders were oriented on 14th October 2018 in a single batch. The training started with “AMA SANKALPA”; i.e. our promise for addressing child marriage in the two districts.



C. Sensitization of key stakeholders from 21 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) Gram Panchayats of Gajapati and Rayagada districts on addressing Child Marriage

Three PVTG groups, namely *Saora, LanjiaSaora and Dangria Kondh*, with a population of approximately 28,000 reside in 21 Gram Panchayats, spread over six blocks of Gajapati and Rayagada districts. The PVTGs generally reside in hilly, forested regions and remain isolated from the mainstream population and have poor access to RMNCH+A information and services. Further, girls in these communities get married at a very young age resulting in too early, too many and too closely spaced births.

A total of 1605 key stakeholders of PVTG communities, comprising 816 (Male-228, Female-588) from Gajapati and 789 (Male-86, Female- 703) from Rayagada were sensitized on vulnerabilities of girls including child marriage. The key stakeholders comprise of PRI members, religious leaders, SHG leaders, frontline health workers, tribal community leaders, youth leaders, School teachers, CRP members in the PVTG communities play an important role in defining the sociocultural practices particularly those that affect the lives of adolescent girls and women. As per the schedule the meetings were conducted at Panchayat headquarters of respective GPs, to sensitize the key stakeholders on girl's education, child marriage and maternal and child health including delaying and spacing in births.



D. Orientation of ICDS supervisors on Child Marriage and Scheme for Adolescent Girls :

To highlight the urgency of addressing child marriage and to garner support, 150 ICDS supervisors (Gajapati-69, Rayagada-81) were oriented on issues related to girls dropping out from schools, child marriage and Scheme for Adolescent Girls.

The topics covered during the orientation programme covered were – the overview of the IDI project intervention, prevention of child marriage Act, role and responsibilities of key stake holders, identifying Vulnerabilities, current practices and gaps, action plan on implementation of prevention of child marriage, schemes and programmes for adolescent girls, review and orientation of ICDS Mission Shakti, and Mamata.



E. UNICEF in Partnership with Action Aid

A. Campaign on #SayNo to Child Marriage :

As part of the process to create awareness on the issues of child marriage and mobilize communities in taking forward the campaign of “Say No To Child Marriage” a wide range of engagements were made by Action Aid in partnership with UNICEF across the state. This campaign covered both urban and rural areas and successfully mobilized the solidarity support from a large categories of stakeholders like community leaders; young men and women volunteers; PRI members; lawyers; journalist; writers; poets; traditional leaders; faith leaders, tent owners, members of youth clubs and Biju Yuva Bahini, drum party, printing press owners & workers, adolescent boys and girls; students and Government Officials (Teacher, CDPOs, Supervisors, AWWs, ASHA,). ActionAid with the support of the Civil Society Organization, Youth Clubs, People's Organization and District Administration, Subarnapur and Child Protection Units & ICDS reached out to more than one lakh population of Odisha through the campaign #SayNoToChildMarriage. As a result of these 56 cases of child marriage in different districts of Odisha were stopped.

More than 1 lakh population in 1000 villages of Odisha joined the Campaign #SayNoToChild Marriage and Took Collective Pledges to stop child marriage.

B. Campaign Meeting in Urban Slums :

In one of the urban slums of Bhubaneswar i.e. Aurobindo Nagar, Patharbandh a public meeting followed by a human chain was organized on 17th and 25th September where more than 575 young men and women including the community people and leaders took part and collectively pledged and appealed to “Say No To Child Marriage”.

C. Social Media Campaign :

Using social media as tool to connect the youth, ActionAid connected with more than 1700 youth through the face book page “Say No To Child Marriage” and facilitated continuous discussion among the members on the issue of child marriage and motivated young people to take collective action at the ground throughout the state. This page archived wide range of resources related to child marriage like news, record of ground actions, Government circular and orders, articles and IEC materials.

