



Department of Women &
Child Development
Government of Odisha

PREVENTION OF CHILD MARRIAGE

A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT







Smt. Pravati Parida

Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister

Department of Women and Child Development
Government of Odisha

MESSAGE

A society can truly progress only when every child is free to learn, grow, and dream without barriers. Child marriage deprives children, especially girls, of their childhood, education, health, and equal opportunities. It perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality, limiting the potential of future generations. Odisha envisions a future in which every child is nurtured in a safe, supportive, and empowering environment that enables them to realise their fullest potential.

The Government of Odisha has placed the protection and empowerment of children and women at the heart of its development agenda. Through flagship initiatives, community-based interventions, and strong interdepartmental convergence, we are taking determined steps to prevent child marriage. Our efforts focus on strengthening child protection mechanisms, expanding access to education and skill development for adolescent girls, mobilising Mission Shakti groups, and engaging community leaders and youth in sustained awareness campaigns.

I am pleased that this booklet, 'Preventing Child

Marriages in Odisha', brings together knowledge, strategies, and examples of collective action to inspire change at every level of society. It will serve as a valuable resource for parents, teachers, front-line workers, community organisations, and all stakeholders committed to safeguarding the rights and well-being of children.

I call upon parents, teachers, community leaders, and young people to join hands in this mission. Ending child marriage is not only about protecting children from harm, but also about upholding their right to dream, to learn, to play, and to grow into confident and empowered citizens. Together, we can and must ensure that no child is forced into marriage, and that every girl and boy in Odisha has the opportunity to build a brighter and more dignified future.

Pravati Parida







Smt. Anu Garg, IAS

Chief Secretary, Odisha

Department of Women and Child Development
Government of Odisha

MESSAGE

Child marriage undermines the constitutional principles of equality, dignity and opportunity guaranteed to every child. It disrupts education, compromises health outcomes, restricts economic participation, and perpetuates intergenerational cycles of deprivation and vulnerability. For Odisha, addressing child marriage is therefore not merely a matter of statutory enforcement, but a core governance and development priority.

With a population exceeding 40 million, including 22.8 per cent Scheduled Tribe and 17.1 per cent Scheduled Caste communities, and a substantial proportion of children and adolescents, Odisha's social and demographic diversity necessitates decentralised, context-sensitive and preventive response systems. The Government of Odisha has made steady and measurable progress in strengthening child protection mechanisms and advancing the rights and well-being of adolescents, particularly girls. The State's approach reflects a mature governance framework that combines legal enforcement, interdepartmental coordination, community participation, and sustained investment in adolescent empowerment.

According to NFHS-5, 20.5 per cent of women aged 20 to 24 years in Odisha were married before the age of 18, and the rate of teenage pregnancy stands at 7.6 per cent. These indicators have guided target-

ed, evidence-based interventions anchored through ADVIKA and the Odisha State Strategy and Action Plan to End Child Marriage. These efforts are further supported by school retention initiatives, strengthened health and nutrition linkages, structured community mobilisation, helpline-based reporting mechanisms, and an expanded network of Child Marriage Prohibition Officers to ensure robust last-mile vigilance and timely response.

This booklet presents Odisha's integrated approach by documenting key policies, institutional mechanisms, field-level practices and community-led initiatives that together constitute a comprehensive prevention ecosystem. The Government of Odisha remains firmly committed to ensuring that every child grows up safe, educated and empowered, and that every adolescent girl is supported to realise her full potential. Preventing child marriage is integral to building a healthy, skilled and confident population, and to securing the State's sustained social, economic and developmental progress.


Anu Garg





Dr. Mrinalini Darswal, IAS

Commissioner-cum-Secretary
Department of Women and Child Development
Government of Odisha

The Government of Odisha is taking firm and determined steps to eradicate child marriage by 2030, and the progress achieved so far is encouraging. This information booklet, Prevention of Child Marriage – A Collective Commitment, clearly outlines how this goal is being pursued through strong legal frameworks, well-designed programmes, and active community participation. It reflects our commitment to turning intent into meaningful action so that every girl can complete her education, pursue her aspirations, and make informed decisions about her own future.

At the core of these efforts lies the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, which prohibits marriage below 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys. The Act makes such marriages voidable and prescribes penalties of up to two years’ imprisonment and fines of up to ₹1 lakh for those involved. Odisha has strengthened enforcement by appointing more than 10,000 Child Marriage Prohibition Officers and over 63,000 Child Marriage Information Officers to monitor and intervene at the grassroots level. District Collectors serve as nodal officers, and district task forces bring together departments such as Women and Child Development, Health, and Education to ensure coordinated and timely action.

