

OUT OF BONDAGES



**CARITAS INDIA'S CHILD POLICY IS BINDING FOR ALL THOSE
ASSOCIATED WITH THE ORGANIZATION.**

**IT REAFFIRMS ITS PHILOSOPHY THAT CHILDREN ARE PERSONS WITH RIGHTS
AND THAT THE ORGANISATION AIMS AT THE RIGHTS OF ALL CHILDREN AT ALL
THE TIMES, AT ALL LEVELS AND IN WHATEVER CAPACITY ONE OPERATES...**



PREFACE



**FR. FREDERICK
D'SOUZA**

Children constitute a significant part of the Indian Population. According to the Report of the Working Group Report on Child Rights constituted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development 2012, children in the age group of 0-18 years constitute 43 percent of the population in India. Out of this 27% comprise of children in the age group of 6-18 years. This implies that a vast percentage of our population remains invisible, their issues and concerns have not been prioritized.

A key feature of children's rights is the way in which they confirm children as active and legitimate holders of rights which they can exercise in accordance with their maturity and experience. This includes the right to express their views on decisions that affect them. But children's rights are also about supporting families and others to do their very best for the children in their care and guide their development as they grow from baby to adolescent, eg, improved women's access to healthcare also has a positive impact on the health of infants and the newborn child.

Caritas India recognizes the importance of supporting and connecting with children to enable them to become agents and advocates of change and of their rights along with the members of their community. Most of Caritas Interventions are related to protection of child rights in terms of capacitating the local partners, community development program with child rights focus, ragpickers program, networking and advocating for Child rights, joining hands with other alliances for policy advocacy.

This publication collects good examples of how children's basic right to life and dignity have been restored through advocacy. Key success factors were drawn to capitalise on the experience from these children to maximise advocacy outcomes and its impact.

FR. FREDERICK D'SOUZA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CARITAS INDIA

FOREWORD



FR. PAUL MOONJELEY

Children have been at the forefront of child rights monitoring and reporting efforts and are considered key partners in all phases of child programing. However, their participation has to be well planned, respectful of child safeguarding and child participation policies and principles, and facilitated through child-friendly materials and tools in order to be meaningful and effective.

In recent years as a society, we have become very aware of the problem of child abuse. Caritas has her interventions in the area of Care and Protection and Development of children through promoting active participation. Besides a cross cutting focus of child rights in the programmes and interventions, Caritas India supports child-centred programmes in different states namely Delhi and Uttar Pradesh with street children programme, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur and Assam with Peace building among the young people, Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal with Tribal and Dalit (Musahar girls) children addressing Child labour and early marriage with education as solution. Caritas India is closely working with the ICDS centres to improve the early education and health status of children in Odisha. Few Caritas local Partners are nodal organizations for Childline centers in many states to help children in distress.

In response to the ground realities in one of our assessment reports on education, Caritas India initiated two educational empowerment programmes for Musahar (Maha Dalit community) girls called 'Roshini' and 'Hamari

Pathshala', which are in force since 2013, and cover 46 villages of 4 districts in Bihar leading to the enrolment of 1842 children in government schools with hundred percentage retention. These interventions have prevented child /early marriage among girl children. In West Bengal, in Darjeeling District, 13 villages/wards have been declared 'Child Labour Free Zones' in Kalimpong municipality and 'Child Friendly Police Station' is established.

Children being the most potential peace makers have a greater stake and role in peace building, Caritas initiated Peace building initiatives in J & K, Assam and Manipur and covered 11 colleges, 21 schools and 106 villages forming peace clubs of children, youth, women and developing peace education module. Through peace committees, the programme defused a good number of potential issues that could have given rise to communal tension and conflict in these areas.

Caritas India has been constantly striving towards improving their policies, procedures and practices to safeguard children and young people. By taking stock of the experience capitalized over these last few years, this compilation aims to provide valuable testimonies of our intervention at the ground.

FR. PAUL MOONJELEY
ASST. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CARITAS INDIA



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BACKGROUND

INDIA IS HOME TO 440 MILLION CHILDREN, THE LARGEST CHILD POPULATION IN THE WORLD. TRAGICALLY, IT ALSO HAS THE LARGEST CHILD LABOUR FORCE I.E. 12.6 MILLION, ACCOUNTING FOR ABOUT 14 % OF CHILDREN IN THE 5-14 YEARS AGE GROUP



Children are the future pillars of society and need a loving and secure atmosphere to develop and reach their full potential and thus grow into responsible adults. By doing so, they can make a valuable contribution to the success of society and the nation as a whole. However, they are and have always been one of the most vulnerable groups in society because they are completely dependent for their survival and development on adults. The International UN Convention has stated that every child has the right to survival, to development, to participation and to protection against abuse and neglect. In spite of this, because of poverty and greed, the child is often reduced to an economic unit and becomes a victim of abuse and exploitation by dominant sections of society. Throughout the world, especially in developing countries, child labour continues to be culturally accepted and commonly practiced. Even though India has ratified the international child rights norms laid down by the convention, India has the largest number of child labourers in the world (UNICEF).

India is home to 440 million children, the largest child population in the world. Tragically, it also has the largest child labour force i.e. 12.6 million, accounting for about 14 % of children in the 5-14 years age group. Unofficial estimates by non government organisations (NGOs) suggest that the numbers could easily be much higher - close to 60 million. Meanwhile, government reports indicate increasing trends in 2 3 4 migration and trafficking of children for labour in different parts of the country. West Bengal

is one of the several states in the country with more than one million children involved in labour (as per 2001 census) and one that shows an increasing trend in numbers of child labourers. Legislations like and subsequent notification (2006) which ban employment of children across various industries/trades are often flouted. Children continue to work in small roadside eating places, sweet shops, bigger hotels and in the domestic sector. Since the Darjeeling district in West Bengal is a popular tourist destination, the incidence of employing children as free or cheap labour in such occupations is high. These children lead difficult lives with limited or no access to education and little opportunity to enjoy their childhood. The rich and poor divide is visible as their peers born into rich families access Darjeeling's reputed residential schools and other benefits.

With more than a third of its population below the age of 18, India has the largest child population in the world. India has made some significant commitments towards ensuring the basic rights of children. There has been progress in overall indicators: infant mortality rates are down, child survival is up, literacy rates have improved and school dropout rates have fallen. But the issue of child rights in India is still caught between legal and policy commitments to children on the one hand, and the fallout of the process of globalisation. Liberalisation and privatisation on the other. Children are most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Child rights are violated in any ways by many who come in contact with children including parents. ■

CARITAS INDIA'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS CHILDREN

Three words summarize the guiding principle of Caritas India (CI), the official Social Development Organization of Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI), established in October 1962. CI's broader vision for the world is "Formation of a Just and Sustainable Social Order; where Gospel values of Love, Equality and Peace are Nurtured and Lived".

