



*“My father died six year ago, while I was still studying. And about two years back I had to leave school. I joined the ‘Sabla’ group in the village and while attending a Urmul camp I came to know about my rights. After that I went back home and asked my mother to study further. She refused and started preparing for my marriage. Asha from the village came to know about it and explained to my mother about the danger of marrying at a young age; she told her about how another young girl from village died soon after child birth. But my uncle and grandfather were against the idea of me going back to school. I didn’t give up. Along with Asha and help from other girls from the group I convinced my family and finally went back to school. ”*

*Suman Kumari D/o Banwari Khan Resident of village from Jaisalmer*

Suman is a 17 year old girl and the eldest child in her family. Her father, Banwari Khan died six years ago. Subsequently, she had to leave schooling midway. She joined ‘Sabla’ group and while attending Urmul training camp she received information about her rights and wanted to study more. Her family refused and wanted to get her married. Asha, a local girl from the village proactively helped her, and explained the dangers of early marriage to her mother. But there was stiff pressure from her uncle and grandfather. Asha then spoke to the local school teacher, women’s health group, local/village level representative and they all went to Suman’s house to persuade them. With help of other relatives and girls from ‘Sabla’ group, Suman put pressure on the family. After few days of resistance they succumbed to the pressure and allowed her to go back to school. She came first in grade 10<sup>th</sup> exam and now is studying in grade 11<sup>th</sup>. She now gets a scholarship, which encourages her to study further. According to her interest, she along with 5 other girls from the village presented a play on Child marriage for the Child Rights Commission’s workshop, which was well appreciated. Her courage to fight for her rights and leadership tells a tale of immense potential of these girls, which if nurtured, and protected from perils of child marriage could go a long way in creating a congenial environment for the girl child in traditionally patriarchal societies.