Significant progress has also been achieved through targeted programmes. The ADVIKA scheme, meaning “I am unique”, launched in 2020 in partnership with UNICEF, has reached more than 2.5 million adolescents through engaging and practical sessions on leadership, education, and life skills. It has contributed to the declaration of over 11,000 villages as child marriage-free and has helped prevent hundreds of child marriages each year. Mission Shakti strengthens both protection under Samarthya, and economic empowerment under Samarthya,

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and economic empowerment under Samarthya, while the Subhadra Yojana provides eligible women with financial assistance of ₹50,000 over five years to enhance their economic independence. Focused initiatives, including the recent 100-day drive towards a child marriage-free state, have mobilised ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, and youth leaders to engage directly with families and communities.

The data demonstrates measurable impact. Between 2019 and 2024, more than 14,000 child marriages were prevented. Over 13,500 villages and 954 Gram Panchayats have declared themselves child marriage-free. From 2019 to early 2025, authorities registered 8,159 cases, with higher reporting in districts such as Nabarangpur, which recorded 1,347 cases. Increased case registration often reflects improved reporting mechanisms and proactive intervention rather than a rise in incidence. According to NFHS-5, Odisha’s child marriage prevalence stands at approximately 20.5 per cent, below the national average of 23.3 per cent. Focused efforts continue in rural and tribal areas where the challenge remains more acute.

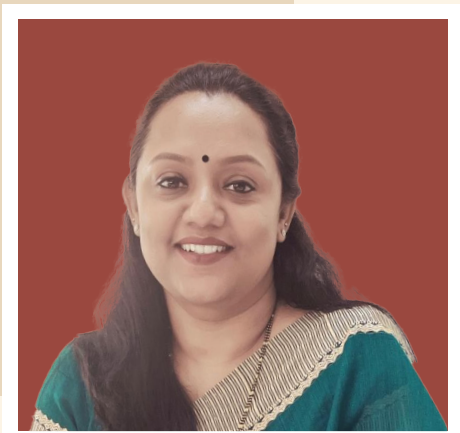
These figures represent more than statistics. They signify more girls remaining in school, enjoying better health outcomes, and building secure and dignified futures. Services such as Childline 1098 make reporting accessible, while sustained partnerships with UNICEF, civil society organisations, and local communities strengthen collective action. This booklet presents key resources, inspiring success stories, and practical guidance for parents, teachers, and community leaders to contribute meaningfully.

Odisha’s experience demonstrates that child marriage is not inevitable. It is preventable when legislation, policy, institutions, and communities work together with shared purpose. Let us continue this collective effort, one alert, one conversation, and one supported girl at a time. Together, we can ensure that Odisha becomes a truly child marriage-free state by 2030.


Mrinalini Darswal







Smt. Monisha Banerjee, IAS
Director, ICDS and Social Welfare
Department of Women and Child Development
Government of Odisha

MESSAGE

Preventing child marriage remains central to our commitment to safeguarding the rights of children and empowering girls across Odisha. The Department has taken a proactive and sustained approach in translating the State's vision into effective ground-level action through a comprehensive range of community-based and institutional interventions.

Our key initiatives include the State Strategy and Action Plan to End Child Marriage, the formation and strengthening of Child Protection Committees at village and block levels, systematic capacity building of frontline functionaries, and continuous awareness campaigns engaging parents, adolescents, and community leaders. Through Mission Shakti groups, adolescent empowerment programmes, and close convergence with the Departments of School and Mass Education, Health and Family Welfare, and Home, we are ensuring that preventive efforts reach the most vulnerable families and communities.

Odisha has witnessed a measurable decline in child marriage prevalence, from 21.3 per cent as reported in NFHS-4 to 20.5 per cent in NFHS-5. While this

progress is encouraging, we remain committed to accelerating the pace of change. The Department also utilises robust monitoring systems, helplines, and grassroots networks to identify and prevent at-risk cases in a timely and coordinated manner.

This booklet, 'Preventing Child Marriages in Odisha', serves as an important resource for stakeholders, practitioners, and communities to better understand both the challenges and the collective solutions required. I urge all partners, civil society organisations, and citizens to strengthen their commitment and work collaboratively towards creating a child marriage-free Odisha.

