

“Where there’s will there is way”

Background of Story:

This is the story of Lata Rana is 19years adolescent girl from Rana Samaj at Khairani village of Saiphala Gram Panchayat at Nuapada Block, Nuapada district comes under western Odisha boarder of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh state. The local language and environment influence by Chhattisgarhi. This village consists of Rana, Harijan, Majhi & Goud samaj basically belongs to SC, ST & OBC category population live in the village. The village is 30 kms from the Block head quarter. People are depending on Darlimunda PHC and also Sub center during their health problem. People mostly depend on marginal agriculture and daily Labor for their livelihood and sources of income. Lack of knowledge and information pushes the village people to take very complicated steps for adolescent girls. Parents think adolescent girl is burden for the family and also they believe girls are born for other family, creating bonding system through marriage. Even girls do believe that they do not have other option rather than marriage; very often girls have to travel long distance for higher education which is unsafe and hazards environments all the way to collage or institution. In order to ensure her safety and protection parents think of marriage their daughters at early age.

Family Background and Economic Condition:

Miss. Lata Rana, age 16 live with her parents at Khairani village of Sahipala panchayat. Her father is Hemsagar Rana who is a marginal farmer & Mother House wife and supports her husband in agricultural activities. She has 4 sisters & one brother. Her parents humble earning is not enough to meet the need of the family member, so it's the reason entire family migrate to other state of Odisha in search of livelihood for 6 to 7months in a year. Unfortunately after the completion of 7th standard she dropped her study, because she was forced to migrant Andhra Pradesh with her Parents. Her grandmother said that, ***“My granddaughter wants to continue for higher education but due to her father pressure made her to choose migration to other state of Odisha.*”**

In 2016-17 after the intervention of project ANANYA: Marriage No Child's Play Lata Rana came to know the work of empowering adolescent girls during the field visit of Sahipala (GP) cluster coordinator. The information heard that Lata is forced to marriage at the age of 16years before attaining the legal age of marriage. With the support of PRIs, AWW and village leaders tried to convince her parents not to give marriage in early age. Entire people were humiliated instead of understanding the situation and consequence of child marriage. The field staff visited time and again to prevent the child marriage, even Lata Rana was not allowed to meet the project staffs still the project staff did not lose the focus to prevent the marriage. Fortunately village meeting was organized with caste leaders and PRI members. The meeting was addressed with status of adolescent girl in India and how girls are exploited in the society. Later on came to understand the importance of LSE, SRHR and child protection issues under this ANANYA project. Most of village leader convinced with

the burning example of empowering adolescent girls through the project. Some of them also explained how the risk and adverse effect of child marriage caused physical or sexual abuse and its ruins the Rights of the child. After few days back her grandmother convinced and she also counseled to her parents to prevent child marriage. Finally the child marriage was prevented and committed to performed marriage after attaining 18years of age. Lata Rana was very happy to express her thought and feeling that she said, ASHA ODISHA and Save the Children saved my life and now I am allowed to attain LSE session, adolescent meeting and program at community level.

Present Situation:

Miss. Lata Rana's marriage was prevented, in between she was trained on tailoring to make herself self reliant and supports her family. In 2018 through field assessment Lata Rana was selected as per the criteria of start up support to develop her own entrepreneurship at her village. She was given start up support and now she is earning money and supports her family financially. She says, *Life Skill education, work is done for empowering the adolescent is real appreciated and saving many young lives through this project.*