



INSPIRING INSTITUTIONS

Stories of Change in Nutrition



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Introduction

In Odisha, every third child under the age of five is either stunted or underweight. Also, one fourth of women of the state have body mass index (BMI) below normal as per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-IV). Under-nutrition among mothers and children is a vicious circle which needs multi-sectoral approach and intervention. The National Food Security Act passed by the Indian Parliament in 2013 is one of the significant steps in this regard as it aims at providing food and nutrition security in human life cycle approach by ensuring access to adequate quantity and quality foods at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity. The Act covers mainly four schemes: Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Targeted Public Distribution Service (TPDS), Mid-Day Meal (MDM) and Maternity Benefit Scheme. Schedule III of the Act further highlights different enabling factors to ensure food and nutrition security. It specifies on social audit as a tool to ensure transparency, accountability and participation in food and nutrition programmes.

Society for Promoting Rural Education and Development (SPREAD) with the support of Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives (APPI) is implementing a program, titled “Collective Action for Nutrition” from August 2016 with the objective of promoting transparency, accountability and participation in food and nutrition programmes through social audits in 240 Gram panchayats of six districts – Balangir, Kalahandi, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur and Nuapada. Building capacities of the Panchayati Raj Institution members and facilitating their role in carrying out social audits and monitoring food and nutrition programmes is the core focus area of the project. One of the long term goals is to strengthen the communities so that they themselves can facilitate the social audit process. The program is working with 480 Samikhya Saathis.

Saathis in terms of building their capacities and providing hand holding support. “Stories of Change in Nutrition” narrates the stories of communities, institutions, Panchayati Raj representatives and individuals who have been a part of community engagement and social audits carried out so far. It highlights the efforts made under the project and changes in the lives of the women and children, their nutrition, their capacities and thought process

The six stories in this document speak at large how different people contributing their part to improve nutrition situation. The stories about the effort of the Government providing ration cards to the left out yet eligible households with advocacy support from CAN team members, anganwadi centres altering the pictures of service provided by reaching out to the most unreachable beneficiaries and adolescent girls and communities demanding their rights in small tag village from Malkangiri. The document also narrated the journey of Rudma, a tribal girl who is making effort to change the situation in her panchayat. Finally, the document also features the efforts of a young Sarpanch, who not only owned the process of social audit but also ensuring that the people in the gram panchayat get their rights and entitlements. improve nutrition situation.

Collective Efforts Made People Actualising their Right to Food

Advocacy helped people to assert for their Right to Food.“I am happy that I am getting the rice since last two months. At least we can sustain ourselves.”—says Phulmati of Dhakli village in Nuapada District

“It's been a long time that I and my wife have stopped working due to old age. Few years' back they cancelled my BPL card and did not even gave me one in return which I gravely needed. Crossing all these forest and hills, both of us have been to Nuapada a couple of times to meet the Collector and BDO. They didn't pay heed to our concern. Even I met the Supply Inspector, but he too didn't come to my rescue. I was hopeless seeing no end to It”.—said Maniram with a sense of despair.

Maniram Majhi, who was in his mid-60s lives with his wife Phulmati Majhi about 60 years in a single room thatched house in Dhakli village within Sunabeda Wildlife Sancturay of Soseng gram panchayat, Nuapada district. The couple has four sons and three of them are residing separately. Maniram and Phulmati are living with their youngest son.

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With time and onset of old age, Phulmati has lost her vision completely and hence is dependent fully on her husband for survival. As the couple has divided all their land among the children, hence is left only with a quarter of their possession—only one acre of land, which is not sufficient to meet the bare minimum. . Consequently, the son moves out of the village in search of work during lean months, whereas the couple resorts to collection of forest produces like Mahua and earns around Rs. 3,000/- a month. Thus, the burden got heavier, when their BPL card got suspended and they didn't receive their ration card which they deserve.