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Monisha Banerjee





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INTRODUCTION

"No More Lost Childhoods - Empower Every Girl in Odisha."

Child marriage remains one of Odisha's most urgent gender and child rights challenges. Despite legal protections and developmental progress, entrenched social norms, poverty, and gender inequality continue to limit opportunities and threaten the future of adolescent girls.

Odisha, with a population of 4.65 crore, is home to diverse communities, including 22.8% Scheduled Tribes and 17.1% Scheduled Castes. These socio-economic realities disproportionately affect girls in tribal, rural, and marginalised areas, reinforcing cycles of disadvantage. Although women make up nearly half the population, their access to education, healthcare, livelihood opportunities, and political participation remains limited.

According to NFHS-5, 20.5% of girls in Odisha are still married before the

age of 18, and teenage pregnancy rates have stalled at 7.6%. Secondary school dropout rates remain high (23.6%), exacerbated by poverty, early marriage, and gender norms. Alarming, anaemia among women of reproductive age has risen from 51% to 64.3%, and the child sex ratio has declined from 932 to 894, revealing deep-rooted gender bias.

The Government of Odisha has launched several initiatives-like Advika, Mamata Yojana and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao- to promote gender equality and support at-risk girls. Though these efforts create important pathways for inclusion and protection, systemic transformation remains a challenge.

To address this, the State Strategy and Action Plan to End Child Marriage (2019–2030) was developed and strengthened in 2024 with renewed





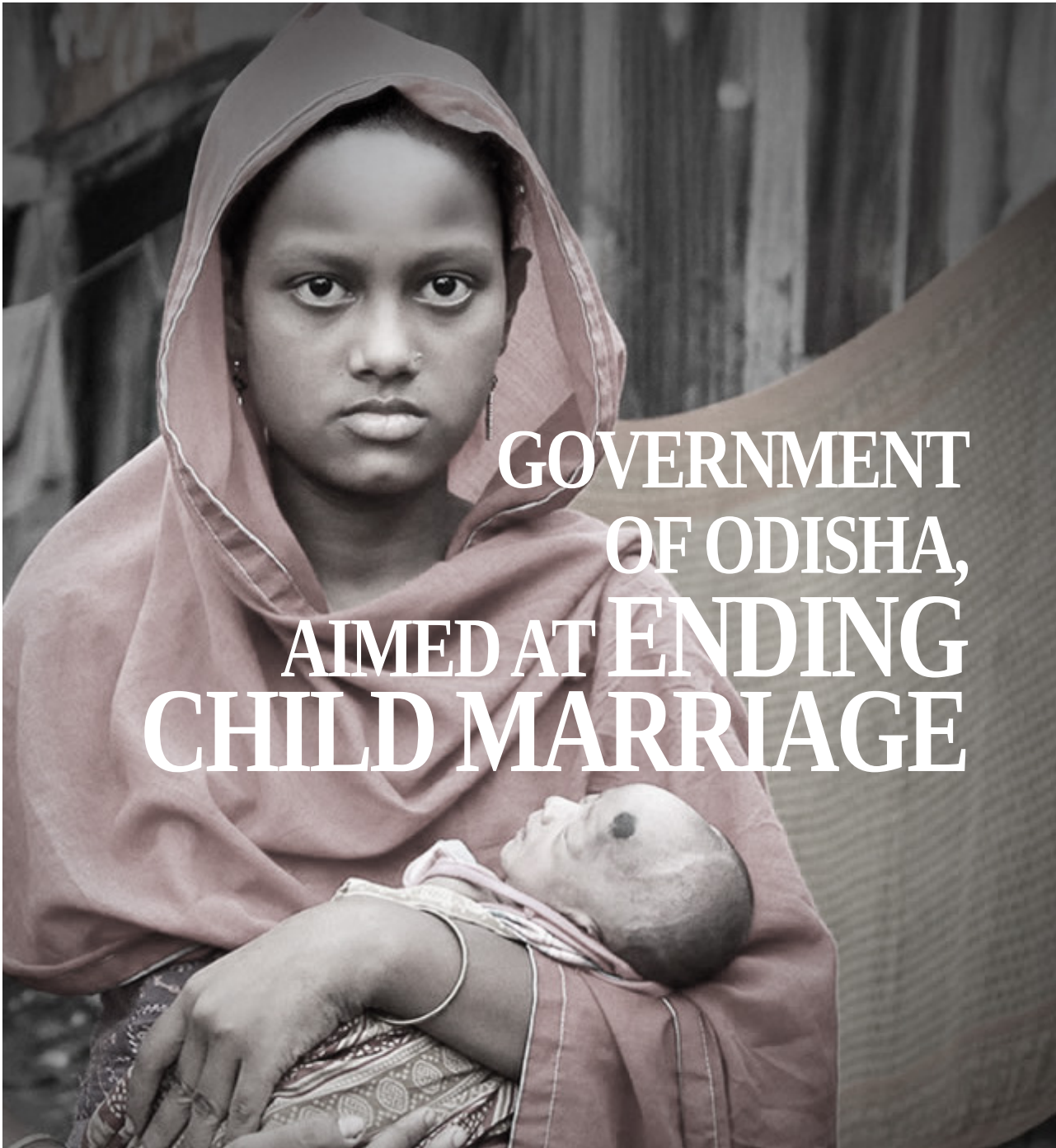
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CHILD MARRIAGE** A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT



focus on prevention, adolescent empowerment, community engagement, and systemic reform-all grounded in a rights-based, gender-transformative framework.

This booklet highlights key initiatives by the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Odisha, aimed at ending

child marriage. It presents a comprehensive overview of legal, institutional, and community efforts while shedding light on the structural barriers that sustain early marriage. Ending child marriage is not only a legal and developmental imperative but a moral responsibility-every girl deserves the opportunity to live with dignity, freedom, and equal rights.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND STATE INITIATIVES

"Legal Shield, Social Will - Together We End Child Marriage."

Odisha's efforts to end child marriage are grounded in a strong legal and policy framework, combining national laws with state-specific strategies. These legal provisions recognise child marriage as a violation of children's rights—especially girls' rights to education, health, protection, and freedom from exploitation.

National Legal Framework

Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006: This is the primary legislation in India to prevent and address child marriage. It defines a child as any girl under 18 and any boy under 21 years, criminalises child marriage, and empowers authorities to annul such marriages. The Act mandates appointment of Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs) to enforce the law, protect victims, and prosecute offenders including parents, guardians, and community members.

State-Level Initiatives in Odisha

*"Protect, Empower, Prevent—
A Future Free from Child Marriage."*

Odisha adopts a multi-sectoral approach combining prevention, protection, and empowerment by strengthening institutional mechanisms, improving girls' access to education and services, and engaging communities to change social norms.

Key initiatives include:

**Odisha Prohibition of
Child Marriage Rule,
2019:** In Odisha, the implementation of the PCMA is significantly bolstered by a strong legal and administrative framework through the Odisha Prohibition of Child Marriage Rule, 2019.





PREVENTION OF CHILD MARRIAGE

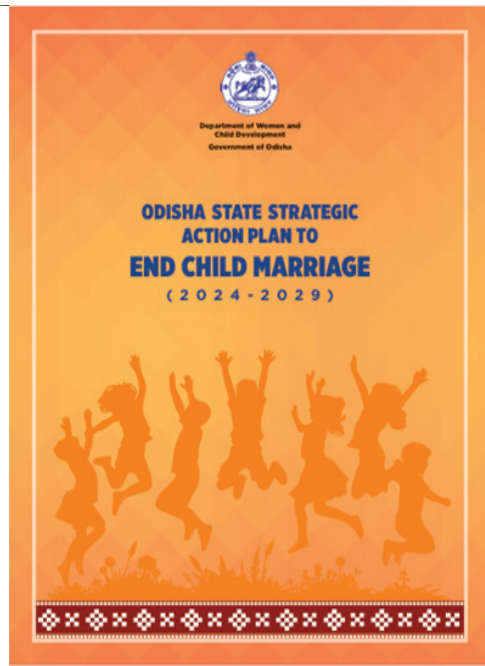
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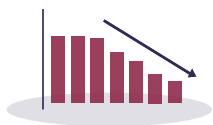
Key features:

