

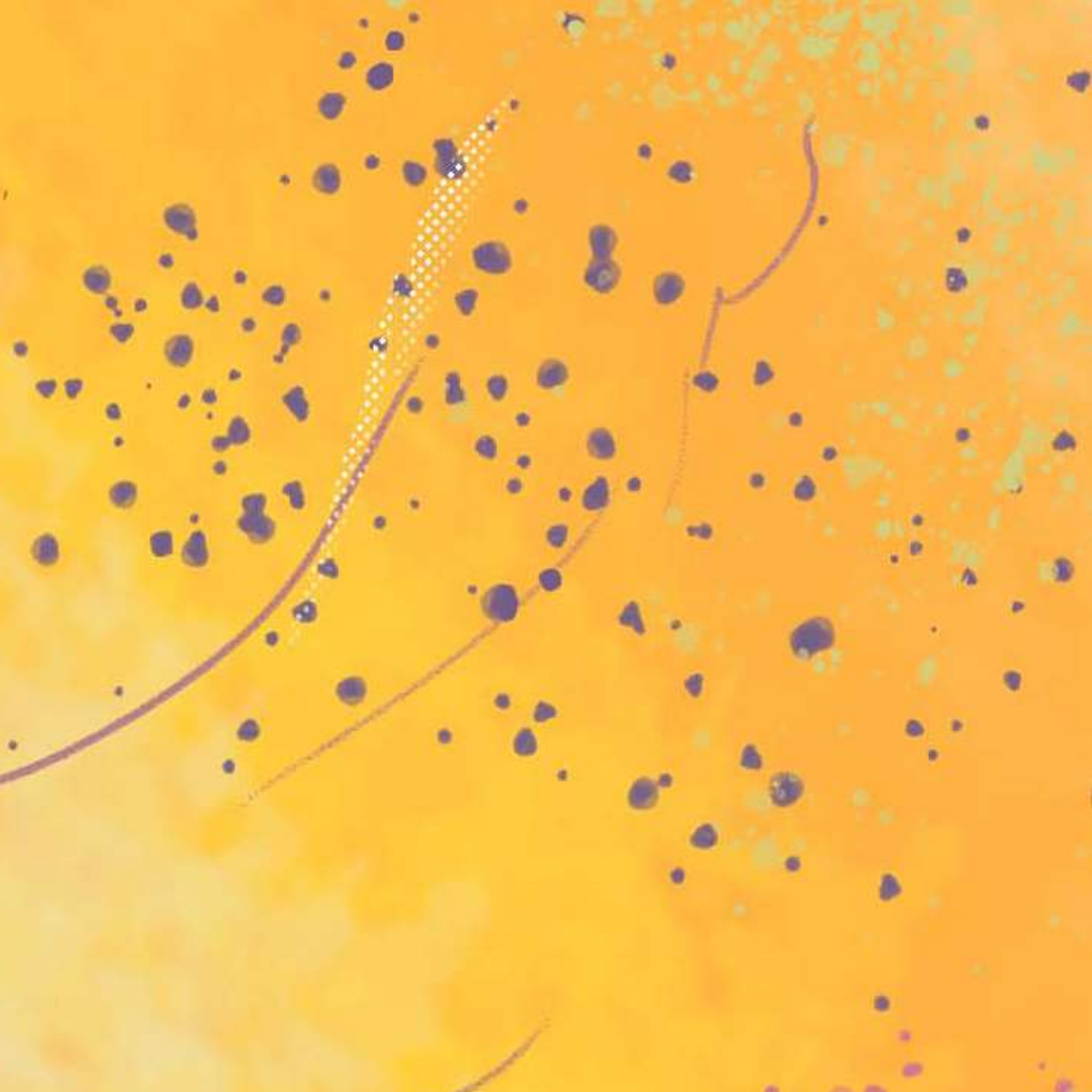


**GIRLS NOT BRIDES**

The Global Partnership  
to End Child Marriage



*The respect  
I deserve*



*This is Asha's\* story,  
told in her own words.*

*\* Name changed to protect her own identity.*

*My name is Asha.*



*I have four sisters.*







*With five mouths to feed,  
my father felt he had to  
marry me off young.*

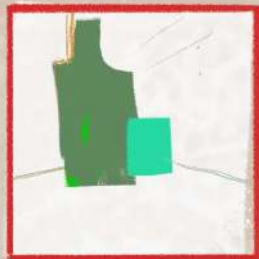
*I was just fifteen.*

An illustration of a young woman with dark hair, wearing a blue t-shirt and purple shorts, standing in a white doorway. She is carrying a large red backpack. The background is dark with some orange and white abstract shapes and lines.

*I was still in school.*


*I had no choice.*

*My new husband was an alcoholic.*



*Soon he started  
abusing me.  
I lived in fear.*






*"You are  
worthless"*

*"Your dowry was  
too small"*

*"Your skin is  
too dark"*

*...He would taunt me. It  
went on, and on, and on.*

An illustration of a pregnant woman with long dark hair, wearing a yellow coat over a blue dress. She is looking down with a sad expression, her hands near her face. The background is a simple room with a tiled floor and a wall with some abstract purple and pink lines. The style is painterly and expressive.

*After six months,  
I begged my  