Phulmati and her husband Maniram Majhi

Similarly, Rambati Majhi, a 40 year old woman and her husband Lakhan Majhi, 45 year lives in Deosil village with Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary of Soseng gram panchayat along with her mother-in-law of about 80 years and 4 children. Rambati and Lakhan primarily depend on agriculture, wage labour and collection of forest produces like mahua, kendu leaves for living. Despite repeated filling of applications, Rambati did not receive her ration card. *“Two of my children are in ashram schools and two are staying with me and enrolled in the local anganwadi. This has somehow reduced burden as we could have always worried about putting food in 7 stomachs”* says Rambati. Usually, the couple barter a kilogram of mahua for one kilogram of rice to sustain their family. Still it is not enough for Rambati to feed the family.



Rambati and her husband Lakhan Majhi

Exclusion of individuals and families like Rambati and Maniram from Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was one of the most common and prominent issues, which cropped up during the social audits. The CAN team members decided to approach the State Food Commission with the findings of the social audits. In course of deliberation, the Food Commission expressed its interest to be the part of one of the Gram sabhas to get a first-hand experience and agreed to participate in the social audit Gram Sabha scheduled on 16th March 2018 at Soseng GP in Komna block of Nuapada district.



Mr. Ranglal Jamuda, Chairperson State Food Commission, Dr. Puma Tudu, District Collector Nuapada and other officials during the social audit gram sabha at Soseng GP



Social Audit Gram Sabha underway in Soseng Gram Panchayat on 16th March, 2018

The social audit in Soseng GP was held from 10th to 16th March 2018. During social audit verification for TPDS, the CAN team found that there were 6 households, who were eligible to get TPDS but were left out and 118 individuals. Eventually, on 16th March in Gram Sabha, the findings were shared with Mr. Ranglal Jamuda, Chairperson, State Food Commissioner, Odisha, Dr. Poma Tudu, District Collector Nuapada and many other officials. In response to the issues raised, Mr. Jamuda and Dr. Tudu committed to look into the matters of exclusion, particularly in the villages falling within Sunabeda Sanctuary. They also emphasised that Chuktia Bhunjia households, who are residing beyond the micro project area and had PHH cards (Chuktia Bhunjia community are one among the 13 other Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups found in Odisha).

Alone in Nuapada district, 1,365 households got new PHH cards, 2364 households got their PHH converted to AAY and 3,824 households got new AAY cards till June 2018. CAN team members are continuing their efforts to engage with the Government so that, people like Phulmati, Rambati and many more ethnic communities get their rights under NFSA. For them it is not merely about rice, but an option providing dignified living.

“I am happy that I am getting the rice since last two months. At least we can sustain” said Phulmati when we met her in June 2018. As a result of tireless effort laid down by the CAN team members with follow up from Gram panchayat to state, the efforts have started reaping benefits for people like Maniram, Rambati and many more. In the current state of comparison it was found that, in Soseng GP there are 260 AAY households in June 2018 as compared to the month February 2018 where it was 229 AAY households. In addition to that, as committed by the officials in attendance during gram sabha, Chuktia Bhunjia households living beyond the micro project area got their PHH cards replaced with AAY cards.

Excelling with the Hurdles

The Anganwadi pledged to ensure better service not only for women and children but also getting the girls to walk ahead for a healthier womanhood. "Social audit helped to build relations between the anganwadi and community, now that the anganwadi workers have started understanding their responsibilities, there won't be any complaints in the future. I also feel that mothers should understand their responsibilities to send their children regularly to the centre."--Ward Member, Pakhanmunda, Buromal GP of Bolangir district.

"When I was young, I have seen many women and children weak and abnormally thin in Pakhanmunda village. Due to lack of knowledge on proper menstrual care and hygiene, the girls particularly suffer from anaemia and vaginal infections and have been admitted to hospitals for treatment at very young age. Then, I was clueless of how to reach out to those girls. Now I have realized that my efforts as an anganwadi worker can help them overcome the problems" says Madhumita Kumbhar. Madhumita is a woman in her early 30s and is currently working as an Anganwadi worker at Pakhanmunda village anganwadi centre of Buromal Gram Panchayat in Balangir district. Madhumita is born and brought up as Pakhanmunda village and also married in the same village. Fortunately, she got selected as an anganwadi worker in the year 2009. Being a graduate and residing in the village, she was one of the most eligible candidates out of all applicants.