This vision now includes a commitment to addressing the issues of human trafficking and protecting rights of children. CI's mission is "To generate environment in the communities and society that is safe, secure and conducive to the all round development of all its children irrespective of gender, age, disability, caste, social categories, creed, religion, or economic position."

Caritas India had reflected since 2009 and we have developed a child protection policy for the organisation. As part of the policy, we have developed code of conduct (COC) signed by all staff and Child protection guidelines for staff. During emergency relief, Caritas India works directly with children as well. All our programme are implemented in collaboration with the local partners. Caritas India has children focussed programme implemented in different parts of the country.

Most of Caritas interventions are related to protection of child rights in terms of capacitating the local partners, Community devel-

opment program with child rights focus, Rag pickers programme, networking and advocating for Child rights, joining hands with other alliance for policy advocacy. Our effort is also to facilitate that our local partners have child protection policy. Caritas has been supporting "9 is mine Campaign". Through this campaign, children belonging to most marginalised communities are given opportunity to have interface with highest level of decision makers for demanding their rights of 9% of the GDP for children well being. We have also facilitated Children's parliament formation and deliberation.

Caritas India's child policy is binding for all those associated with the organization. It reaffirms its philosophy that children are persons with rights and that the organisation aims at the rights of all children at all the times, at all levels and in whatever capacity one operates.

According to the child policy, Caritas India is committed to:

- Creating and maintaining an environment which is conducive to promotion of the rights of all children
- Actively preventing and dealing with all kinds of abuses and exploitation of children
- Taking positive action to prevent child abusers becoming involved in any way in her operation
- Taking stringent measures to prevent partners from employing child abusers. ■

MOST OF CARITAS INTERVENTIONS ARE RELATED TO PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS IN TERMS OF CAPACITATING THE LOCAL PARTNERS, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WITH CHILD RIGHTS FOCUS, RAG PICKERS PROGRAMME, NETWORKING AND ADVOCATING FOR CHILD RIGHTS, JOINING HANDS WITH OTHER ALLIANCE FOR POLICY ADVOCACY



COMMUNITY BASED CHILD CARE, ODISHA

The proposed intervention “Community based Child Care” aims to mobilize and facilitate communities to take an active role in the planning, implementation and monitoring of child health and education programs implemented by the government. As a consequence, communities would be empowered to ensure equal access of health and education services to all the children in the intervention area.

Education, protection, and health are the three focus areas which essentially constitute the core of children’s well-being. Education is essential for stimulating and developing the physical and cognitive capacities of children. The intervention works towards ensuring that all the children in the intervention area are enrolled, retained, and participate in schooling from pre-school up to the age of 18 years.

EDUCATION, PROTECTION,
AND HEALTH ARE THE
THREE FOCUS AREAS
WHICH ESSENTIALLY
CONSTITUTE THE CORE OF
CHILDREN’S WELL-BEING

This initiative addresses the cases of child labor and create child labor free villages in the project area. The project works towards ensuring accessibility and availability of health and nutrition services for both mothers and children including antenatal, delivery and postnatal care for mothers, neonatal, infants and immunization up to 5 years of age. ■



MAINSTREAMING CHILDREN INTO EDUCATION

I. ROSLIN – TWINKLING STAR OF A MIGRANT FAMILY

Roslin Lakda, is a 9 year old girl and the eldest daughter of Hanman and Sunita Lakda of remote tribal village Kudabira under Sole Grampanchayat in Gurundia block of Sundargarh district. Hanman is a poor migrant labourer, having only 3 acres of agricultural land which is hilly and less productive. To manage the family needs, Hanman migrates to other districts of Odisha to work as a mason for a period of 8 months in a year. Roslin has to migrate with her family frequently to different parts of Odisha which affects her education.



In 2014, with the help of Rourkela Social Service Society, parents were educated and sensitized towards the importance of education and other development issue of the village. Roslin’s mother participated in one of these awareness camps and realized the importance of education, which can help her children lead better lives in the future. She also sensitized Roslin’s father towards the importance of education and how migrating is affecting the education of their children. Finally, the family decided not to migrate with children. Hanman decided to migrate alone for a certain period and would frequently visit the village and family. Children would stay in the village with their mother and continue their education.

Realizing the importance of education for her children, Sunita provides adequate care and support to her daughter Roslin and her son - who is in class 3rd. She motivates and guides them at home to accomplish their tasks. Sunita is also a leading member of the village committee that mobilizes other tribal parents and children on education and health.

Roslin is now regular at school and is performing well. She is doing well in academics and other curricular activities like drawing, singing, debate and craft work. She has also participated in cluster level camps organized by school departments and performed very well.

II. COMMUNITY ACTION INVIGORATED HOPE WITHIN DROPOUT GIRL CHILD

Kalpana Kisan is a Fifteen year old daughter of Suru and Fulmani Kisan. The poor tribal family lives in Brahmani basa village under Gurundia block in Sundargarh district of Odisha. They possesses only one acre of agricultural land and are mostly dependent on wage work round the year. Seeing his family’s situation, Kalpana’s elder brother Rajendra moved to Bangalore to look for work. Now, he is employed in a bread factory and is a daily wage earner.





WITH SUPPORT FROM ALL FAMILY MEMBERS AND CBCC, KALPANA IS PURSUING HER STUDIES SERIOUSLY. SHE WANTS TO BE A NURSE IN THE FUTURE TO SERVE PATIENTS OF POOR FAMILIES.

Kalpana, after completing her primary education in her own village in 2012, took admission in class 6th in Upper Primary school of Sole village. Sole Village is 4 Km away from her home and she was the only girl from her village to walk to school daily. Other fellow students, mostly boys, rode their bi-cycles to school. After a week, Kalpana found it difficult to walk alone and stopped going to school.

It was almost after two years when CBCC project team found Kalpana as a dropout child during a survey. She was motivated through personal counseling and was involved in children club formed in the village under the project. Her parents also participated in

the community awareness meetings and felt motivated to send Kalpana back to school. Meanwhile, another girl from the neighboring village started going to the same school crossing Kalpana's village. CBCC Team members made arrangements for both girls to go together. Kalpana joined back school in class 7th in 2014 and is now going to school regularly. Her brother supports all her educational expenses and is now planning to buy her a bi-cycle for her travel.

With support from all family members and CBCC, Kalpana is pursuing her studies seriously. She wants to be a nurse in the future to serve patients of poor families.

