

Durkhal Primary School Becomes Regular after Villagers' Intervention

Dist: Rayagada, Block: Kashipur, GP: Chandragiri, Village: Durkhal

Durkhal is a small revenue village of Chandragiri GP in Kashipur block under Rayagada district, Odisha. Most of the villagers are tribal. They are very poor and illiterate. A total of 110 families live in the village. There is very little agricultural land in the village. The farming on the hills is the only source of subsistence. The illiteracy and malnutrition in the village especially among the mothers and children are clearly visible in their face.

There is one Primary School and an Anganwadi centre in the village. But none of them were functional for years together. In the school 2 teachers had been appointed and a total of 55 children were studying in different classes up to 5th Standard. The villagers were also silent about both the school and AWC being ignorant of Govt. provisions, rules and regulations, roles and responsibilities of the School and AWC Committee members. There was no school and no scope of MDM for village children.



Durkhal primary school, Jaymal Majhi, a CAG member and village head

Our CAG members informed the BIC Kashipur of this situation in the village in the last week of December 2014. Understanding the gravity of the situation BIC, Kashipur immediately organised a meeting in Durkhal village in January 2015. In the meeting it was discovered that the only one teacher comes to school for once or twice a month in the year. The AWW has not come to centre for past 6 months. No written complaint was lodged at the BEO or CDPO.

The villagers were sensitized about the Govt. provisions, rules and regulations, roles and responsibilities of the School Management and AWC Committee members. It was also made clear in the meeting how both school teachers and AWW engaged in corruption and malpractice submitting false bill regarding MDM and pre-school food at AWC regularly on a monthly basis. The leaflets and information brochures on diverse provisions of Govt. Free and Compulsory Education and six services to its stakeholders from AWC were distributed to the villagers at the meeting. The villagers were also to ask to call for the school teachers and AWW to the village meeting immediately and then demand for all provisions of services in the school and AWC as per Govt. rules. It was also advised that first of all they should discuss and solve the issues with the teachers and AWW amicably. If they acknowledged their corrupt activities and promised to regularise school, MDM and other provisions then they must observe the sincerity of the teachers and AWW regularly.



EU staff sensitising villagers at the meeting in Durkhal

And, if they failed to regularise the school as per the Govt. rules, the villagers felt, then they would have to lodge a written complaint at the BEO and CDPO office against them. After knowing everything about Govt. rules and provisions, role and responsibility of the SMC members, Janch Committee members on AWC, the villagers got enraged and decided to challenge both the school teachers, the AWW this time to teach them a lesson. The villagers were also

told that in case the teachers or the AWW tried to dodge the alleged complaint against them by citing official negligence or anything like that then they should ask them to give a written form of whatever excuses or reason they had explained to justify their irregularities so that the villagers could show it to BEO or CDPO for further explanation. Thereafter, the next day the villagers sat together to discuss the strategies to confront the teachers and AWW and sent intimation to the teachers and AWC of such a meeting at the village the day after following day.

The AWW and only one of the two teachers came to the said village meeting. The villagers asked for reasons behind serious irregularities at school and AWC showing the leaflets of Govt. rules and provisions, role and responsibilities of teachers and SMC and Janch Committee members. The school teacher found no way out wept before everybody and finally accepted his guilt and promised to run school as per rules and provisions. But, the AWC was adamant and tried her best to argue with the villagers. But, when the villagers asked her to provide a written petition of what she was saying she got humbled, wept and acknowledged her guilt and promised to be regular at the AWC with all provisions and facilities. Afterwards, both the school and AWC became regular.