- **Chief Child Marriage Prohibition Officer (CCMPO):** Director, ICDS & SW from the Women and Child Development Department is designated as the CCMPO to administer and coordinate the work relating to Child Marriage Prohibition throughout the State.
- **District Collectors as Nodal Officers:** At the district level, the Collector functions as the nodal officer responsible for periodically reviewing implementation and ensuring convergence across departments. In addition to this, for the purposes of preventing the solemnisation of mass child marriages on certain days such as Akshaya Tritiya, the District Magistrate shall be deemed to be the Child Marriage Prohibition Officer with all powers as are conferred on a Child Marriage Prohibition Officer by or under this Act.
- **Increase in the number of CMPOs:** In Odisha, Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs), have been officially designated as Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs) under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006. In a further step to strengthen the child protection ecosystem, the Government of Odisha has also extended the CMPO designation to Panchayat Executive Officers (PEOs) and Wardens or Matrons of Residential Hostels under the Scheduled Tribes & Scheduled Castes Development Department and the School & Mass Education Department. This integrated, cross- departmental approach significantly improves the state's ability to identify, monitor, and prevent child marriage- particularly in tribal and marginalised communities- through timely surveillance, reporting, and intervention.
- **Designation of CMIOs:** Principals & Headmasters of Higher Education Department & S&ME Deptt. is declared as CMIO Child Marriage Information Officers to assist Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs).





State Strategy and Action Plan to End Child Marriage (2024–2029):



The State Strategy and Action Plan to End Child Marriage (SSAP), originally launched in 2019, is a landmark roadmap developed by the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Odisha. It presents a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder framework focused on prevention, protection, and empowerment of adolescents, with an emphasis on addressing the root causes of child marriage.



A key feature of the SSAP is the institutionalisation of District, Block, and Gram Panchayat-Level Task Forces, which play a pivotal role in:



- Coordinating inter- departmental efforts
- Monitoring and responding to child marriage cases

The revised State Strategy and Action Plan to End Child Marriage

(SSAP) 2024–2029 builds on earlier efforts and marks a shift from awareness-raising to deeper, systemic transformation. It adopts a rights-based and gender- transformative framework, focusing on empowering adolescents- especially girls- while strengthening families, communities, institutions, and data systems.

Strategic Interventions to End Child Marriage:

Strengthening Implementation of Legal & Policy Framework

- I. Encourage and evaluate governmental policies and initiatives and define the roles and duties of various stakeholders at various levels to enhance their execution and enforcement of the law.
- II. Mapping of children vulnerable to child marriage, especially school dropouts and children of migrant workers' families, and strategic intervention for their inclusion with education and family strengthening.



**Creating & Enabling
Environment**

- I. Establish and promote partnerships with elected representatives at the state, district, block, and gram panchayat levels as strong advocates against child marriage.
- II. Popularise reporting mechanisms such as child-line/hotline/women’s helpline and establish local redress mechanisms like complaint boxes in educational institutions.
- III. Provide comprehensive care, protection, and counselling services to married girls, teenage pregnant adolescents, and adolescent

mothers to ensure their well-being and empowerment.

**Empowering Adolescents
through Multi-Sectoral
approaches, Life skills
Education & Gender
Transformative approaches**

- I. Emphasise Gender Equality & participation
- II. Education & Skill Development
- III. Health & Safety
- IV. Adolescent Empowerment & Life Skills
- V. Community Engagement & Legal reforms

Together, these Strategic Interventions form a comprehensive and scalable framework that aligns legal enforcement with social transformation. The SSAP envisions an Odisha where every girl can grow up safe, educated, and empowered to determine her own future-free from the threat of child marriage.



The Advika scheme, aimed at empowering adolescent girls and boys aged 10-19 through education and life skills

**ADVIKA: A Path to
Adolescent Empowerment:**

ADVIKA – a path to adolescent empowerment in the year 2023 is a state-wide initiative focused on adolescent empowerment, particularly aiming to prevent child marriage and promote girls’ rights. The Scheme, which has been expanded to include adolescent boys, focuses on

reducing vulnerability and making adolescents self-reliant and empowered. The Advika scheme, aimed at empowering adolescent girls and boys aged 10-19 through education and life skills, serves as a unified platform to link various schemes targeted at this demographic, ensuring they receive comprehensive support both in and out of school.

1098
Child Helpline

Odisha has established a robust network of emergency helplines to support real-time reporting and intervention in child marriage cases. The 181 Women Helpline and 1098 Childline along with the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS)

112, provide immediate assistance to girls and children at risk. The Women and Child Development (WCD) Department, Government of Odisha, has undertaken a state-wide wall-painting initiative. The campaign involves visually engaging wall paintings at all CDPO offices and functional Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) across Odisha.



Odisha has instituted a multi-level coordination system that includes:

- o District, Block, and Gram Panchayat Level Task Forces
- o These grassroots and institutional bodies work closely with CMPOs, Anganwadi Workers, ASHAs, and PRI members to identify vulnerable children, conduct awareness drives, and prevent planned child marriages.