Madhumita counselling the pregnant and lactating women along with adolescent girls at the Anganwadi centre in Pakhanmunda Village.

“When I was young, I have seen many women and children weak and abnormally thin in Pakhanmunda village. Due to lack of knowledge on proper menstrual care and hygiene, the girls particularly suffer from anaemia and vaginal infections and have been admitted to hospitals for treatment at very young age. Then, I was clueless of how to reach out to those girls. Now I have realized that my efforts as an anganwadi worker can help them overcome the problems”

In January 2018, SPREAD conducted social audit of schemes under NFSA-2013 at Buromal Gram Panchayat. During the social audit, the community members of Pakhanmunda village raised the issue of not getting eggs and right quantity of chhatua as Take Home Ration (THR). However, during the Social Audit Gram Sabha held on 11th January, Madhumita explained that due to rise in the price of egg, she was not able to provide eggs to the beneficiaries as per their entitlement. Regarding distribution of chhatua, she explained that the supply was being stopped due to some discrepancies at the SHG—assigned to produce chhatua. The BDO and CDPO, Turekela block, who were present during the Gram Sabha assured that the issue would be sorted out soon. The ward member and many other community members appreciate Madhumita's effort to stream line the functions of Pakhanmunda AWC.



Helper serving hot cooked meals to the children at the centre

“Social audit helped to build relations between the anganwadi and community, now that the anganwadi workers have started understanding their responsibilities, there won't be any complaints in the future. I also feel that mothers should understand their responsibilities to send their children regularly to the centre” said Prafulla Kumbhar, Ward member, Pakhanmunda village. Prafulla actively participated in the social audit and made sure that the issues around the schemes are being raised and redressed during the social audit gram sabha.

In the subsequent months after social audit, Madhumita was supported by the GPC (Gram Panchayat Coordinator) and Samikhya Saathis of CAN project to take up the issues of adolescent girls with appropriate authorities at Block level. The Samikhya Saathis also carried out meetings with adolescent girls in the village. They also supported the worker to bring the children to the AWC every day. The children at present are not only getting the HCM (Hot Cooked Meals) on regular basis but are also engaged in different preschool activities.



The worker weighing children during VHND

Reflecting on her days as a young girl, the worker thinks through the importance of nutrition and proper guidance to the adolescent girls. She has proved her mettle working with the adolescent girls. Piagi Majhi a 14 year old girl of Pakhanmunda said that, many like her have received packets of sanitary napkins and the worker has helped them learn to use these and also guides them on practising hygiene during periods. She also said that, the anganwadi worker cared for the girls who suffered from vaginal infections at times. Not only that, these girls appreciated worker's guidance on the food that they should eat, particularly the importance of vegetables and green leafy, ones that are locally available like drumsticks etc. Along with the ANM, the worker is also ensuring that the girls undergo haemoglobin tests on regular intervals and basing on the results of the test she requests the girls to take IFA tablets.

Apart from the girls, women of Pakhanmunda are also elated with the services provided by the worker. Anusaya Malik who is a beneficiary at the centre feels that, the worker is very supportive during counselling on VHNDs (Village Health and Nutrition Day). She takes weight and monitors the growth of their child and also shares it with them. Madhumita is thankful to the local CAN team members Sobhagini, Karishma and Sasmita, who helped her immensely in reaching out to the communities about the ICDS services and its importance for women and children through village meetings. Basing on the learning from Pakhanmunda anganwadi centre and many more centres, CAN plans to engage with more anganwadi workers on the issues of adolescent girls whereby laying the foundation of a better, brighter and healthier womanhood for young girls.