More than 1700 young volunteers having engaged on the discussion in the face book page Say No To Child Marriage



D. Largest Human Chain of 60,000 Women against Child Marriage-A Case of Successful mobilization of Key Stakeholders :

On 7th of July, 2018, the District Administration, Subarnapur with the knowledge partnership of ActionAid hosted the district wide campaign "Say No To Child Marriage" where approximately 60,000

The largest human chain of Odisha formed in Subarnapur district by approximately 60,000 women in solidarity to the campaign **#SayNoToChild Marriage**

women from more than 5000 women SHGs in 965 villages & 3 urban areas of Subarnapur



joined and formed a human chain to create awareness against the issue of child marriage. This human chain under the campaign was first of its kind in the state of Odisha district where women in such a huge number came forward and took pledge to say no to child marriage. District Collector-cum-Magistrate joined this campaign and appealed the gathering. The District Magistrate being the nodal officer as per the Orissa Prohibition of Child Marriage Rules, 2009 directed the temple authorities, priests and tent house owners that action would be taken against them if they were found to be a party in the solemnization of any child marriage.

E. Mass Campaign in 92 Gram Panchayats of Subarnapur :

A mass campaign organized in 92 numbers of Gram Panchayats, through one day simultaneous public meeting throughout the district. As many as, 13, 858 people from the community including AWWs, ASHA, Teachers, members of youth clubs, Biju Yuva Bahini, Drum party, printing press owners, religious leaders etc. joined this campaign in solidarity & took collective pledge to combat child marriage.

Further, the district administration organized a special programme at Hilung Gram Panchyat of Birmaharajpur block, where the Sarpanch announced to bring resolution in the next panchayat level meeting to make Hilung a child marriage free Gram Panchyat in the next one year. On this occasion, Bindia a girl of 17 years was felicitated with cash of Rs. 10, 000/- for her courage to say **NO to child marriage.**



Joining this meeting, the PD, DRDA told that the district will soon declare zero tolerance to child marriage. Among others the Child Marriage prohibition Officer, Block Development officer, SDPO, Sub Collector, Chairperson of the Birmaharajpur Panchayat Samiti who supported to these efforts.

The campaign successfully mobilized 92 Gram Panchayats of Subarnapur district towards taking mass pledge to stop child marriage. Subsequent circulars by made by administration to stop child marriage.

F. Formation of People's Forum :

Different people's platforms like forum of the tribal and caste leaders, knowledge platform, media forum and *Balya Bibaha Pratirodh Manch* (CBO of adolescent Girls & Boys) took action in the ground coordinating with the administration to stop child marriage.

- **Koraput** : 57 numbers community meetings that followed by “Pada Yatra” organized under the campaign say no to child marriage and in result 13 cases of child marriages were stopped in Koraput district.
- **Kandhamal** : The Balya Bibaha Pratirodh Manch successfully stopped 23 numbers of child marriages in Phiringia, G. Udayagiri, Tikabali, K. Nuagaon & Chakapad blocks mobilizing communities. 6 numbers of child marriage cases were handed over to DCPO to take appropriate action. Antaranga, the youth federation and the members of Balya Bibaha Pratirodh Manch collectively organized 14 numbers of round table meets with the CDPOs, Sarpanch and the PRI Members in different blocks. Balya Bibaha Pratirodh Manch constituted at block level and facilitated to work with Govt. stake holders and PRIs in the respective block to address the issue of child marriage. More than 500 youths during the Antaranga Youth Festival at Kandhamal took collective pledge to stop child marriage.
- **Subarnapur** : An orientation on the prohibition of child marriage was organized jointly by the District Administration with the knowledge partnership of ActionAid on 24th November.
- **Nuapada** : 54 villages of Nuapada, took mass pledge by the community members to stop child marriage. The leaders of Bhunjia and Paharia samaj took leadership in mobilizing their respective members of the community and brought collective resolution to stop practice of child marriage.
- **Rayagada** : The Balya Bibaha Pratirodh Manch stopped 16 cases of child marriages during July to December 2018. Also, this forum helped 9 children to re-enrolled in schools. On 2nd October 2018, on the eve of Gandhi Jayanti, the Balya Bibaha Pratirodh Manch sensitized the people of M.K Rai Gram Panchayat on the issues of child marriage as a result of this the Sarpanch, Ward Members along with the members of Gram Panchayat resolved in making of a “child marriage free panchayat”. The leaders of the Manch organized orientation programmes in different educational institutions like Gudari Science College (with +2 1st year students), Gudari SSD girls High School (with 9th and 10th standard students), M.K. Rai Giridhara High School, Dambasara Kanya Ashram of Gunupur block, Khulamunda SSD Kanya Ashram of Padampur block, KGBV Jalanidhi Residential school of Gudari block and oriented the students on the consequences of early child marriage and legal provisions to prevent child marriage.
- **Felicitation to Balya Bibaha Pratirodh Mancha by OSCPCR** : Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR) felicitated the Kandhamal Balya Bibaha Pratirodh Manch for its significant contribution to stop child marriage in Kandhamal district.

