



GIRLS NOT WIVES

"I have become a change agent to safeguard other girls from the adversities I faced in my life due to child marriage" - says Kamalini Pradhan



Kamalini Pradhan (in picture left) is a 'Yuva Mitra' (Youth's Friend/Change agent) in Agalpur village, Balangir district, Orissa. She was married off at the age of 17, just after finishing high school. She talks about the trauma she went through at a very young age due to motherhood, financial burdens, chaos in the family, mental and health disorders.

Kamalini's story is just 1 of many other girls in 400 villages where DF and 20 partner organizations are seeking to bring an end to child marriage. Yuva Mitras like Kamalini, nearly 2,400 of them, have been trained to provide inputs on adolescent health to more than 30,000 youth who meet in youth clubs, discuss issues affecting their lives and participate in community work. This initiative enables girls to gather courage and convince their parents and elders in the community, not to marry them off early, but to support their aspirations to study further, acquire vocational skills and earn a decent living to support their lives.

Child marriage is a social evil, widespread across India. Several socio-economic factors contribute to this practice, affecting children who have no say in this matter.

We at Development Focus (DF) believe that every child has the right to a decent life - education, health, joy of childhood, livelihood and choices on matters like marriage. We sensitize youth and adult community members on child rights, which includes Sexual and Reproductive Health rights. They are also sensitized on the adverse effects of child marriage on the girl child.

Your support can make a difference to these girls and will enable us reach out to other 'Kamalini's' from poor and marginalized communities in remote, tribal regions of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa.



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