

**Enabling Implementation of the Right to Education
Act through involvement of Gram Panchayats,
School Management Committees and Local
Communities**

Half Yearly Report from January – June 2014

Submitted to GEW

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Acronyms and Abbreviations used

ANM	Auxiliary Nursing Mid Wife
CDPO	Child Development Project Officer
CRPF	Child Rights Protection Forum
GP	Gram Panchayat-A unit of local government
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
KGBV	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya - Residential School for Girls
MDM	Midday Meal
MEO	Mandal Educational Officer (Mandal is an administrative unit in the local government)
MP Primary School	Mandal Parishad Primary School
MP UP School	Mandal Parishad Upper Primary School
MVF	<i>Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation or M V Foundation</i>
PD-W&CW	Project Director-Women & Child Welfare
RDO	Revenue Divisional Officer
RTE	Right to Education
SC	Scheduled Caste
SMC	School Management Committee
UNCRC	<i>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>
ZP High Schools	Zilla Parishad High School (Zilla is District)

Summary of Activities

As stated in the earlier report Panchayats have been playing an active role, especially where women were elected to the post of Sarpanches. In all, the activities under this project have received great support. As per the requests made by School Management Committees and CRPF members, the village community has generously contributed around Rs.1.5 lakhs for carrying out minor repairs in the schools and celebrating school days. In three villages, Summer Schools were organised with the contributions made by the community. Reopening of schools after vacations was an event celebrated by all stakeholders with the community coming forward to bear the expenditure. For the first time, schools have celebrated schooldays, and child committees were formed in 10 Schools. During this summer also, summer schools were run wherein 72 children joined and 68 of them improved their learning levels. What follows is a brief report of the activities taken up during the reporting period.

Activities Taken up

Facilitate the processes of strengthening of all local institutions such as Gram Panchayats, CRPFs and youth groups keeping the various provisions of the RTE Act

Community Meetings and Activities taken up by the Stakeholders' Groups

Apart from regular meetings with different stakeholders groups, these groups were encouraged to take up certain activities that would help in creating a congenial climate for the implementation of the Right to Education Act. In the following paragraphs a brief account of the activities and meetings held with them are presented.

Child Rights' Protection Forums

During the half year period 31 meetings were held with the CRPF committees at Village and Mandal levels in which 441 members participated. As per the decisions taken in these meetings, the following activities were organised:

- CRPF Mandal Committee visited the two welfare hostel located in the Mandal Head Quarters Dornipadu to have an understanding of the problems faced by the students staying in these hostels. It was observed that the Boys Hostel run by the Social Welfare Department does not have a compound wall and the toilets do not have doors. In the Girls hostel run by the Backward Communities Welfare Department it was noticed that there were only 2 toilets for the 90 girls boarding the hostel. Toilets do not have a water connection

and weed has grown in the hostel premises. The CRPF Mandal Committee resolved to raise a demand with the concerned departments for resolving these issues.

- The roof of the primary school building in Dornipadu was leaking and the local CRPF unit submitted a petition to the MLA and Sarpanch for repairing it.
- In Chakirajuvemula, the local CRPF Unit requested the neighbouring residents to refrain from using the school premises as dumping yard. They succeeded in preventing this.
- Child marriages are rampant in W.Govindinne Village and the CRPF members of the village have been campaigning against them. With the help of the local KGBV, they organised a street play against child marriages.
- Towards the closure of the previous academic year, in 10 Schools in the entire Mandal, School Days were celebrated with the CRPF supporting the events.
- Similarly, at the time of reopening of the schools for the current academic session, CRPF organised events to celebrate the beginning of the new academic year.

School Management Committees

During the half year period 27 meetings of School Management Committees took place in which 622 members took part.

- Some School Management Committees regularly held meetings i.e., once a month.
- SMCs discussed children's achievements and the implementation of the Midday Meal Scheme.
- School absentees are being followed up on a regular basis.
- SMCs in villages like Chakirajuvemula, W Govindinne, Arjunapuram etc., urged parents to come forward to resolve certain minor problems faced by the schools by contributing small amounts.
- SMCs have submitted petitions for additional accommodation, additional teachers and up gradation of Primary Schools into Upper Primary Schools.

Gram Panchayats

Sarpanches of six Gram Panchayats have been concentrating on the development of Schools. The Panchayats are: Kishtipadu, Dornipadu, Chakarajuvemula, W. Govindinne, Arjunapuram and Gundupapala. It may be noted that the elected Sarpanches of all these six Panchayats are women. Under their leadership the Panchayat members have started visiting schools twice a month, enquiring about the academic progress of children, problems, absenteeism among children, teachers' punctuality, midday meal programme etc. They are encouraging parents to admit their children in the Government Schools, by assuring them quality teachers and education. They are also regularly monitoring teaching and learning in the

Government run Schools. The Sarpanch of Kishtipadu Panchayat contributed Rs. 10,000/- for Teaching-Learning material. 5 other Sarpanches are also putting in their best efforts to improve the credibility of Government Schools. In Arjunapuram, the Panchayat has resolved to pay for volunteer teachers who were to be appointed in the school by the locals. The School was up graded during this academic year on the condition that villagers will make their own efforts for placing the additional teachers. Government will not do it in the first year of up gradation.