Madhumita counselling the young girls of Pakhanmunda village

From Ignorance to Assertion

A Story of the Community residing in a remote village named Kantaseru, who went on from being ignorant about their rights to asserting them with the support of CAN team. “After attending the meeting, I know about my rights and am asking for it too.” —Samari Galori of Kantaseru village, Malkangirir, Pakhanmunda, Buromal GP of Bolangir district.

“Chilipadar dui kilometre dur... ei jungle rasta re amarpila mane keti jibe centre...” (Chilipadar village is 2 kilometres away, how will our children go to anganwadi centre through the forest) said Samari Galori (25 years) a resident of Kantaseru and a four year old son who is a beneficiary at Chilipadar anganwadi. This was the situation before Collective Action for Nutrition (CAN) team planned for the social audit in Kudumulugumma gram panchayat. In the month of March 2018 CAN team organized social audit in the panchayat. During the pre-social audit preparatory meeting held in Kantaseru in the month of February, Samari and many more women were of the opinion that, they did not know about the anganwadi services that they are entitled for. They said that the anganwadi worker never visited Kantaseru to provide VHND services nor gave any eggs or chhatua to the beneficiaries as take home ration.

Kantaseru is a remote forest village having Chilipadar as its revenue village in Kudumulugumma gram panchayat of Khairput block in Malkangiri District. Kudumulugumma panchayat is one of the most difficult to reach area in Malkangiri district which is about 60 kilometres away from the district headquarter without having any proper commutable roads.



Samari Galori of Kantaseru Village

Kantaseru is home to 30 families of Kandha tribe. The community mostly depend on agriculture and forest produces for their survival. The people walk through the rough trails stretching for about 2 kilometres within the tough forested hilly terrains to access basic facilities like markets and health centres located in Chilipadar village.

During social audit verification which was carried out from 16th to 23rd March, it was found that the children of Kantaseru were deprived of pre-school education, hot cooked meals and take home ration as there was no anganwadi centre. People in the village were unaware about their rights under NFSA and many other developmental programmes. As a result, they had almost no access to any of the development schemes and entitlements like that of ICDS. When CAN team interacted with anganwadi worker of Chilipadar centre said that she never received any ration for Kantaseru and which is why she did not give any ration in Kantaseru. Understanding the need of the hour, CAN team members carried out a series of meetings with the community and disseminated information about the schemes and entitlements under NFSA. It was found that there were 3 pregnant women, 5 lactating mothers, 7 (6 months to 3 years) children and 8 numbers of 3 to 6 years children, who were eligible for getting entitlements like, take home ration, hot cooked meals and VHND services, but not getting any of it.



Social audit gram sabha under way in Kudumulugumma gram panchayat

On 24th March, a special Gram Sabha was organized, where the ICDS supervisor and the CDPO were in attendance. CAN team shared the findings of the social audit and many individuals shared their grievances in the form of testimonies on the issues of anganwadi services. To this the CDPO, assured the people of Kantaseru that she will make sure that the anganwadi services are provided as per requirement instructed the Chilipadar anganwadi worker to be more responsive towards the needs of the beneficiaries of Kantaseru. During subsequent follow-up by CAN team, it was found that the anganwadi worker of Chilipadar centre was regularly visiting Kantaseru village and distributed eggs and chhatua to the beneficiaries. Later on, the anganwadi worker requested the community to help her by collecting the ration from Chilipadar; as it was difficult on her part to come to Mahimapadar carrying dry ration every week. The community agreed to the proposal and the beneficiaries formed a committee to collect the ration from Chilipadar anganwadi centre. Now all beneficiaries are getting two eggs weekly and two chhatua packets on monthly basis. Furthermore, the pregnant and lactating mothers are also attending VHND on regular a basis. Samari Galori, who is one of the anganwadi beneficiaries thanked the CAN team for helping out mothers like her to know their rights and get their rightful entitlements.



Samari and her child collected her share of chatua packet

Fulfilling Duties towards the Greater Good of Communities

Enhanced Capacities of PRI representatives have ensured effective implementation of schemes under NFSA-2013. “Now I have a clear vision for the people of my Gram Panchayat with my increased knowledge on various schemes under NFSA. I have realized how deadly malnutrition is to the children and in what way it poses threat to a child's overall development.”—Sarpanch, Nuagaon, Golamunda Block of Kalahandi district.