III. A SEMI ORPHAN DROPOUT GIRL MAINSTREAMED WITH FORMAL EDUCATION

Agatha Bhengra, a girl of 14 years from village Brahmanibasa in Sundargarh district, lost her father late Fransis Bhengra when she was 6 years old. Her mother - Teresa Bhen-

gra, manages the family by working as a daily wage labourer. Her elder brother left home due to poverty and is now working in a factory in Bangalore. Agatha studied in class 7th in Upper Primary school, Jhaliadihi, which is 2 kilometers away from her village. She left studying in 2013 due to financial crisis and started working with her mother in daily wage work. CBCC field staff identified her as a school dropout and motivated her for further education. Through children club, she was sensitized and began to take interest in studies again. Facilitator of CBCC took her to school and enrolled her in class 8th. She now goes to school regularly along with a cousin sister and is performing well in her class. Her mother is pleased with her performance and wants to support Agatha for her further education.



IV. CREATIVE ACTIVITIES AND QUALITY EDUCATION LEAD TO RETENTION OF CHILDREN

There are total 37 students in Gobargoti New Primary school in Gobargoti village under Kumbharigam Gram Panchayat in Daringbadi Block of Kandhamal district. All children are from tribal community, who spend most of the time in forest. Only 10 to 15 % children come to school regularly. After intervention by the CBCC program by Catholic Charities, community awareness programs were conducted and a children club was formed in the village to generate interest and peer pressure on children for their regularity at school. Further, skill development programs were conducted with creative activities to attract children to school. As a result all children that were enrolled in school became regular.

Manoj Parichha, son of Premchand and Minati Parichha is a student of class 5th at school.

NOW MONOJ GOES TO SCHOOL REGULARLY AND IS PERFORMING WELL IN DRAWING, PAINTING AND OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

He would only go to school after being pressurized by his parent, but on the way would disappear and roam around the forest. Later, return home in the evening pretending to have returned from school. After the formation of the children's club in the village by the CBCC program, Manoj participated in the meetings and got himself involved in the skill development programs. This interested and motivated him to participate in similar activities at the school. Now he goes to school regularly and is performing well in drawing, painting and other creative activities. His level of competencies have increased and he dreams to be a teacher someday.



V. JANESH BACK TO SCHOOL AFTER ONE YEAR

Janesh Sabar, son of Saula and Marry Sabar, is a 12 year old boy of village Lamba Kiari in Daringbadi block of Kandhamal district. He lost interest to go to school after class 4th due to lack of motivation and proper infrastructure. His parents also did not see any improvement in him. Also, due to their lack of awareness on importance of education, they involved Janesh in domestic activities. It was only after a year, when a member of the children's club and a CBCC staff visited his village and motivated Janesh to return to school. He was taken to a new building and introduced to creative activities of learnings that motivated Janesh to join school again. He also received uniform, textbooks and midday meals from the school that made him regular at school. Now he is in class 5th but struggling to develop his competencies. His teachers and CBCC volunteers are helping him improve his marks in academics.

The effort put in rebuilding a life of a tribal child who was out of school for a year.

VI. CBCC BUILT NEW HOPES AMONG CHILD LABOUR

Tala Damadua in Mohana block of Gajapati district is a remote tribal village. There are 75 households in the village that depend on daily wage work. But, due to unavailability of wages in the local area, 70% of families are migrating to other districts and states for livelihood. Due to lack of proper awareness, unavailability of school in the village and poor socio-economic condition many children and adolescent have stopped their education and are supporting their family's income.

During a survey, carried out by SWAD under CBCC program, it was found that 4 children from upper primary and high school have dropped out. Some of them have joined their families as laborers to earn daily income. CBCC team conducted meetings with parents and counseled the children personally on importance of education. These children were also included in the children club of the villages and were motivated by their peers. Further CBCC team coordinated with the concerned school authority of Damadua High School and followed up their mainstream education.

Followings are the details of the children mainstreamed:



i. Birendra Adhikari, 15 year old son of Arjun and Marina Adhikari of Tal Damadua village, left school after class 6th due to poor family conditions. He moved to Delhi with other village people and worked in a textile

factory as a labourer. He returned to the village in 2014 but did not intend to go to school after detachment from education for 2 years. CBCC team members of village SMC motivated him to pursue education. He has now been mainstreamed at Fakir Mohan High school, Damadua in class 8th.



ii. Samiya Adhikari, 15 year old son of Iswar Chandra and Kuni Adhikari of Tal Damadua village left his school after class 6th and moved to Delhi to work as a wage earner. After two years he returned to the village in 2014 and was motivated by

the CBCC program. He is now studying in class 8th in Fakir Mohan High school, Damadua.



iii. Kanha Patra, 15 year old son of Kalidash and Prabha Patra left school after class 5th due to poor family conditions and worked in a hotel at Paralakhemundi district head quarter. CBCC team met him with his relatives and counseled him to return to school. He returned home and is now continuing his education in class 6th at Mission high school Damadua. He is re-inventing his life by pursuing his education with support from CBCC.

iv. Jalendra Parichha, 15 year old son of Mementa and Runu of Tal damadua



village dropped his education after class 4th for a period of one year. His father was addicted to alcohol and to manage a two time meal for his family, Jalendra had to work as a daily wage earner. After intervention by the CBCC project, he and his father were counseled by the project team and community. Finally his father gave up alcohol and began working in Damadua mission high school. Jalendra is now in class 6th at mission high school and is performing well in his class.

Apart from enrolling the dropouts, the project team also provided tutorial support to these children to increase their level of competencies, so they can perform well in class. ■

APART FROM ENROLLING THE DROPOUTS, THE PROJECT TEAM ALSO PROVIDED TUTORIAL SUPPORT TO THESE CHILDREN TO INCREASE THEIR LEVEL OF COMPETENCIES, SO THEY CAN PERFORM WELL IN CLASS

ACCESS TO HEALTH AND NUTRITIONAL SERVICES THROUGH COMMUNITY ACTION

I. REALIZING THE BENEFIT OF IMMUNIZATION

Mira Mallick is a 42 year old wife of Nildi Mallick, of village Ralidipanka under Damadua Grampanchayat in Mohana block of Gajapati district. The family has 6 children between the age group of 4 months to 12 years. The parents were completely unaware about immunization and nutritional needs of children and pregnant women. Hence, no immunization had been administered to previous 5 children. But after the intervention by CBCC program, sensitization programs in the village by SWAD and through spreading awareness, the family realized the importance of immunization. Also, with the help of ICDS center in the village since 2014, immunization and nutrition programs have been regularized. Mira got the benefit of immunization and nutrition during her last pregnancy and after the birth of her last child, who is four months old now.

II. COMMUNITY ACTION TO REGULARIZE ICDS SERVICE

Khajuripada is a tribal village having 18 households in Damadua Grampanchayat of Gajapati district. There are 31 children within the age group of 6 years but there were no ICDS centers or immunization services available within the village. The village falls under Damadua ICDS center, which is at a distance of 5Km from the village. A Mini Anganwadi was later opened in the village in 2010 which was under Damadua ICDS center. The worker of the mini anganwadi was not regular since she had to travel from Damadua village. Also, the main worker of Damadua ICDS was not cooperating with the Khajuripada mini anganwadi (sub center) and did not provide any support to the mini anganwadi for past 4 years.