In alignment with the State

Strategy and Action Plan to End Child Marriage, various convergence initiatives were undertaken with key departments to ensure coordinated and integrated action. These included the Higher Education Department, Panchayati Raj Department, ST & SC Development Department, School and Mass Education (S&ME) Department, and the Health & Family Welfare Department. Through joint planning, awareness activities, capacity building, and service linkages, these departments contributed to creating an enabling ecosystem for adolescent empowerment and child marriage prevention at multiple levels.



INITIATIVES AND
ACHIEVEMENTS

Child Marriage
Free village and
districts

"Declare with Pride: We Protect Our Daughters."

Odisha has adopted a proactive and multi-pronged approach to eradicate child marriage, focusing on both preventive strategies and community-led transformation. A key initiative in this effort is the declaration of Child Marriage-Free Villages-tangible indicators of progress and community resilience against harmful traditional practices.

These declarations are far from symbolic; they reflect sustained grassroots action through awareness campaigns, stakeholder engagement, and the strengthening of child protection mechanisms. The state's strategy integrates data-driven interventions with strong community ownership to identify vulnerable areas and scale up effective practices. These efforts are critical for shifting mindsets and building a protective, supportive environment for children, especially girls.

Together, these initiatives mark significant milestones in Odisha's commitment to ending child marriage and securing a safe, empowered future for every child.

Sl. No	District	Total Villages	No of child marriage free Villages
1	Ganjam	3309	3309
2	Gajapati	1510	1510
3	Kandhamal	2515	1441
4	Rayagada	2656	1345
5	Nabarangpur	3124	1053
6	Subarnapur	962	772
7	Nayagarh	1532	764
8	Deogarh	720	585
9	Mayurbhanj	3950	528
10	Nuapada	658	408
11	Angul	1930	405
12	Malkangiri	1055	364
13	Jharsuguda	354	177
14	Sambalpur	1350	171
15	Jajpur	1881	152
16	Bargarh	1208	148
17	Bolangir	1792	96
18	Cuttack	2111	86
19	Balasore	3049	68
20	Kendrapara	1500	64
21	Keonjhar	2132	43
22	Puri	1722	29
23	Sundargarh	1779	18

“
Awareness is
Power.
Spread the
Word, Stop
the Marriage
”

In Odisha’s statewide movement to eliminate child marriage, efforts are being made to identify and declare “Child Marriage-Free Villages.” These are communities where proactive measures have been taken to prevent the practice, ensure child protection, and promote awareness and education. As per the data, districts such as Ganjam (3,309 villages), Gajapati (1,510 villages), have made significant strides and have been declared as child marriage-free districts. This demonstrates both administrative commitment and strong community mobilisation in these areas.

Sl. No.	District Name	YEAR 2022		YEAR 2023		YEAR 2024	
		Received	Prevented	Received	Prevented	Received	Prevented
1	Angul	57	57	81	81	73	69
2	Bolangir	76	76	31	31	98	27
3	Balasore	100	100	80	80	37	73
4	Bargarh	29	29	45	45	22	20
5	Bhadrak	37	37	22	22	26	11
6	Boudh	37	37	32	32	9	8
7	Cuttack	23	23	41	41	29	25
8	Deogarh	48	48	24	24	8	6
9	Dhenkanal	55	55	33	33	33	32
10	Gajapati	46	46	27	27	20	18
11	Ganjam	331	331	104	104	43	57
12	Jagatsinghpur	12	12	18	18	19	22
13	Jajpur	26	26	19	19	32	32
14	Jharsuguda	28	28	9	9	12	12
15	Kalahandi	14	14	11	11	23	23
16	Kandhamal	58	58	60	60	73	48
17	Kendrapada	35	35	24	24	14	10
18	Keonjhar	87	87	36	36	33	33
19	Khordha	37	37	19	19	16	15
20	Koraput	62	62	55	55	155	153
21	Malkangiri	72	72	54	54	64	64
22	Mayurbhanj	130	130	82	82	53	53
23	Nabarangpur	297	297	440	440	417	373
24	Nayagarh	74	74	61	61	26	21
25	Nuapada	33	33	16	16	9	9
26	Puri	26	26	34	34	28	31
27	Rayagada	121	121	48	48	53	46
28	Sambalpur	16	16	8	8	13	12
29	Subarnapur	71	71	38	38	14	7
30	Sundargarh	78	78	72	72	85	82
Total		2116	2116	1624	1624	1537	1392

These outcomes reflect the effectiveness of proactive community engagement, sustained surveillance, and key interventions such as ADVIKA, District- and Block-Level Task Forces, and the State Strategy and Action Plan to End Child Marriage.