Before schools reopened, the Sarpanches have directed the School Head Masters to make arrangements for universal admission of all children in their catchments areas. As a result Head Masters and other teachers prepared lists of eligible children for admission into schools by the time of reopening of the schools. Sarpanches are trying to resolve the schools' problems within their limits. In cases of additional requirements for funds or permission they are scaling the issues and representing them to the higher levels. In W. Govindinne the Gram Panchayat has joined hands with the CRPF in the prevention of Child Marriages.

Women Groups

MVF volunteers participated in the meetings of Village Federations of Self Help Groups in two villages during the reporting period. Volunteers facilitated debates on child marriages and the importance of girl child's education in these meetings. They also facilitated them to submit petitions to the Mandal Education Officer and District Educational Officer for the construction of toilets in all the schools and enable the girl children attend schools without problems.

Teachers Forum for Child Rights - TFCR

During the reporting period 17 meetings with the members of TFCR were organised at school level in which 75 teachers took part in all. Imparting quality education, children's progress, absenteeism among school children, regularity in the conduct of school committees' meetings, formation of children committees, improvement in midday meal and conduct of schools' anniversaries are some of the important issues that were discussed in these meetings.

Child Committees

First time Child Committees were formed in the schools of this Mandal. In 10 schools committees with children were constituted. These Committees included, Health Committee, Library Committee, Information Committee, Cleaning Committee and Servicing Committee. MVF Volunteers trained the members of these committees. While the Library Committee is concerned with maintaining the Library including issuance and receipt of books and recording the entries, the Information Committee looks after absenting children and enquires about them. Similarly, each committee has specific roles to perform. One of the school teachers is made in charge of each committee and such teachers would guide children on their functions.

Farmers of Cottonseed cultivation

In the month of May a meeting with the Cottonseed farmers was organised in the Mandal Head Quarters. About 45 farmers attended the meeting. Farmers resolved not to engage children and no advances be paid to them. They also decided to motivate other farmers about this.

Achievements

- In Arjunapuram the MDM agency was changed.
- The Kishtipadu Primary School got furniture
- In the Primary School, Chakirajuvemula, jungle was cleared. Panchayat constructed a toilet in the school. In the Urdu School class rooms were levelled. In the Special School additional teachers were posted.
- In Gundupapala flooring of class rooms was done and water motor was repaired
- In the Regular School, Dornipadu the borewell was repaired. Police took action against persons who were found gambling in the school premises. Additional rooms and additional teachers were sanctioned by the Education Department for the Special School. For the Old Special School a retired Police Constable contributed money for the purchase of a motor.

School Day Celebrations

In 10 Schools in the Mandal, School Days were celebrated. The chief objective behind organising school anniversary celebrations was to prove to the Society that children studying in Government Schools are no less to the children studying in Private Schools. The occasion was also used to initiate a debate in the society about the Government Schools. As part of the celebrations, competitions in Dance, Drama, Mono Action, Songs, Kho-kho, Kabaddi, Musical Chairs, Skipping rope and essay competitions were organised. On the Anniversary Day children who stood first, second and third in these events were given prizes.

CRPF Units of the concerned villages provided support in organising these events, by collecting donations and sponsoring certain prizes. Sarpanches and Gram Panchayat members too generously contributed for the success of events. Sub Inspector of Police, Mandal Education Officer, Panchayat Sarpanch and members witnessed the events that were held on the anniversary day.

Summer Schools

As organised during the last year, Summer Schools were organised this year also in 5 villages, viz., Dornipadu, Arjunapuram, Chakirajuvemula, W.Govindinne and

Kishtipadu. In all the schools 86 slow learners were identified. Of them 72 attended remedial classes and 68 children improved their learning levels. SMCs, CRPFs and Gram Panchayats supported the honorarium of three volunteers and MVF supported the other two. Two Volunteers who worked during the previous year have rendered services this year also, while three new volunteers were entrusted with the responsibility of teaching these children. All these five volunteers were trained on organising and teaching the children. In Chakirajuvemula the community contributed for the teaching-learning material and for other schools MVF provided.

