

Feminist Coalition Letters

Child Marriage/
Labour/Trafficking

Letter 5: Antim



In September of this year, UNGEI convened its first meeting of the Global Feminist Coalition of Transformative Education, the convening was a powerful opportunity for civil society organisations and young feminist activists to come together, learn and share evidence. During the convening, the coalition dedicated time to mapping solutions for different thematic priorities for gender equality in education and felt that the power of stories is un-matched when showcasing the need for action in each of these themes. So, after careful reflection and collaboration, the coalition put together a set of stories on children that may be hypothetical in name but are not hypothetical in experience.

Speaking on behalf of children suffering from the effects of Child Marriage, Labour and Trafficking, here is a letter from Antim

I am Antim. My name literally means 'The End'. My friend is Rabia, her name means 'four'. Both of us have to give extra chapati to our brothers at dinner time if they are still hungry. But I am hungry all the time too.

I am from an urban slum in India, I am 13 years old. After school I help my mother pick up cow dung to light up our homes. I am not allowed to go play as I am just starting my periods. Since I just use grass, sand and waste clothes to soak my period blood, momma says if I stain my skirt, I will look stupid and people will laugh at me. I am also not allowed to pray; grandmama says God will get angry. Why doesn't God get angry when the local grocery uncle says he will give things to me for free if I sleep with him? Then why does momma say I will be sold if I don't listen to her and papa? Am I not sold to grocery uncle already? Anyway, I think we all got to make some sacrifices...right?

My teacher says I should not waste time with math, science and coding. He says I should learn home sciences, but I hate cooking you know. Only my brother is allowed to study science and math.

I don't want to be sold, get married or have a baby. I am just a baby myself.

Here is what I want:

- I want my glass of milk that is always given to my brother
- I want to feel confident and learn science
- I want to own a phone and see Instagram reels
- The lady from the local NGO is the only one who understands me. She tells me about my magical powers. But her organization is shutting down and she doesn't have money for me. I want my safe space at the local NGO to be safeguarded.



I am Antim. I am 13. I will not be the end. I will be the beginning, I will be the rising sun, you are all here to hold me with your revolutionary care, compassion and humanity. I am Antim. I am 13 and you will heal the world with me. Come on, get up, there are 1.8 billion more like me.