Shyamasundar Chhatra (age 40) is a Sarpanch from Kalahandi district, having perspective and niche to work for the betterment of the people in their respective Gram Panchayats. Kalahandi district is still considered to be one of the nutritionally vulnerable areas for children and women. In this regard, Shyamasundar tried his best to set examples for other PRI. Shyamasundar is the resident of Nuagaon gram panchayat of Golamunda block of Kalahandi district. The journey from being an aspirant in the panchayat elections for the position of Sarpanch in January 2017 to keeping the promises to work against malnutrition among children and women –is arduous but Shyamasundar is proud of it. Both of them got opportunity to voice their opinions during Pre-Election Campaigns organized by Collective Action for Nutrition (CAN) in their respective Gram Panchayats.



Shyamasundar (centre) presiding over the social audit Gram Sabha in Nuagaon GP

Shyamasundar was greatly influenced by CAN team's slogan '*Bhoka re Kehi maribe nahi..Pushti hina kehi rahibe nahi*' (No one will die of hunger and no one will live malnourished) and took it as their motto. On winning the elections and after becoming the Sarpanch, Shyamasundar along with other PRI members were requested by CAN team to participate in the training programme organized for the PRI members and GKS members. In the training, they were made to understand about their mandated roles and responsibilities coupled with the basics of nutrition and related food schemes of the government. In between, he remained in touch with the CAN team members to identify the eligible yet left out individuals under schemes of TPDS and Pension. After identification, CAN team prepared the applications of the individuals and handed over to Shyamasundar for filing with the appellate authorities and also did the subsequent follow-up. In his own capacity as a Sarpanch, Shyamasundar used to visit anganwadi centres and schools to monitor the hot cooked meals, organized nodal meetings for stock-taking of the work done and issues of people in availing the benefits of the schemes i.e., ICDS, MDM, TPDS and Mamata.



Shyamasundar during a nodal meeting

Later in month of February, 2018 CAN team organized social audit with support from Shyamasundar in Nuagaon Gram Panchayat. Based on the verification done during the social audit, he assured that he would visit the anganwadi centres and schools regularly to monitor the services. That's not all, in person he met the left out individuals particularly the old persons of his Gram Panchayat to collect their missed out documents for availing ration cards and pensions. True to his words, Shyamasundar goes on surprise visits to anganwadi and schools two to three times in a week and also moves around in the village asking the anganwadi beneficiaries about the take home ration that they been receiving. During the visits, he interacts with the children about the activities done in the centre and also talks to the anganwadi workers to understand issues pertaining to the hot cooked meals, take home rations and other services provided during the VHNDs. He has also directed the ward members to regularly monitor the functioning of anganwadi centres and schools. Further, he has ensured that the Jaanch Committees and Mother's Committee meetings are organised every month.



Shyamasundar interacting with children during anganwadi visit



Shyamasundar discussing with people during a village meeting

“Now I have a clear vision for the people of my Gram Panchayat with my increased knowledge on various food schemes under NFSA. I have realized how deadly malnutrition is to the children and in what way it poses threat to a child's overall development.”— says Shyamasundar. Many more Sarpanchs like Shyamasundar, have ensured that children in their panchayats are not malnourished. For this to happen, they have worked in tandem with the frontline service providers.

Total 188 other promising Sarpanchs and 1809 ward members from 240 gram panchayats of 24 blocks across 6 districts of Odisha have owned the Social Audit process and pledged to work towards effective implementation of NFSA in their respective constituencies in collaboration with CAN-SPREAD.

A village girl-turned -Change Agent

Being a Samikhya Saathi is a matter of pride and dignity for 22 year old Rudma. "Now, I can talk to both men and women equally with ease and confidence on issues of nutrition and access to various services under NFSA."- says Rudma Gadaba, Paikphulbeda village, Dasmantpur Block of Koraput district.