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Swift
Interventions
to Protect
Children at
Risk of Early
Marriage
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Rescue and Rapid Response Mechanism

As part of Odisha’s sustained efforts to end child marriage, the state has institutionalised rapid response and rescue mechanisms through coordinated action by district administrations, Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), Child Protection Units, and the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) network. These

systems aim not only to prevent child marriages but also to intervene promptly in high-risk cases through counselling, legal safeguards, and rehabilitation.

During the Akshaya Tiritiya Week (24–30 April 2025) and subsequent days, districts reported timely rescues and preventive actions that underscore the effectiveness of Odisha’s convergence model. Noteworthy among them were the following interventions:



Rescue of a Minor in Lanjigarh Block

In Turisemel village of Lanjigarh block, a 12-year-old girl who had eloped with an adult male was successfully traced and rescued. The District Child Protection Unit, with support from local frontline workers, produced the child before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) as per legal procedure. After assessment and counselling, the child was safely reunited with her mother under monitored conditions.

Following the rescue, a community awareness programme was conducted in the village. The event was attended by the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), Lady Supervisor (LS), One-Stop Centre

(OSC) staff, and Women Hub members, who collectively addressed local families on the legal, emotional, and social implications of child marriage and elopement. The programme aimed to reinforce community vigilance and encourage early reporting of such incidents.





Prevention of Child Marriage in Khordha Project

On 3rd May 2025, in the Khordha project area, an attempted child marriage between Barsa (14 years) of Keranga and Bikas (20 years) of Champaur was successfully prevented. Acting on local intelligence, the ICDS team, in coordination with law enforcement and community stakeholders, intervened swiftly. The family was issued a formal notice, and both parties underwent extensive counselling to understand the legal consequences and developmental

risks associated with early marriage.

These cases demonstrate the effectiveness of Odisha’s real-time, community-linked response system, which includes:

- Frontline detection by Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), ADVIKA peer leaders, and PRIs.
- Immediate legal action and counselling through DCPU and CWC engagement.
- Community sensitisation as part of post-rescue rehabilitation to prevent recurrence.



Institutional Mechanisms in Action

These interventions reflect the operational strength of Odisha’s child protection ecosystem, where district-level convergence units, supported by Mission Vatsalya, ADVIKA, and Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs), are empowered to act swiftly. Through a blend of surveillance, counselling, family reintegration, and grassroots awareness, Odisha ensures that children are not only rescued from immediate harm but are also supported through recovery and reintegration.

The success of these rescue operations reinforces the state’s commitment to:

- Preventing all forms of child rights violations.
- Strengthening real-time coordination between law enforcement and child protection actors.
- Embedding community accountability within formal child protection structures.



“ Building Awareness and Capacity to Prevent Child Marriage ”

Training and IEC

A core pillar of Odisha’s strategy to end child marriage is the sustained investment in Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) along with capacity building of key stakeholders and community members. Through statewide campaigns, cultural outreach, and focused training, the

state has adopted a multi-pronged approach to raise awareness, shift harmful social norms, and empower adolescents and families with knowledge of their rights and available protections. The following sections highlight key initiatives undertaken under this component during the reporting period.



Akshaya Tritiya

Preventing Child Marriage During Akshaya Tritiya: A Statewide Campaign of Vigilance and Empowerment

Akshaya Tritiya, traditionally celebrated as an auspicious occasion for marriage, also poses an increased risk of child marriages across Odisha. Acknowledging this vulnerability, the Department of Women and Child Development led a coordinated, week-long campaign from 24 to 30 April 2025, mobilising districts to raise awareness, activate local surveillance mechanisms, and prevent early marriages through community-based interventions.

This initiative was rooted in the State Strategy and Action Plan to End Child Marriage and aligned with the objectives of ADVIKA and the legal mandates of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006). The campaign adopted an integrated approach—combining preventive, promotive, and protective measures—and brought together district administrations, adolescent groups, service

providers, community leaders, and child protection institutions.

Key Highlights

Mass Awareness Campaigns: Over 12,000 awareness activities were organised across rural and urban settings, including rallies, pledges, community meetings and ADVIKA sessions. These reached and engaged more than 2.5 lakh individuals, including adolescents, parents, PRI representatives, and women’s self-help groups.