UNICEF under social and behavior change communication to prevent child marriage are,

1. Regional Consultations covering 30 districts on key challenges and enablers on Child Marriage
2. IPC Training of Adolescents against Child Marriage
3. Training of Child Marriage Champions on negotiation skills through Theatre of Oppressed
4. Two-day workshop with CoE for Communication, SIHFW to develop prototypes of communication material
5. State Consultation with all partners on finalization of State Communication Strategy on Child Marriage
6. State Communication Strategy drafted and shared.



3. Total Number of Child Marriage Prevented from January to December 2018 as per reports received from the districts. Point 8 of form I under rule 3(2)b of the Odisha Rule

Form-1, point -8 Child Marriage Successfully Prevented in 2018 (Jan-Dec)		
Sl.No	Districts	Jan Dec
1	Angul	17
2	Balesore	17
3	Bargarh	2
4	Bhadrak	0
5	Bolangir	3
6	Boudh	7
7	Cuttack	16
8	Deogarh	7
9	Dhenkanal	7
10	Gajapati	17
11	Ganjam	22
12	Jagatsinghpur	1
13	Jajpur	3
14	Jharsuguda	11
15	Kalahandi	3
16	Kandhamal	22
17	Kendrapara	6
18	Keonjhar	30
19	Khordha	17
20	Koraput	2
21	Malkanigiri	62
22	Mayurbhanj	75
23	Nawarangpur	14
24	Nayagarh	12
25	Nuapada	0
26	Puri	12
27	Rayagada	3
28	Sambalpur	17
29	Subarnapur	3
30	Sundargarh	3
	Total	411

4. Case Study :

Case study – 1

Odisha Balya Bibaha Pratirodh Manch - a forum of youth for social change – engaged in combating child marriage

Started since June 2017, spread over 8 districts of the state the forum Odisha Balya Bibaha Pratirodh Manch has 49 young boys and girls in it as on date. They are all change makers – combating their own early marriage as well as saving many more girls as well as boys from child marriage.

Bismita Bagarty (name changed) of Phiringa block in Kandhamal is an exceptional champion. Child marriage is prevalent in her area. Twenty five of the forty-five girl members in her youth club were married at the age of fifteen. This not only brought down the strength of the club, but also set a poor example for other members. Bismita rose against all adversity and resistance from the families of five young girls whose marriages were fixed and stalled their marriages till they met the legal age of eighteen. Her village and the district watched her efforts. She began to collect a band of committed youth and was encouraged to expand this work into other areas of the district. “I formed a women’s group, in which there was a lot of participation. Girls came forward to share their experiences on stage. They influenced their peers and propagated the ills of early marriage. They realized the contribution of education in their lives,” says Bismita, while expressing her pride in being solely responsible for four of the members, who had the forbearance to complete graduation, in spite of drawing flak and criticism faced in their homes.