In June 2014, with the help of CBCC team, a written application was submitted to the Supervisor and block level official of WCD which was led by a village member.

Since then, food and necessary immunization is being provided to the village. Children and women now have access to nutritional and immunization services within the stipulated time.



III. REALIZED THE NEED OF IMMUNIZATION FOR A HEALTHY CHILD

Kanchmi Dalbehera, age 32 years, wife of Timati from village Jhirikua under Kumbhari-gam Grampanchayat of Kandhamal district, is an illiterate tribal woman. Both, husband and wife were unaware of the importance of immunization and nutrition during pre and post-natal period. The immunization center is far and 3 hills away from the village. Hence, Kanchmi did not bother about immunization during the birth of her two elder children. But after intervention by the CBCC program and



regular motivation from field volunteers, she realized the importance of immunization and received proper nutritional support from a nearby village during her last pregnancy. The baby is now two months old and immunized. The baby also receives proper nutrition and is healthy. Parents are now able to see the difference in development of their two elder children who did not receive proper immunization or nutrition during their birth. The daughter is 6 years old and the son is 4 years old - both are facing health issues - anemia and malnutrition. The new baby of two months - who received proper immunization and nutrition during birth, is quite healthy than others.

The CBCC team is supporting the parents for a complete medical checkup of the two elder children.

IV. IMMUNIZATION SAVED LIFE OF OUR KID

Rungtu Kamar, of village Nahanaguda (Mahul-dihi) under Gurundia block of Sundargarh district, is a poor blacksmith who doesn't own any land. He lives in a thatched house with his wife and four children. His wife, Dulari Kamar, also assists him during work. The family was unaware about immunization. Neither did Dulari take any immunization during her pregnancy nor were the children immunized after birth, which led to the death of their two children.

After intervention, the CBCC team found that Dulari was in the sixth month of her pregnancy. They counseled the parents on pre-natal care and immunization for a healthy baby. They took Dulari to the nearest immunization center and introduced her to the nutritional



THE FAMILY IS GRATEFUL TO THE CBCC TEAM, FOR GUIDING THEM AND HELPING THEM UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF IMMUNIZATION AND THE NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN

services available under ICDS program. They also cautioned her to stay away from their workshop during pregnancy. Adhering to the given advices and regular immunization - they now have a healthy baby of 10 months. The parents are taking proper care of immunizations and nutrition of the child.

The family is grateful to the CBCC team, for guiding them and helping them understand the importance of immunization and the nutritional needs of children.

Sixteen years old Akshya Nag, is the only son of Bijaya and Pratima Nag of village Laxmipur in Paniganda Panchayat of Mohana block in Gajapati district. Akshya's father is a daily wage earner and takes care of Akshya's education. He has a lot of hope for his son's future. Unfortunately, during his matric board examination in 2014, Akshya faced a severe road accident. His right leg suffered fracture at two places - upper knee and lower knees. It was a serious setback for the family and Akshya was unable to appear for his examinations.

Furthermore, it became difficult for the poor Dalit family to provide for a good treatment for Akshya. At this crucial time, the CBCC team came forward to take care of Akshya and his family. With the help of mobilization of CBCC volunteers and village committee leaders, all families in the village contributed Rs. 10/- each. Women SHG, of which Akshay's mother is also a member, provided 20 Kgs of rice and Rs. 2000/- as donation. They also provided them Rs. 3000/- as a loan. This helped Akshay's family in providing quality treatment for him.

Now Akshya has completely healed and regularly plays with his friends. He also appeared for the matric board examination in 2015 and secured good result. He is now pursuing his

NOW AKSHYA HAS COMPLETELY HEALED AND REGULARLY PLAYS WITH HIS FRIENDS. HE IS NOW PURSUING HIS EDUCATION FROM A GOOD COLLEGE AND WORKING TOWARDS FULFILLING HIS PARENT'S DREAMS

education from a good college and working towards fulfilling his parent's dreams.

Six year old Ashis Sabar was born with multiple disabilities of MR and CP. He belongs to Turenpani village. His father Gaya Sabar and Mother Ruto Sabar had lost all hopes for the future of their son. Someone had to always be around Ashis to take care of him. After the implementation of the children's club by the CBCC project in their village, they saw changes in Ashis behavior. He was more stable and calm around other children and participated in different activities. Members of the children club would visit Ashis at home



and would take Ashis along for bathing and playing. They accompanied him while going to school and during Midday Meals. Ashis parents now feel less worried about him and are happy with his activities and progress.

Ejara Jani is another 7 year old child from the same village with MR. His father Abraham and mother Sarita were worried about their only son. After his involvement in the Children club and its activities, they observed improved behavioral changes in Ejara. He is now more disciplined and takes care of his daily habits like combing, dressing and eating. These improved changes in his behavior are pleasing to his parents and they are grateful to the CBCC initiative which has changed lives of other similar children. ■

DROPOUT ADOLESCENTS LINKED WITH SKILLS AND LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVES



Banita Mandal is an adolescent girl of 17 years from Turenpani village under Paniganda Grampanchayat. Her father Philip and mother Rayal Mandal are daily wage earners. Banita could not continue her education after class 7th due to poor family conditions. In 2010, she began to support her family by earning daily wages. CBCC project team identified Banita and took her to participate in the Atma Nijukti Mela employment camp run by the government. She was selected for training in tailoring. She completed her training in Chennai with a monthly stipend support of Rs. 5000/- along with food and stay by the government. She now plans to start her own tailoring unit in the village to generate income and employment opportunities for other women.

Another five adolescent girls from the same village are working in a textile company in Chennai after completing their training and earning upto Rs.12000/- per month. Banita is grateful to the CBCC project team for giving her a new life. ■

BANITA NOW PLANS TO START HER OWN TAILORING UNIT IN THE VILLAGE TO GENERATE INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHER WOMEN

CHILD RIGHTS, DARJEELING

Darjeeling district, which comes under North Bengal is famous for three “Ts”- Tea, Tourism and Timber. Amidst these three very progressive social milieu there also exist social evils like Human Trafficking, child labour, exploitation of tea garden community etc.

Kalimpong is one of the largest sub-division of the Darjeeling District. The Sub-division consists of Kalimpong I, Kalimpong II

and Gorubathan development Blocks with its headquarters at Kalimpong Town. These three blocks contain 42 Gram Panchayats.

Caritas India has been implementing Child Rights programme with special focus to anti-child labour in collaboration with two local partners namely Anuglaya (DSSS) and Bal Suraksha Abhiyan (BSA) since 2013. The project area where the organisations are working are located in three different Blocks i.e. Kalimpong I & II & Gurupathan blocks and in 8 Gram Panchayats like Pedong, Sakyong in Kalimpong bloc I Pudung & Singdebong Gram Panchayat which is under Kalimpong Block II. Ahalay, Gorubathan, Nim and Dalim Gram Panchayats under Gorupathan Block. Child Labour is rampant in the areas and Caritas India and local organizations wanted to address this burning issue through holistic convergence approach/model in collaboration with the above two organizations.