Strengthened Convergence and Coordination: Multi-stakeholder meetings were held at district and block levels to enhance coordination among CDPOs/CMPOs, PRI members, religious leaders, AWWs, NGOs, and Child Welfare Committees.

Targeted Surveillance and Family Counselling: High-risk locations such as temples, mass gatherings, and tribal belts were closely monitored. Field-level staff-AWWs, PRI members, conducted door-to-door visits to identify children at risk, counsel families, and intervene when needed.





Outcomes and Impact

The Akshaya Tiritiya campaign served as a catalyst in Odisha’s ongoing efforts to prevent child marriage by:

- Elevating public visibility and institutional urgency around child marriage risks during festival periods.
- Empowering adolescent girls and their families to assert their right to delay marriage.

- Reinforcing cross-departmental accountability and convergence in implementation.
- By embedding child marriage prevention efforts within culturally relevant observances, Odisha continues to pioneer a context-sensitive, community-driven approach to protect children’s rights and promote adolescent empowerment.

Akshaya Tiritiya Week (24–30 April 2025)

Sl.No	District	Villages Covered	People Reached	Children Identified at Risk	Home Visits Conducted
1.	Koraput	2,269	54,352	720	720
2.	Nabarangpur	863	53,719	1,057	3,000
3.	Kendrapara	1,506	68,952	4	2,755
4.	Sambalpur	1,639	17,391	2	2000
5.	Keonjhar	3,361	1000	N/A	500
6.	Bargarh	958	11,480	17	536
7.	Gajapati	1487	32481	5	573
8.	Ganjam	3628	89735	565	5640
9.	Subarnapur	963	35215	2	2775
10.	Balangir	2325	67750	N/A	4560
11.	Mayurbhanj	3411	87800	4	2709
12.	Deogarh	773	16233	1	825
13.	Nuapada	564	16653	2	2605
14.	Kandhamal	917	18535	1	3417
15.	Jajpur	746	13278	1	1023
16.	Sundargarh	1792	68380	3	15
17.	Rayagada	2153	47250	0	150
18.	Malkangiri	1055	22303	7	262
19.	Balasore	2535	51230	5	320
20.	Puri	1722	48981	2	5108
21.	Angul	2275	45557	123	7889
22.	Cuttack	1969	39380	6	5907
23.	Jharsuguda	399	5173	N/A	18
24.	Nayagarh	977	17073	7	3700
25.	Khordha	1087	26419	5	2606
26.	Dhenkanal	823	12354	NA	1023
27.	Bhadrak	1240	27351	7	8264
28.	Kalahandi	1964	73517	0	6547
29.	Jagatsinghpur	1320	15840	4	5280
30.	Boudh	725	16118	NIL	859



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*Culturally
Rooted
Awareness on
Ending Child
Marriage*

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Folk Shows

Folk shows were leveraged as an effective community mobilisation strategy to raise awareness on child marriage, adolescent rights, and protective services. Recognising the persuasive power of traditional art forms, the Department of Women and Child Development encouraged districts to integrate local folk media into their awareness drives.

These performances-conducted in open village spaces-served as interactive platforms that brought together adolescents, parents, teachers, PRI members, AWWs, and local influencers. Shows were performed in local dialects and popular formats such as Dasakathia, Pala, Bharata Lila and other traditional narratives. They creatively conveyed key messages to:

- Challenge social norms and myths supporting early marriage.
- Explain provisions under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) and promote available services such as ADVIKA sessions, and Women Helpline (181)
- **Impact and Community Response:** Hundreds of villages across Odisha witnessed these performances, which engaged thousands of citizens. The shows served not merely as entertainment, but

as catalysts for dialogue and change. In many locations, they were followed by:

- Community pledge-taking against child marriage.
- Identification of at-risk adolescents by frontline workers.
- Immediate follow-up and counselling by ICDS and DCPU teams.
- The folk show initiative effectively:
 - Opened dialogue in socially conservative and hard-to-reach areas.
 - Bridged literacy gaps through oral storytelling and drama.
 - Reinforced and amplified messages delivered via ADVIKA and other platforms.

By grounding legal and developmental messages in Odisha's rich cultural traditions, folk shows demonstrated the potential of inclusive, community-owned strategies to combat child marriage and empower adolescents.

Conclusion

The fight against child marriage in Odisha is far from over-but the direction is clear. Through laws, systems, partnerships, and people's participation, the state is building a future where every girl can learn, lead, and live with dignity.



Ending child marriage is not just a policy goal-it is a promise to every girl.





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