Her mother was not convinced but the people in the district convinced her about the noteworthy work her daughter was doing for the society at large. Her mother realized the extent of admiration and respect her daughter enjoyed. Pride replaced ignorance, as was the need of the times.

“I enjoy the confidence of all in my district. I am respected and asked to speak first at all meetings. I feel no fear and want every young girl to be a leader like me,” Bismita reveals. She organizes monthly meetings, where they determine their agenda while sharing experiences in areas of child marriage, school monitoring, Swacchh Bharat programmes, Anganwadi development and maintenance of health and hygiene in their area.

Child marriage in the district of Kandhamal has been well combated by Bismita and the youth champions who emulate her ideology. There has been support and appreciation from the district administration. Education among the adolescent girl population has increased and more girls are today going to schools.

Another change maker Mala Swain (name changed) of Dhenkanal district is a committed leader and extremely resolute in her task. Mala is presently twenty one years old. She was all of four years when her father was diagnosed with a mental disorder. Her mother had an older child to take care of, as well as an aging father –in-law who suffered from leprosy. It made better sense to send Mala to the Child Care Institute. The talented girl cleared every academic year including the class 10 examination successfully. She marched ahead to complete her higher secondary education as well, at the Dhenkanal Autonomous College.

Mala's family wanted to arrange a marriage for her older sister, to which Mala opposed and made them understand that her sibling should first gain economic independence, before going to the groom's house as a dependent. Her mother resorted to a fast as an effort to nullify Mala's efforts, but little Mala stood strong in her resolve and helped her sister to take training in tailoring. Presently, her sister runs a successful tailoring outfit at Dhenkanal.

A marriage proposal came for Mala too. Intelligent as she has always been, she conveyed her disapproval through her maternal uncle. Mala's purpose was met and her marriage proposal did not see the day. She pursued her academic career further through a college degree and finally post-graduation. Her mother was eventually ecstatic at her daughter's achievement, not only for herself, but because she stood as an icon for girls her age, who would have the courage to oppose early marriage and opt for education and vocational training.

Mala, a founder member of Odisha Balya Bibaha Pratirodh Manch, a state level forum of girls and boys, who have said NO to Child Marriage, stands tall like a champion.

The Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has provided support to this forum of grassroot change makers.

Case study – 2

Combating child marriage- the story of the snake charmer community of Padmakesharpur

Padmakesarpur is a village in the outskirts of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) whose inhabitants are the people of the snake charmer community. Due to the ban in their traditional occupation presently the men are depending upon work at stone quarries for their economic sustenance, and women are employed as domestic help in the nearby urban apartments.

The incidence of child marriage in Padmakesarpur has been arrested to a great extent through activities by civil society intervention in coordination with ASHA workers and the community leaders.

All the girls in the village are working towards eliminating the social evil of child marriage. It is the collective, that is instrumental in bringing about the change in the last ten years. Several young women like Arunima (name changed) who have emerged as leaders in the community resolving to combat child marriage.

Case study - 3

Engaging with tribe and caste leaders to end child marriage

Child marriage is a social norm among some of the tribal communities and castes in Odisha. The reproductive role of women is accepted immediately after puberty in these communities and the age of marriage of a boy is considered when he starts hunting and working in the field which is usually between the age of 13 and 15 years.

Today tribal leaders have been sensitized and they have understood the ills of child marriage. The traditional forums of a few tribal communities such as the Paudi Bhuiyan in Sundergarh district; Soura in Ganjam district; Kui, Kondh, Gadaba and Paraja in Koraput district; Gondh in Bargarh district; Juanga in Keonjhar district have resolved to stop child marriages in their community. They have formally passed resolutions in this context in their meetings. This is a very unique action of self-realization which can show the light to many more.