Rudma Gadaba

Rudma Gadaba is a young girl belonging to Gadaba tribe of Koraput district. She lives with her mother, elder sister and brother-in-law in Paikphulbeda village of Dasmantpur block. The family largely depend on agriculture and wage labour to make both ends meet. They cultivate rice and millets like *suan* and *mandia*; in their meagre land; which is not sufficient enough to sustain the family of four. It is Rudma's sister, who has been supporting the family after the death of their father. Life came to a standstill, after the death of Rudma's father-who was the sole bread earner of the family. In order to complete atleast +2, Rudma shifted to her maternal uncle's place in Koraput and got admission in the Government College.

After completion of +2, she continued to stay at her uncle's place and searched for jobs in Koraput. It was in December 2016 she came to know about SPREAD and CAN project from some sources. Upon hearing about the openings of the project, she applied for the post of Samikhya Saathi. Rudma's happiness went overboard, when she got selected for the position because she could go back to her village for work and would be able to look after the family in a better manner with her salary.

“In the beginning I was confused regarding my work. Often I would think how I will talk to people in the village and make them understand about the importance of nutrition” says Rudma thinking back in time.

Pondering over her journey with SPREAD in CAN program in past one and half years, Rudma feels proud to have come so far. *“I found it difficult making women and girls come for the meeting in the beginning. The women were mostly reluctant to even sit and listen. In the beginning, I was nervous while answering the women, who sometimes raised difficult questions. However, over a period of time, I built my confidence due to various trainings imparted by SPREAD.*



Rudma interacting to women on the vicious circle of malnutrition



Rudma sharing the findings of verification during social audit Gram Sabha in Paikphulbeda GP

“Now, I can talk to both men and women with ease and confidence on issues of nutrition and access to various services under NFSA while answering their questions.”— says Rudma with more profound confidence in her voice. As a young woman, she had tough times engaging with men in the community as they never really try to understand the issues of women and children and was mostly drawn to the issue of rice (TPDS). It was not easy for her to travel distant villages, mobilise people to discuss on health and nutrition issues and informing the community on various schemes enlisted under NFSA.

During the month of May 2017, social audit was organized in Paikphulbeda gram panchayat. It was then, that Rudma's dedicated efforts brought her close to the community. She made people understand about the benefits they were entitled to under different schemes of the government and to a great extent encouraged the community to access those schemes and services. With her active engagement in different community mobilisation activities such as village meetings, collecting applications for TPDS and Mamata, facilitate Jaanch & Mothers' committee meetings etc. Rudma's confidence has grown and able to create a new identification for her among the peers. Now she is able to engage with men and women equally without any inhibition. *“Rudma is so fortunate that she is able to work so much for the communities and people also appreciate her work. I realized that girls too can work like men”*—says one of her friends, Jema Gadaba of Paikphulbeda village.

Rudma is very much sensitive towards the malnourished children from the beginning. Along with the CAN team members and other local service providers, Rudma has carried out campaigns, meetings and rallies on various important days like World Breast Feeding Week, Nutrition Week, Global Hand washing day etc. Having undergone trainings on nutrition and related issues, she was quick in reaching out to the mothers who had malnourished children. Gouranga Malli of Badalimaliguda village and Jharana Gadaba of Paikphulbeda village are among few other severely malnourished children who were referred to the NRCs. In between, she visits both of them from time to time to follow up on the children's health. Both Gouranga and Jharana are now out of danger and have recovered well.



Rudma along with the service providers and CAN team members doing campaign on Breastfeeding Week

“Now I am confident and with the experience I had in past one and half years, I will try to continue my work for the malnourished children in my area. At least I will talk to mothers about the foods that they give to their children for their overall growth. I will share the knowledge that I have gained so far” says Rudma ruminating about the future pathways.

All 480 young and energetic men and women working as Samikhya Saathis under CAN program are trained on different food schemes and other rights as mandated by constitutions and on how to conduct social audit These Samikhya Saathis are honing the necessary skills and capacities to work in their own community. These trained local youths would lead the nutrition campaign in underdeveloped KBK region of Odisha beyond the program period.

