



Girls Not Bride: Thar Extension of Global Campaign to End Child Marriage

Second quarter report to the donors and the
Global Giving platform
January 15 - March 2015



Urmul Trust, India



Dear supporters,

The previous quarter was a very exciting, fruitful, and a full of activities time Across the fronts - village, community, media, government - we reached out successfully and made significant attitudinal, structural and advocacy mark, across.

We continued our work in the community-participation approach - engaging village elders, women, and youth at different platforms and mobilising them for specific changemaking components - towards taking the village close to a child marriage free story. Our efforts are showing results not only in the specific project areas but through 'butterfly-effect', in inspiring others of the region to follow the same for the future of children of the village.

While several more villages declared themselves child marriage free, we hosted many local and trans-oceanic guests; we shared with them our work - the stories of challenges and inspiration. Numerous meetings with government officials at different levels, helped sensitize and aware them on the issue, while also securing their support for our activities - which

at times, also get some harsh reactions - as these involves talking about misplced traditions and religious practices and also criticising government lathargy on the issue.

We got a great support of local and national media. Italian Journalist, writer & philosopher Andriano Sofri visited our work and wrote brilliant pieces for 'La Republica'. Few national newspapers covered our work, state tv station invited us for discussion and in coming few days, a group of tv jounralists would be visitng our field areas.

As we prepare for 'Akhateej', a very auspicious wedding day (on 21st of april) but unfortunately also a day when the maximum number of child marriages happen; we are happy to share this quarter's report...

We thanks you for all you support,

Arvind Ojha
Urmul Trust

The project team engaged communities through following specific activities, events, and intervention

Adolescents girls groups

Regular follow-ups and formation of new adolescents groups in the project area has been a major task accomplished. These groups are the nodal platform to interact directly with the adolescents and motivating them to be more curious, informed and proactive in the cases of child marriage, child rights and connecting every child with education. In groups, the participants meet, play sports, discuss on promoting child rights, education, reducing school drop outs and also legal implications of child marriage including Child Marriage Act 2006. Group meetings are held at regular intervals while sports are a daily activity. Members also decide and work on special day's celebration or organising some special sessions.

Interaction sessions at schools

The project team regularly organises interaction sessions at schools. These sessions are pre structured with use of multimedia and followed up with open house discussion and interaction. Teachers and students of particular class(es) all participate in these sessions. This way the message reaches the homes as well. Various issues/themes are covered in these sessions including child rights, Child Marriage Act, role of adolescents in controlling child marriages, Childline helpline and how to access its service

Meetings with village groups and opinion leaders

This is an important component of the project towards sensitizing different stakeholders in the village on the issues of child rights and child marriages. These meetings are organised with Self Help Groups, Local Governance groups (Panchayati Raj Institution), elders in the villages, women and so on -the people who can make a positive impact.





In addition to the previously mentioned core activities following also played a vital role in the programme in the last quarter

Visit of local & international guests

Many supporters, friends visited us in the previous quarter to see the work we are doing in the area of child marriages. Important amongst them were,

- Mr. Andriano Sofri, Journalist-writer and an intellectual voice taken very seriously in Italy
- Mrs. Neige De Benedetti, Photojournalist, La Repubblica, Italy
- Mr. Samuel, State Head, UNICEF India
- Ms Arti Dogra, IAS, District Magistrate, District of Bikaner, Rajasthan

All these visits helped the project in different capacities. While the Italian delegates went back and wrote some fantastic pieces for the newspapers, UNICEF's visit helped in policy briefing. Similarly the visit by the district Magistrate helped greatly in showcasing the work locally and also improving the liaison with the government officials. During all the visits, the delegates interacted widely with the communities, school children and also the adolescent girls groups.

Two child marriage free village declaration events

In the last quarter two villages took up the onus and the Village Council decided to organise community event to declare their village child marriage free. These two events organised at **Benisar & Surjansar** villages, were attended by the inspired communities from the nearby areas too. Several dignitaries attended these events and appreciated the efforts of the village and the project team. The village councils of both the villages took pledge not to promote child marriage, to closely monitor any secret attempts to marry off the wards and to continue efforts to promote child rights in their villages and communities.

5 interactive sessions at different schools in the project area. Total participation of 255 individuals covering teachers and students

1160 women of 86 SHGs from 60 villages were reached out on the issue of child rights and child marriage

2

Villages declared child marriage free

25 group meetings organised with different stakeholders, elders, opinion leaders in different villages.

Major focus on Benisar, Dheerdesar and Thukariyasar villages

Formation of 8 new groups of adolescent girls, with total membership of over 150 girls in these groups

8 girls enrolled back to schools through these groups

A heartily thank you to all the funders
and supporters of the campaign !

- Urmul Team, Thar Desert, India
April 2015