This initiative, mobilized by NGOs and development partners, has also resulted in a state level forum of caste, tribes, religious and faith leaders to discuss and deliberate on combating child marriage. The forum has had several rounds of meetings and documented the existing good practices in some of the communities.

Case study – 4

True spirit of convergence – all join hands - Say no to child marriage

With an understanding of the need to engage with different stakeholders to combat child marriage, the district administration of Subarnapur have taken up many proactive steps involving all the stakeholders.

Nearly 60,000 women from more than 5000 self-help groups in the Subarnapur district come together to form a human chain in the month of July 2018, to create awareness against child marriage. The drive, organized by the district administration in knowledge partnership with NGOs and CSOs covered the 965 villages and 3 urban areas of the district.

The Collector and District Magistrate, Subarnapur, being the district-level nodal officer for the purpose of implementation of *The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006* (under the *Orissa Prohibition of Child Marriage Rules, 2009*) issued instructions, sending out a strong message to all temple authorities, priests and tent-house owners in the district that action would be taken against them if they were found to be a party to the solemnization of any child marriage. Similar letters have also been issued by the District Magistrate and Collector of Jagatsinghpur, Nayagarh and Mayurbhanj.

Emphasizing the role of Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) as Child Marriage Prohibition Officer (CMPO), the district administration also provided name plates mentioning the CDPO as also CMPO.

Engaging with the young is a good process to combat child marriage. Students of high schools, colleges have participated in oath/ pledge taking event to say NO to child marriage. This model has been taken up in many districts such as Boudh, Kandhamal, Puri and Nayagarh.

Many cases of child marriages have been prevented due to the timely and coordinated intervention of the Child Line, District Child Protection Unit, CDPOs and the Child Welfare Committees. Police and media have also provided all support towards this combined effort to stop child marriage and rehabilitate the rescued girl towards continuation of education.

Case study - 5

Knowledge platform - united to combat, together, the social malaise of child marriage

With an understanding of the need to engage with different stakeholders to combat child marriage, a State Knowledge Platform has been formed since 2016. The objective of this platform is to learn and share good practices, develop common communication messages and build a public discourse on child marriage. The platform is now steered by the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) and has the participation of people from different walks of life such as committed individuals, academics, media personnel/ journalists, lawyers, CSO representatives, officials from the District Child Protection Units, officials from the state level departments, community leaders and the like. Meetings usually take place on a quarterly basis. The members share their experiences, case studies and initiatives on child marriage. They also discuss the key communication messages. Tribal leaders, faith leaders and leaders of caste Panchayats have also participated in this platform to share their views and to contribute to action plans.



Case Study 6

Use of social media in combating child marriage

A message popped up in the “Say No to Child Marriage” Face book page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/281405295652400/>) mentioning that marriage has been fixed of a girl child of 14 years old studying in class 9 from Kamakhyanagar of Dhenkanal district with a 30 years old man. The messenger had a request to take immediate action to stop the child marriage. Responding to the posting in FB, the moderator of the page coordinated with Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights; District Child Protection Officer, Dhenkanal; Child Marriage Prohibition Officer of Kamakhyanagar and a NGO working at Kamakhyanagar. The volunteers of the NGO confirmed about the marriage and the age of the girl. Responding to that OSCPCR contacted the DCPO for immediate action. Together the DCPO, CMPO, representative of the NGO could reach the spot and rescued the girl child and produced her before the Child Welfare Committee. The child marriage could be stopped.

This is one of the active social media platforms in Odisha on combating child marriage where many such information is shared and addressed. Key stakeholders working on these issues have taken this platform as a place of learning and sharing. Members are posting their activities with photos, videos, news clips. The page is being used by many development workers, journalists as reference. Recently a social media campaign has been initiated to end child marriage named #postyourpledge, where thousands of peoples posted their photo with message board saying “No to child marriage”.

At present the group has 2114 members with 474 women and 1640 men mostly in the age group of 25 years to 55 years.