father to let me  
come home, and  
he let me.*

*But by then I was already pregnant.*

*When I gave birth to a boy, I  
went back to my husband's family.*



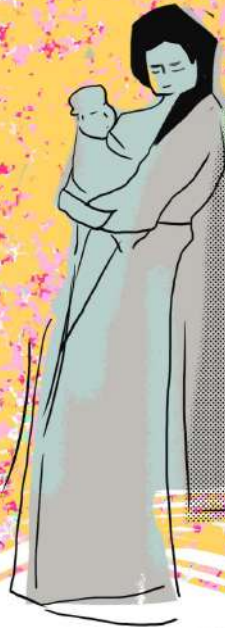
*But after a few days,  
my husband's violence  
came back too.*

*I had to escape. I went back home.*





*No one from my husband's family  
wants to know how we are doing.*



*They act like we  
never existed.*





*A year later, I found a place to get the help I need at the Srijan Foundation. I joined their group for adolescent girls.*

*I'm learning my rights, rebuilding my confidence, and I'm even going back to school. After school, I want to join the army.*

No girl should have to go through what I did. If I see a girl marrying too young, I will take a stand.



And one day I will marry someone who understands me, supports me, gives me the respect I deserve.

Every year, 12 million girls like Asha marry before the age of 18. Child brides are more likely to suffer from physical, sexual and emotional violence.

*We will not end violence  
against children as long  
as girls are married off as  
children.*



*Girls Not Brides* member Srijan Foundation strives to build a better world for women and children. Based in Jharkhand, India, they campaign and deliver services to empower women and girls.