The project “Moving towards Child Labour Free Society” renamed as above title was formally initiated from the year 2013 with the objec-

tive to engage with Government administrations and advocate for child labour free society. This project began working with schools, gram panchayats and other state institutions by creating & strengthening community based child safety mechanisms and networking with NGOs and key stakeholders mobilizing their support for address the issue in a concerted manner. Technical support of PRATHAM Mumbai was also provided for enhancing quality impact of the programme.

District level network have been formed with 26 organisations which is known as “Darjeeling District Child Rights NGO Network (DDCRN)”. In every meeting District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) and Child Welfare Committee (CWC), the key advisory members are playing an active role.

One child friendly space in Police station is established in Kalimpong Town police station. In total 10 villages and 3 wards have been declared Child labor free zones in the programme operational areas in Darjeeling districts of West Bengal. ■



RAIDS & RESCUE OF CHILD LABOURERS



RAID & RESCUE OF CHILD LABOURERS

Based on the reports from a secret survey that was carried out on 27th December 2012, Child Release Officer and Secret Survey Volunteers conducted a rescue operation on 29th December 2012 on 16th and 17th Mile near Algarah, Kalimpong. The team found two children working as domestic help at 16th Mile. Village people also informed that the employer physically assaulted them.

On 29th December 2012, with assistance from Asst. Sub Inspector and two policemen, the team rescued Sunita Kachhu, a 12 year old girl from 16th mile and Rajesh Uraw, a 10 year old boy from Upper Payong Bisty, Kalimpong. Rajesh also informed that his younger brother - Jiwan Uraw was employed at 17th Mile. On the same day, his younger brother was also rescued from 17th Mile.

After the rescue, children were taken to the local police station to complete legal formalities. Since the Inspector-In-Charge was on VIP duty and the employer's pleaded BSA to pardon them, a GDE was lodged. The employers also submitted a written apology letter stating that they would not employ minors again. Since this was the first time BSA rescued minors from the domestic sector, they had to negotiate some terms. Children were then safely handed over to BSA for providing temporary shelter after procuring shelter order from Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Darjeeling. Once the children were brought to BSA, Sunita Kachhu and Rajesh Uraw decided to stay and study at BSA while Jiwan Uraw wanted to return to his family. Sunita and Rajesh have now been mainstreamed in formal schools, and Jiwan too has now returned to BSA to study.

RESCUE AT KALIMPONG

On 15th July 2013, Darjeeling CHILDLINE Sub-Centre in Kalimpong received information about a 12 year old girl child named Nimkit Lepcha. She was employed as domestic help with Mrs. Sona Doma Lama (Poonam), a government teacher and a resident of B.L. Dixit Road, Kalimpong. To verify this information, CHILDLINE team visited the school where the child was studying and met her. According to the child's statement, she was brought home by Mrs. Sona Doma Lama when she was 5 years old. She belongs to Pemling, a remote village under Kalimpong

Sub-division. Her employer had promised her that they would enroll her in school. Nimkit had to attend school as well as work in the house. The employer abused her verbally as well as physically. CHILDLINE team saw visible marks all over her face and hand. As per the school's record, the child's attendance was very low and her performance was very poor, as compared to other children.

On 17th July 2013 at 4:15 P.M., Child Release Officer of BSA along with Sub-Inspectors Bablu Roy, Romah Rai and Tirtha Gurung and Kumar Thapa from CHILDLINE Kalimpong visited the employer's house and rescued the child.



After the child was brought to Kalimpong Police Station, the Inspector-in-charge ordered for a complete medical examination of the child, since there were visible scars on her face and other parts of the body. The medical report is still pending. However, the doctor has confirmed that the marks were caused by physical abuse and it has been noted.

A FIR was immediately lodged against the employer for violating The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 and Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2000.

Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Darjeeling ordered BSA to provide temporary shelter to the child. At present, the case is still undergoing trial in the local court and Nimkit has been handed over to her parents. She is attending a Government school in her village.

RESCUE FROM BHALUKHOP

Through various sources, CHILDLINE received information of an eleven year old girl child named Sheela (name changed), who was employed as domestic help. The case was brought to the team's notice during an awareness program. It was informed that Sheela was employed as a domestic worker with Mr. Nirmal Rai, resident of Dalman Goan, Bara Bhalukhop. The team was also told that the child was not allowed to go to school, instead she was forced to take care of her employer's child.

Without any delay, the team visited Mr. Nirmal Rai's residence to verify the information. Team members informed Mr. Nirmal Rai's wife about the complaint and advised her to allow the child to go to school. They also warned

her that if they receive any further complaint about the child, they will rescue her. Again on 24th October 2013, it was informed that Sheela tried to commit suicide because her employers were not treating her well.

Based on this information, on 26th October 2013, a rescue team was formed and led by the Child Release Officer, along with the support of the local police. Sheela was safely rescued from Nikki Rai W/O Nirmal Rai's residence. After the rescue, A FIR (FIR/Case No- 301/13) was lodged against the offender and was immediately arrested by Kalimpong Police. Later, the child was produced before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and BSA was ordered to provide temporary shelter to the child. On 22nd November 2013, 164 statement (CRPC 164) given by the child was taken up before the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (ACJM), Kalimpong.

The child is now staying at BSA and studying at St. Philomina's Girl's School, Kalimpong.

RESCUE FROM KALIMPONG TOWN

On 1st November 2013, CHILDLINE Darjeeling Kalimpong Sub-Centre, received a call in the morning around 10:30, from CHILDLINE Collab, Siliguri. The caller informed about three minor children working in different restaurants in Kalimpong. Immediately, the team led by CRO BSA prepared a plan to rescue these children.

On 2nd November 2013, rescue team along with the local Kalimpong police conducted a raid and rescued two minor child labourers (12 year old girl and 10 year old boy) from a restaurant at 10th Mile Kalimpong, while the third child (11 year old boy) was rescued



from a restaurant at Motor Stand in Kalimpong. Initial statements of the rescued children were recorded at the Kalimpong Police station. Children informed that they belonged to the District of Jalpaiguri. A FIR was lodged against the offenders at the Kalimpong Police Station.

After all the written formalities were complete, Child Welfare Committee (CWC) Darjeeling was informed about the rescue operation followed by a medical checkup of the children at Kalimpong Sub Divisional Hospital. After the medical checkup, CWC Darjeeling gave orders to BSA to provide temporary shelter to the rescued children.

On 7th November 2013, rescued children were produced before Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (ACJM) Kalimpong Sub Judiciary Court to record their final statement under 164 of CRPC.