Standing upto Promises

An Anganwadi Worker Kept her promises of improving Service Delivery after the Social Audit.



Brundabati Nayak,

“I made some mistakes in my work in the past. But as I promised in front of everyone during the Gram Sabha, I will make sure that there will not be any more complaints relating to my work from the community.”—says Brundabati Nayak,

“I made some mistakes in my work in the past. But as I promised in front of everyone during the Gram Sabha, I will make sure that there will not be any more complaints relating to my work from the community.”—says Brundabati Nayak, Anganwadi worker of Mahimapadar mini centre. Mahimapadar is the hamlet of Girliguda village located in Chancharaguda Gram Panchayat (GP) in Dabugaon block of Nabarangpur district. Mahimpadar has 42 households with a population of 184, who are mostly tribal. Agriculture is the mainstay of the people staying there.

During the social audit verification in the month of February 2018, community from Mahimapadar village placed their grievances— children at the anganwadi are not getting morning snacks and the hot cooked meals are not provided as per menu. People of Mahimapadar also complained that they received no eggs and chhatua as take of ration (THR). The pregnant women also complained that the anganwadi worker didn't take up regular health check-up nor did she measure their weight.

On 24th February 2018, Social Audit Gram Sabha was held in Chacharaguda GP. When the grievances on ICDS services were placed in the Gram Sabha, Brundabati-the Anganwadi worker realized her mistake and promised to work sincerely in providing the services to the community. Apart from that, seeing Brundabati genuinely repent, the community too came forward and agreed to help her in accomplishing her work.



Gupteswari talking to Lachma at her house in Mahimapadar

“Ms. Padma Bhatra who is the GPC (Gram Panchayat Coordinator) of Chacharaguda GP along with Ms. Gupteswari Majhi working as the Samikhya Saathi of Chacharaguda GP followed up with the community people and Brundabati in the subsequent months after social audit. It was seen that, Brundabati with support from the anganwadi helper are working hard to provide better services to the right holders in Mahimapadar village. Brundabati instructed the helper to fetch children from their homes in the village so that they can come to the centre. It was also seen that, the centre is opening on a regular basis and Brundabati is coming to the centre every day. Not only that, the worker is assuring that the children are also getting morning snacks and hot cooked meals as per the menu and preschool activities are being diligently carried out at the centre.

.Sunaphula Bhatra and Lachma Bhatra, who are the pregnant women of Mahimpadar village, were elated to see the immediate change that happened after social audit. They said that, Brundabati is now carrying out VHNDs once every month and also informing the beneficiaries prior to the VHND day. Lachma said that the pregnant women are being weighed and thorough check-ups are also done by the worker and Brundabati is also going on home visits to counsel the mothers. Even, Brundabati is talking to the adolescent girls and convincing them to attend VHND. Lately the girls are attending VHND where they are given deworming medication as well as IFA tablets with proper counselling. Sundarai Bhatra, who is member of the Mother's committee says *“because of the meeting (social audit), we as members of Matru committee are able to know about our responsibilities. We are now discussing about the issues of anganwadi and trying to solve those with help of the worker during monthly meetings. The committee members and the Ward member remain present on the day of distribution of Chhatua and eggs.”*



Mother's committee meeting underway in Mahimpadar

Many communities like that of Mahimpadar village have now started monitoring the services provided in the anganwadi centres. Strengthening of community level organizations like Mother's committee, Gaon Kalyan Samitis and Jaanch committees have greatly helped streamlining the implementation of the services in anganwadi centres. This strategy of CAN is being tried out across more than 3000 villages and has turned out to be a game changer towards assertion of rights by the community themselves.

Dedicated to
All those institutions who inspired us

We acknowledge the efforts of all Panchayati Raj Members, Community Institutions and the Communities because of whom we could come out with this document.

We also acknowledge the contributions of Samikhya Sathis and each of the team members for making this change happen.

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