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| **Aparajita: An indomitable spirit of women and adolescents to overcome health and gender inequity** |
| **Setting/problem**  India accounted for 19% of all global maternal deaths & 20% of the world’s child deaths. Globally, every year 15 million girls are married as children, denied their rights to health, education and are robbed of their childhood. According to the 2011 census, India has 5 million child brides (women marrying under 18 years of age) against 380,000 in 2001. The poor indicators of RMNCH+A are symbolic of health and gender inequities faced women & adolescents. Overall goal of the programme is that women and young people especially adolescent girls have the right to decide freely if and when to marry & to make informed choices about their health and well beings especially sexual reproductive health & rights in a supportive environment in 177 villages of District Ganjam, Odisha, India.  **Intervention**  Broad interventions undertaken in the project areas are Baseline assessment to identify gaps and needs of the local community; Identification of ‘influencers’ and establishing rapport; Selection and training of peer educators; Sensitizing the community groups; Capacitating community groups; Community accountability systems; Enhanced networking and liasoning with government officials.  **Outcomes**  Health and Gender Inequities have been reduced drastically.  Improved Reproductive, child, neonatal and adolescent health of the beneficiaries.  School Drop rate of adolescent girls drastically reduced.  Existing government health schemes for adolescents have been strengthened.  Improved Adolescent Friendly Health Services at Primary Health Centres.  Young couples are better informed about the risk of early conception and importance of spacing.  Increased utilization of SRHR & other health services.  Reduction in child marriage & pregnancy rates.  Increased access to economic opportunities for adolescents at risks.  **Implications:** In the complex social settings like this, health promotion has to take social determinants of health approach, which involve the stakeholders right from the beginning as active partners and ensures that the programme is dovetailed with the existing government programmes. This will ensure the sustainability and overall health & development of adolescents and women who suffer centuries of neglect. Through empowerment process, they can turn socio-economic situation of their communities robust and wholesome.  **Preferred presentation format:** Oral/Poster Presentation |