On 19th November 2013, on CWC's orders, rescued children were safely handed over to their respective families.

MINOR TRAFFICKED VICTIMS RESCUED FROM HIMACHAL PRADESH

Child Release Officer from BSA along with Kalimpong Police, rescued two minor girls – namely Bina Darjee (13 year) and Jyoti Bano (13 year) from Bhalukhop village of Kalimpong. They were being trafficked by Maheshwar Singh alias Masum Thakur (23) to Anni village in Kullu District, Himachal Pradesh. The case was first being handled by World Vision India, Kalimpong but later forwarded to BSA, seeking help to find the missing children.

Two adolescent girls were missing from home since 21st October 2013. According to the information received, the girls were

seen with Maheshwar Singh, who hails from Kullu District, Himachal Pradesh (HP). Locals informed BSA that Maheshwar Singh is married and had earlier visited the village with a local youth who works in HP. On his second visit to the village, he managed to lure the girls. The victim's relatives also accused Maheshwar Singh to have developed a close bond with Bina Bano.

Suspecting the accused to have lured and abducted the minor girls, the families of both girls lodged a missing complaint at the Kalimpong Police Station. Unfortunately, the victims couldn't be traced for over two months.

On 19th December 2013, an unidentified person from Dharampur contacted the two families

and informed that he had seen the girls in his village with Masum. The caller also reported the girls to be in trouble as he felt Masum looked suspicious. At once, this information was forwarded to the Kalimpong Police & BSA who swung into action.

On 20th December 2013, Mr. C.N. Sherpa - SI of Kalimpong Police Station and other officers, along with Child Release Officer and Child Protection Unit from World Vision Kalimpong, headed to Kullu to rescue the girls. Utilizing its broad network, Kalimpong police contacted the Kullu Police to aid in this rescue mission, while BSA contacted other CHILDLINE centers at Himachal Pradesh.

After the rescue, the girls informed that the accused had taken them to work as domestic workers. When they found out and tried requesting him to allow them to go back home, he refused to do so and threatened them. The police has filed a case against the accused for abduction with false promises of marriage under IPC Section 363 and 366. Since, the FIR was lodged in this Kalimpong Police Station, the accused was arrested and brought to Kalimpong on 27 December 2013. At present, both the girls have been safely handed over to their respective families and have gone back to their school.

CASE FROM PEDONG CHILD RIGHTS PROTECTION DESK

Two cases of child labour (11/F & 7/M) were registered at Pedong Child Rights Protection Desk on 2nd December 2013. The complaint stated that these two children were kept as child labourers at one of the liquor shop in Kattarey, Pedong. As soon as the case





was registered, block coordinator and child protection worker verified and confirmed the information. The team also met the children's grandmother. She told them that the children's parents were divorced. The father had moved to Gangtok to earn a living and the mother had left her children with the neighbours since she was unable to pay for the lodging. The neighbour (shop owner) employed the children as child labourers.

On 24th December 2014, Child Release Officer along with the CPW, approached the employer with intentions to rescue the children in a polite manner and explained to him about the consequences of employing minor children. Children were rescued and sent to their grandmother. Later, the mother took custody of her children and moved to Gangtok, where she worked. She later visited Pedong on 1st February 2014 with the children. This case was presented before CWC Darjeeling, who then gave orders to BSA to provide temporary shelter to the children. Later, the children were moved to Little Angel's Children's Home which is located at Pedong G.P.

In their next follow up, CPW found out that children were taken home by their mother for a holiday and have not returned home. After a week, CPW again visited their home at Kattarey Lower Dalep and found the boy to be staying with his grandmother's while Tshering Doma, the daughter, was with her mother in Gangtok and was looking after her younger sister. CPW tried to trace the house in Gangtok but could not find it.

After a few days, CPW came to know, that the mother was unwell and was admitted at the Sub Divisional Hospital Kalimpong. On 2nd December 2014, a Social Worker from Kalimpong brought the children to BSA Shelter

Home. She encountered the children and their mother at Sub Divisional Hospital Kalimpong. She informed, the mother's health was not good and she was unable to care for the children. At present, the children are staying at BSA and have been enrolled in good schools.

TWO CHILD LABOURERS RESCUED FROM DOMESTIC SECTOR KALIMPONG

On 31st January 2014, an unknown caller informed CRO about two minor girls, who

were employed as a child labourers at Ringkingpong Road, Kalimpong. With the help of Kalimpong Police, CRO along with CHILDLINE, conducted a raid and rescued Rani, 7 year old girl and Kavita, 12 year old girl.

After the rescue, Children informed that they were kept as domestic help. Their statements were noted and a FIR was lodged against the employer under the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection) Act 2000 and the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act 1986. Child Welfare Committee Darjeeling was also informed and a shelter order was given to BSA. The children reside now at BSA.



LET THEM FREE, LET THEM FLY

On 12th March 2014, an unknown caller informed about two minor boys, Santosh Khariya, 12 years and Ajay Induwar, 9 years. They were found in a distressed situation at a Motor Stand, Kalimpong. At once, the Child Release Officer and a member from CHILD-LINE Kalimpong Sub-center, reached the spot and rescued the children. They were taken to Kalimpong Police Station.

Children's informed the police and BSA staff that they were brought to Kalimpong by their employer Bablu Prashad and Sanjay Gupta from Samuktala, Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri, on the pretext of providing them education. But, they were fooled and were employed as domestic help. Children stated, that they had to do household chores like cooking, washing dishes, sweeping, cleaning the house and fetching water. They were to work from 7.00 AM to 11:00 PM and their employer would give them leftover food, which was not enough for them. Ajay informed that he has been working since the past 3 years and Santosh has been working for the last one week. They also stated that they were physically abused.

FIR has been lodged against the two employers under The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2000. Later, the children were produced before Child Welfare Committee Darjeeling, who gave orders to BSA Child Labour Rehabilitation Centre to provide temporary shelter. Later, the children were safely handed over to their parents.

MINOR CHILDREN RESCUED FROM KIRNEY, MELLI

On 20th November 2014, BSA conducted a mass raid and rescued three minor children, working as child labourers in hotels of Kirney, under Melli Check Post along NH 31. Acting on a source information received on the helpline, BSA workers conducted the operation, with the help of Police from Melli Out Post, Melli.

The rescued children fall under the age group of 9-14 and are mostly from Duars and other outside areas. These children were promised good education, in return for the domes-

tic help they provide. However, the children informed that they were fooled and were made to work 15 hours a day. A FIR has been lodged against the owners of the Hostel under Juvenile Justice Act 2000 and Amendment 2006, Child Labour (Prohibition & regulation) Act 1986.

After the rescue, the cases were reported to Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Darjeeling and BSA Child Rehabilitation Centre was ordered to provide temporary shelter to the children. They have now been mainstreamed into formal school.



