



“When I was only 4 years old I fell off from the terrace and sustained an injury on my leg, my parents took me to various places for treatment and nothing happened. Gradually, it became weaker and weaker. My parents are very poor and I have seven younger siblings, so when after 8th grade my parents wanted me to get married, I felt really bad. I didn’t give up. With the help of my teacher and Urmul, I persuaded my parents to change their decision. I am now studying in 11th grade would not stop till I become fully educated”

Kanta Kumari D/O Laluram Nayak, from Benisar village, Bikaner

Kanta Kumari is the eldest child of Laluram Nayak. Both her parents belong to a backward community and are illiterate. They work as daily wage laborers with very little income. When she became disabled her parent tried to get her some treatment but it didn’t help. Worrying about the prospects about her marriage due to her disability, along with succumbing to the pressure from their relatives they decided to get her married after 8th grade. She didn’t want to get married, so she contacted the teacher in her class, who along with friends from Urmul went to her home and tried convincing her parents and relatives to not get Kanta married against her wish. After many rounds of persuading the family, pressure from panchayat (Local/ village level administration body) and threat of legal action, Kanta’s parents finally agreed.

After that she got her disability certificate from the government, along with a rail and bus pass, and workers Urmul facilitated the process of her getting the disability pension she ought to receive from the government. Now she is studying again; in 2014 she achieved the first rank in the 10th board exam, which encouraged her parents to permit her to study further and she is now studying in Grade 11 in Shreedungargarh. She is also quite instrumental in involving and registering other girls from the village who are reeling under similar circumstances. Kanta’s story of struggle with her impairment as well as with social pressures/ stigma of early marriage, is inspirational for every girl of her village; it shows that if some support and encouragement is given from the society, many more Kantas could emerge.