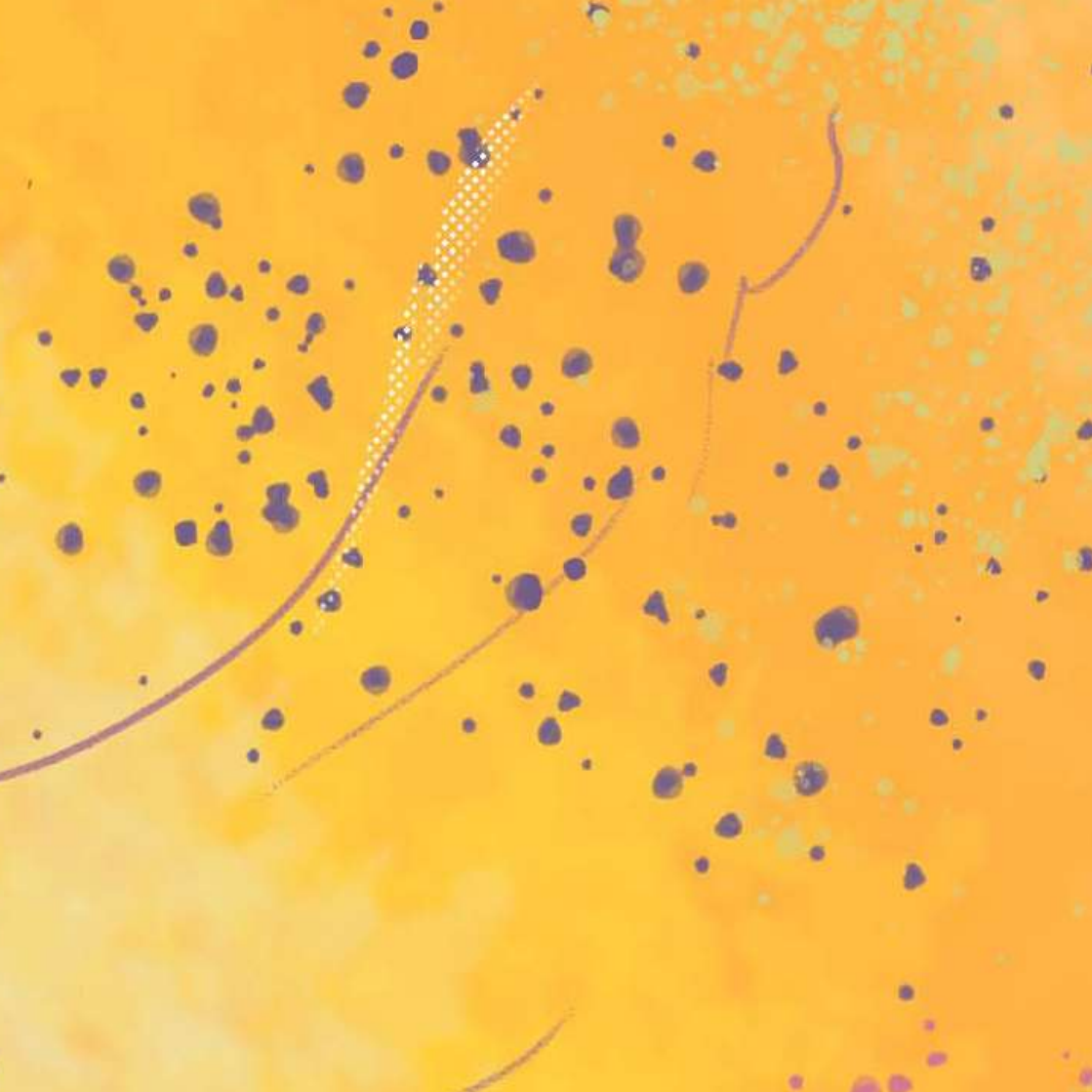
 **Srijan Foundation**

 **@srijanjhk**

 **@srijanjhk2001**

 **[www.srijanjhk.org](http://www.srijanjhk.org)**







The Global Partnership  
to End Child Marriage

This illustrated story was produced by *Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage*, in partnership with Srijan Foundation, India and Out of the Shadows: Shining light on the response to child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Second edition published in  
July 2020 by *Girls Not Brides*

Seventh Floor  
65 Leadenhall Street  
London  
EC3A 2AD  
United Kingdom

☎ 0203 725 5858  
📠 0207 603 7811  
🌐 [www.GirlsNotBrides.org](http://www.GirlsNotBrides.org)  
✉ [info@GirlsNotBrides.org](mailto:info@GirlsNotBrides.org)  
📌 [GirlsNotBrides](https://www.facebook.com/GirlsNotBrides)  
📌 [www.facebook.com/  
GirlsNotBrides](https://www.facebook.com/GirlsNotBrides)

***Girls Not Brides* is a global partnership made up of over 1,400 civil society organisations from over 100 countries, committed to ending child marriage and enabling girls to fulfil their full potential.**