MISSING GIRLS TRACED

On November 2014, a case of two missing girls (one minor) was referred to BSA. According to the information, two girls named Sita Kumari*, 16 years old and Aruna Moktan*, 19 years old, were missing from Kalimpong since 27th October 2014.

Tej Kumar Thapa, Child Release Officer of BSA, immediately took action by collecting information from Kalimpong Police Station, Gossai Gaon (Kokrajhar) Police Station and meeting the girls parents. The information was also shared with IMPULSE, a renowned NGO



based out of Assam, which works on human trafficking. After days of search, a well-wisher informed BSA that the girls were staying at a rented house in Salugara, Siliguri. Without any further delay, Tej Kumar along with the local police and Aruna's parents, reached the location and rescued the girls from the rented house.

Later, the missing girls informed that a 30 year old woman named Kabita Munda* from Gossain Gaon Kokrajhar District of Assam, had approached them with promises of providing them good jobs in Delhi. They also informed that on 11th November 2014, they were to leave for their destination, but the same night they were rescued. The lady was arrested and taken to Kalimpong Police Station. After completing all formalities, the elder girl was handed over to her parents while the minor girl was referred to BSA Child Labour Rehabilitation Centre for temporary shelter, follow-



ing the orders from Child Welfare Committee (CWC) Darjeeling.

On 17th November 2014, on CWC's, Darjeeling orders, Sita Kumari was safely handed over to her parents.

RESCUE AT PEDONG

On 18th December 2014, BSA, with the help of Pedong Police, rescued two child labourers from Pedong Bazaar. Members of the Vigilance Committee of Pedong also participated as volunteers during the rescue operation.

Children informed BSA, that one of the boys was working as domestic help while the other was working in a shop. Their employer had also enrolled them in a nearby Primary School but their attendance was irregular. As soon as the case was registered at Pedong



Child Rights Protection Desk, CPW along with BSA's Child Release Officer approached the employer and explained to him the seriousness of the offense in a friendly manner. In spite of this, employer ignored the information, compelling BSA to take immediate action in rescuing the children.

A statement 161/164, given by the children, was noted at the police station and a medical checkup was done at the Kalimpong Sub-divisional Hospital.

A FIR was lodged against the two employers under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 and the Juvenile Justice Care and Protection Act 2000. Following orders from CWC, children were brought to BSA Child Labour Rehabilitation Centre for temporary shelter. Children are now at BSA Child Labour Rehabilitation Centre.

RUNAWAY CHILD IDENTIFIED

In January 2015, a 13 year old girl was found at Upper Dalep, near Tribal House, Pedong by one of the vigilance committee members of Pedong. He contacted CRPD helpline number and informed that he has found a runaway girl near his place.

Two of the Child Protection Worker from Pedong reached the spot and took the girl to the nearest Police Check Post. At the Check Post, GDE was lodged. While interacting with her at the station, she informed that she was from Reshi Rhenock, Sikkim and she had run away from her home because her drunken father had beaten her up. The case was also informed to CWC Darjeeling who gave an order to BSA to provide temporary shelter until further action.

Later, CPWs visited the child's home to verify the information and it was confirmed that the child had been missing and she is from a poor family. Since her village falls under the State of Sikkim, the case was transferred from CWC Darjeeling to Sikkim CWC. Then the child was taken by the CPW to produce before the Sikkim CWC. At present, the child is under the care of Sikkim CWC and is staying at the Shelter home at Sikkim.

ABUSE CASE

Two local people from St. Augustine's School area, Kalimpong had found a 16 year old minor girl loitering around the area looking for domestic work. While interacting with her, they felt that the girl's story was very suspicious. Immediately, they brought the child to BSA. Initially the girl told the staff of the organization that she was from Bihar and was looking for a job. Since her story was not clear, later she informed one of the staff that she was from Kalimpong itself where she is living with her father & her step mother. She also told that she is studying in one of the schools at Kalimpong. She informed that her step mother physically & mentally abuses her badly. Even her father knowing this truth does not stop her. Since she was unable to bear her step mother ill-treatment, she decided to look for any kind of menial job so as to support herself.

After hearing her story, the case was informed to the local police station. FIR has been lodged against the parents. After informing and getting shelter order from CWC Darjeeling, the child is staying now at BSA for temporary shelter.

RAID AND RESCUE AT AHALAY G.P.

During the month of February & March 2014, CPWs from Anugyalaya had conducted a secret survey at Sombarey Market, Gorubathan and found out that there were two minor girl children working as child labour. On 26th March 2014, a meeting took place with BSA's Program Manager, Child Release Officer and Anugyalaya staffs where it was decided that on 30th March 2014, Anugyalaya will conduct raid at one of the house at Sombarey Market and rescue the child.

On 30th March 2014, with the help of Gorubathan Police, CRO and Anugyalaya staff raided the house of Mr. Bunty Agarwal at Sombarey Market and rescued the 12 year old girl child. During the interrogation, the mother of Bunty Agarwal said that the child was from Ranchi and her parents are dead. The mother informed that the child was very helpless when they bought her here.

According to the child, she informed that she is from Ranchi and she was working in that house since a year. The owners had promised to send her to the school, open her bank account and deposit the money. They had even assured her that she will not have to do any work but only need to accompany the wife and their child. Instead, Jobita said that she was made to wash dishes, clean the house and fill the water. She was not given opportunity to go out and play and was not enrolled in school as they had promised. She used to get up at 6 am and work till 7 pm.

F.I.R was lodged against Bunty Agarwal under the Child Labour and Juvenile Justice Act.

The girl was brought to BSA for safe custody and on 31st March 2014 she was produced before Child Welfare Committee (CWC),

Darjeeling. CWC ordered BSA to keep the girl at their rehabilitation centre temporarily until her parents come with valid documents proving their identity and identity of Jobita Ekka.

Jobita is at BSA and has been mainstreamed to one of the Government school of Kalimpong.

RESCUE CASE

In the month of March 2014, BSA & Anugyalaya safely handed over Binita Yogi 13-year-old over to her parents at Mal Busty, Allay Gram Panchayat under Gorubathan Block. Binita, a Class 5 dropout had been lured by a woman from her village with promise of providing her a job and good income. A concerned person from the village reported the case to BSA. Even her parents were unaware of her whereabouts. After a couple of days, both the organizations were informed that the girl was brought to Kalimpong. Immediately, BSA contacted the employer. After properly explaining the employer about the consequence of employing minor children as workers, the employer agreed to hand over the child.