Child Marriages Prevention

In W. Govindinne, when the CRPF Team was surveying the eligible children (girls) to motivate them for joining the Open School System (10th class), the team members were surprised to know that out of 50 girls in the age group of 15 to 18 years, 21 were married. They also came to know that proposals for the marriage of another 9 are under active consideration and three of them are going to get married within a few months. (Marriages of two of these three girls were stopped). All these girls, who are proposed/engaged belong to backward communities or Scheduled Castes. CRPF shared this information with the Sarpanch of the Village, Subhadramma who is a proactive Sarpanch and is constantly supporting the CRPF to take up a campaign against child marriages. Consequently, a campaign was undertaken with a team consisting MVF, CRPF and the Gram Panchayat against child marriages. The campaign included public meetings, door to door meetings with the parents and organising a street play. A local KGBV teacher wrote and directed a play and children of the KGBV acted in the street play. On March 18 the play was performed in the village. It covered issues of child marriages like legal problems, health problems etc.

During the half year period, marriages for 25 children (15 girls and 10 boys) were proposed in Dornipadu. However, marriages have been stopped in case of 8 girls and 7 boys with the intervention of CRPF, Panchayat and Youth. In Kishtipadu for three girls marriage was proposed and all were stopped. In Chakirajuvemula marriages for a boy and three girls were proposed. Efforts are being made to stop these marriages.

Reopening of Schools

In the second week of June schools reopened for the fresh academic session. MVF Volunteers, CRPF, Youth, Panchayats and School Committees decided to make it a grand event in every village/school. Schools were decorated with green leaves, and colour papers, lighting was arranged. On the day of reopening teachers were given a rousing traditional welcome. Girl Youth painted the ground with colourful designs welcoming the teachers and children. Prior to the reopening of schools, schoolteachers collected data of all the 5+ aged children in the villages. Head Masters of the concerned schools wrote letters to the parents of such identified children, to admit their wards in their school and pledged to impart quality education to their

children on par with the private schools. Head Masters made arrangements to admit all of them on the same day. Aksharabhyasam (initiating the child into the world of education) was organised in the traditional way. Children and parents were also welcomed to join the school. Children who were leaving the school after completing in this school were given a warm farewell and were bade all the best in their studies. Such children were admitted in the higher level schools. The responsibility of admitting them in the nearby high school was taken up by the Head Masters and CRPF. Sweets were distributed and the events were organised in a festive mood.

Teachers' Trainings

From 9th to 11th March 7 Government School Teachers participated in a training programme on teaching Telugu, English and Mathematics, organised by SCERT in Hyderabad.

Open School Examination Results

A total of 35 children (18 boys and 17 girls of 15-18 years old) appeared for the 10th Class Examinations under Open School System. Of them, 5 boys and two girls passed in the examinations held during this half year period. While all of them are reappearing for the examinations, MVF is providing support to 10 of them for payment of examination fee.

Anti-Child Labour Day (June 12)

To mark the Anti-Child Labour Day on June 12 rallies and public meetings were organised in 5 Villages in the Mandal. A total of 510 including the representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions, Youth, CRPF Members, SMC Members, School Teachers, School Children and Members of Women Groups and various others took part in the processions that were held on the occasion. Participants in the rallies holding placards and banners, passed through the main streets and roads of the villages raised slogans denouncing child labour. At the junctions they addressed the general public, appealing them to protect the childhood and child rights. They requested the villagers to strive for enrolling all the children in schools and protect their right to education.

Follow up of Absentees

To prevent children from being absent they are followed up regularly. In the regular visits of Panchayat Members/Sarpanches, SMC Members and CRPF members to schools, monitoring of school children's attendance has become an important event. They are taking note of the long absentees and putting their best efforts to prevent long absenteeism by any child. As a result absenteeism has come down to 15% in majority of the schools. Earlier it used to be more than 30% in all the schools.

Schools Survey

A survey of the facilities available in the Schools of the Mandal was organised. For 17 Primary Schools (1 being Urdu Medium School), 2 ZP High Schools, 2 Upper Primary Schools and a KGBV total (27 Schools) following short comings were identified:

- There is a requirement of 8 additional teachers on the whole as per the RTE norms.
- In 4 schools there are no toilets at all. In 5 schools though there are toilets they are not usable.
- In 6 schools there is no proper drinking water facility
- 13 schools do not have compound wall; out of the rest, two schools have compound wall built partially.
- 17 schools do not have ramp
- 14 schools do not have kitchen sheds, in 6 schools kitchen sheds are there, but they are not used and in three schools kitchen sheds were under construction.
- There is a need for 10 additional class rooms.
- 13 schools don't have play ground
- In 15 schools, health and medical services, and medical Kit cards are not available.

Enrollment Campaign Rally



Summer School Volunteers Training



SMC Meeting



Teachers Training



Children Annual Day Function



Teachers in Enrollment Campaign