Next day, along with the employer's son and staff of both the organization, Binita Yogi was safely handed over to her parents. The staffs explained the parents to re-admit the child in school. A teacher from the local school has assured to provide educational support to the child. BSA also assisted Anugyalaya in rescuing a minor child labourer from Allay Gram Panchayat. The child has been produced before Child Welfare Committee, Darjeeling, which has ordered BSA Child Labour Rehabilitation Centre to provide temporary shelter to the child. ■

ROSHNI- EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT OF MUSAHAR GIRLS IN BIHAR



In Bihar state the Scheduled Caste (SC) population is 13,048,608 as per 2001 census constituting 15.7 per cent of the total population (82,998,509) of the State. The State holds 3rd rank among all the States and UTs in terms of SC population. According to Census 2001 and 2011, literacy rates in Bihar remains amongst the lowest in the country, wherein the Musahar community has shown the lowest literacy level at 3.9% for female literacy.

Without substantial improvements in educational attainment, especially amongst women, significant social and economic development and improvements are unlikely to be achieved in the Musahar communities.

Responding to this grim situation, project "Roshni" meaning the light, aims to disperse darkness and give way to hope for development among the community through educational empowerment among Musahar girls. Through the intervention of Roshni, CI is touching the lives of such girls who are far away from the light of education, without which they are subjected to dwell in deprivations, unfamiliar with their rights and potential.

INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

Through a change in Behavioural Communication, female animator from the same community are employed, who conducted public meetings, Nukkad Nattak, one-on-one interaction, and panchayat meetings to encourage the parents and community at large to send girls to schools, and avail off the benefits under the RTE Act. Teachers are also appointed from same community or villages to work in complementary education centres of this project.

Complementary Education Centres (CEC) are established to support the students with his/her studies. Regular monitoring is maintained by the teachers by way of conducting monthly tests. Around 30 CECs are functional in the respective villages. Peer group of students bright in studies are formed, called "Roshni ki Toli" to act as catalysts for other students.

Samitis or groups are formed after the mothers and fathers, called "Mata Samiti" and "Pita Samiti", for participating in their wards' education and realising the importance of female education.

The rapport building of the project staff with the local schools has enabled them to keep a tab on the number of Musahar children who are receiving the benefits as enshrines under the RTE Act and to report those cases where they are not secured.

Formation of School Management Committees and Village Education Committees- This objective intends to give the project staff a backseat and let the community take the steering. Parents being part of SMC and VEC can create pressure on the schools to provide facilities to the student for which they are entitled. These committees can then contact Block Education Officers and District education Officer. Parents of the children are encouraged and motivated to monitor the education status of the children and attend the Parents Teachers' Meetings. Developing capacity of existing teachers in schools and newly recruited Para-teachers in the communities in order to improve mainstream education and provide effective catch-up training in communities. ■

ROLE MODEL



Rinku Kumari d/o Arun Saday and Pavitri Devi and Leela Kumari d/o Shiv Saday and Savitri Devi are from Ranti Musahar tola in Madhubani district of Bihar. They are the

first ones to have passed matriculation in their tola and are studying in Grade XI. When asked about their hardworking daughters, parents of both girls couldn't conceal the pride and happiness they felt and exclaimed that their daughters were continuing their studies further. The girls too expressed their jubilation and determination to not think of marriage until they completed their education. The girls have taken up the initiative of teaching the younger children of their tola and encourage them to go to school with them. Their dedication towards highlighting the importance of education paid off when they realized that a hundred Musahar children from their tola were enrolled in local Government schools as a result of their efforts. Both Rinku and Leela have become the role models in their tola. ■

STORY OF RUPA

Rupa is the second among seven daughters in her family. She hails from a village named Harincolin in Purnea district in Bihar. With no stable family income and many mouths to feed, education was of secondary importance to her family. With her dedication, Rupa could complete her education up to grade eight. However, the poor socio-economic circumstances of the family forced her into marriage. In the year 2013-14, when the vacancy for the post of a teacher arose in the Girl Child Educational Empowerment Programme through Caritas India, Rupa applied and qualified for the same. Association with the programme has motivated her to continue her studies. Resultantly, despite the opposition from her family and relatives, and besides having a child, she made attempts to get enrolled in Grade IX. She put up valiantly with several systemic hurdles and disdainful attitude of the officials towards her when she sought a written permission from the DEO (District Education Officer) for her admission as the date of admission had lapsed. Finally, she received the written permissions and is continuing with her studies, whilst also serving as a teacher under the Educational Empowerment Programme. In this course, she not just struggled for her right to education, but also right to life with dignity and refused bribe that was demanded of her during the process. ■

THE SUCCESS OF THE MATA SAMITI



Laxmipur Manjhi tola in Haveli Kharagpur area of Munger district in Bihar has an Anganwadi centre that was closed down for over a year. The Anganwadi worker (Sevika) never visited this Dalit village, as a result of which, neither the children received their pre-school orientation and nutritional diet nor were the expecting women and lactating mothers receiving the entitled rations. The matter was brought before the "Mata Samiti" but it took the animators a series of meetings to make them understand their power to get them to function. Facilitated by Caritas India, both the Mata Samiti and Pita Samiti came together to file a complaint to the concerned authorities (with copies to the legislative member of the area and the district collector) demanding the reopening of the centre and realisation of the entitlements. An investigation was ordered into the matter by the District Magistrate wherein the two Samitis explained the issues. Strict disciplinary action was warned against the Anganwadi worker based on the people's report, and the centre was reopened. This incident has brought a wave of confidence in the community and strengthened their trust in Caritas India for empowering them on their role as responsible citizens. ■

HUMARI PAATSHALA, BIHAR

The Musahar community is a highly discriminated and excluded community within Dalits. This has forced them to live away from the main village centres, away from the general population. They have the lowest literacy rate among the Dalits at 6.88 per cent, followed by the lowest for women at 1.43 per cent (Census 2011). Attendance rate falls to 10% at the secondary school level. The project baseline study revealed caste and gender based discrimination as the roots for alienation of the Musahar girls and poor education status among them. Caritas India reached the target areas with programmes focusing early childhood education reaching the elementary level; life skill development, and vocational education. The programme was launched by the Speaker in the Bihar Lok Sabha and Minister of State.

With the objective of creating an enabling environment for Musahar community girls to access education and learning opportunities in the Kochas block of Rohtas district, the intervention drew upon the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) under the Integrated Child Development Scheme

(ICDS). The programme ensured that the girls aged 3 to 6 years attended the Anganwadi centres and weekly informal teaching sessions were conducted with them at the ICDS centres. Steps were also taken to ensure their age appropriate enrolment in schools in accordance with the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009. For out of school girls aged 7-18 years, needs based support classes were conducted within the vicinity of their homes to enable regular attendance at learning sessions.

Key strategies included awareness drives in schools to highlight and combat the practice of caste discrimination by children of the dominant communities and school authorities; mainstreaming of girls enrolled in Hamari Paathshala with the Bihar Board of Open Schooling; participation of programme team in School Management Committees and Parents Teachers Meetings as advisors; engaging with members of the Panchayati Raj Institution to create a positive and supportive environment; and periodic engagements with the local administration to secure better school infrastructure and quality education. ■



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