

**ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR THROUGH  
COMMUNITY MOBILISATION AND  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RTE ACT  
DORNIPADU MANDAL, KURNOOL DISTRICT**

**PROGRESS REPORT  
JULY – DECEMBER 2012**

**Submitted to  
GEW**

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## ***GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED***

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| BC     | Backward Caste                                       |
| CRPF   | Child Rights Protection Forum                        |
| DEO    | District Education Officer                           |
| HS     | High School  |
| ICDS   | Integrated Child Development Scheme                  |
| KGBV   | Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya                     |
| MEO    | Mandal Education Officer                             |
| MLA    | Member of Legislative Assembly                       |
| MPDO   | Mandal Parishad Development Officer                  |
| MVF    | Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation                |
| PS     | Primary School                                       |
| RDO    | Revenue Division Officer                             |
| RTE    | Right to (Free & Compulsory) Education               |
| SHG    | Self-Help Group                                      |
| SI     | Sub-Inspector  |
| SMC    | School Management Committee                          |
| TFCR   | Teachers Forum for Child Rights                      |
| UN-CRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| VO     | Village Organisation                                 |

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

One of the key activities taken up during the reporting period was the conduct of a survey to identify children working in cottonseed farms of 7 mandals. The survey was taken up in two phases. 1985 child labourers were identified in Dornipadu mandal. Data relating to children from the other mandals are being tabulated. A meeting was convened with cottonseed organisers and mandal level officials prior to the conduct of the survey. 160 members were present. One division and mandal level meeting each were also held with trade unions and student unions to involve them more intensively in the campaign. 9 village level meetings were also convened with 180 farmers and they were urged to stop employing children.

The volunteers followed up on the enrolment and retention of all children in school on an ongoing basis. 11 boys and 15 girls aged 6-14 were directly enrolled in educational institutions. 31 boys and 53 girls that had either dropped out of or were irregular to school were also followed up. 9 and 4 petitions were submitted to various officials at the mandal and division levels respectively in the context of violation of the RTE Act. Rallies were held in 7 and 8 villages of Dornipadu mandal with 998 members respectively on the occasion of UN-CRC Week. They were used as a platform to denounce children's employment in cottonseed farms. Games competitions were also held and winners given away prizes. Slogans denouncing children's employment in cottonseed farms were displayed at 250 public locations and wall posters displayed at 160 locations with a similar objective. 13 SMC meetings were held with 450 participants and they have undertaken 10 monitoring visits to school so far.

Mandal level training sessions were organised for 68 youth and 54 CRPF members on their role in strengthening the campaign. 22 youth came forward to form a mandal level campaign committee under the banner of the *Balala Vidya Hakku Parirakshana Yuvajana Committee* with the primary objective of upholding the right to education. The volunteers constantly lobbied with teachers and teacher unions in order to enhance their visibility in the campaign. A project level AdHoc Committee of the TFCR was formed with 3 members. The members have been given the responsibility of transforming schools into child friendly institutions. More teachers have begun cooperating with the volunteers in their efforts. 13 of them have quit punishing children. Volunteers from Arjunapuram felicitated 3 active teachers for their contributions to the cause of child rights.

## **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***

Ongoing meetings were held with youth, the CRPF and women to discuss the status of implementation of the RTE Act, child labour in cottonseed farms, child marriage, expanding the base of the CRPF and problems faced in school. The agenda on each of these meetings is as below:

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>Youth</i>        | MVF's experiences with child labour in cottonseed farms, RTE Act, problems being faced in school, survey, wall writings, rallies, CRC Week, quality education  |
| <i>CRPF</i>         | Follow up of absentees, child labour in cottonseed farms, petitioning to officials, RTE Act, UN-CRC Week, midday meals, community contribution, expanding base of CRPF, rallies                                |
| <i>Women</i>        | MVF's experiences with girl child issues, child marriage, girl child education, absenteeism, school monitoring visits, differences between government and private schools, RTE Act, child rights, midday meals |
| <i>Caste elders</i> | Absenteeism, dropout   |

The following are the key issues identified during the meetings:

- 6 PS of the mandal had just one room each
- No teachers had been posted in 3 schools of the mandal and they were being run solely by volunteers

- 11 schools of the mandal had no toilets
- Toilets in 14 schools were defunct
- 20 schools of the mandal had no kitchen sheds
- 8 schools of the mandal had no drinking water facility
- 1577 children were employed in 4386 acres of cottonseed farms
- Nearly 250 school-going children had dropped out of school during the quarter to work on a seasonal basis in cottonseed farms
- Workers of 24 midday meal agencies had been cooking the meal at their homes, which had affected the quality and quantity of the food. The children were being asked to fetch the food from the workers' homes.
- Scholarships were not being released to children in Classes 8-10 and they were being inconvenienced

The major decisions taken during these meetings are as under:

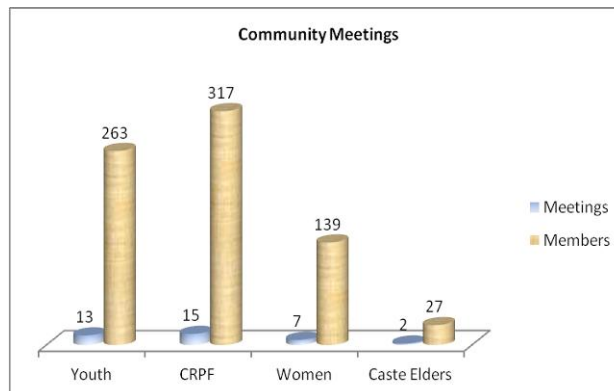
- Youth and CRPF members would take the issues of child labour and additional school teachers to the notice of mandal officials
- CRPF members would take all possible steps to streamline the conduct of SMC meetings
- Group motivation drives would be taken up by the staff members and the CRPF to reach out to out-of-school children
- Planning was taken up for rallies and wall writings
- Visits by the CRPF to cottonseed farms were scheduled

The below are the outcomes of the meetings:

- 7 petitions were submitted to the mandal officials in the context of problems faced in school
- 2 additional teachers were posted in the school in Chakarajuvemula
- 2 toilets and a building were sanctioned in Kristipadu
- A compound wall was sanctioned in Ramachandrapuram
- The implementation of the midday meal scheme has been streamlined in 6 schools
- 3 boys and 6 girls from the mandal that had been proposing to migrate along with their parents were prevented from migrating
- Tuitions and special coaching facilities are being provided to children in 2 schools of the mandal
- 25 children from Adoni division that had immigrated to work in Dornipadu were weaned away and 14 of them were linked to school; 11 to Anganwadi Centres

The details of meetings held are as follows:

| <b>Group</b> | <b>Meetings</b> | <b>Members</b> |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Youth        | 13              | 263            |
| CRPF         | 15              | 317            |
| Women        | 7               | 139            |
| Caste Elders | 2               | 27             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>50</b>       | <b>1179</b>    |



### ***Campaign against child labourers in cottonseed farms***

A survey of child labour in cottonseed farms of 7 mandals, namely Dornipadu, Uyyalawada, Sirivella, Allagadda, Rudravaram, Chagalamarri and Koilakuntla, was taken up in two rounds. The number of farmers and land under cotton cultivation were identified in the first round. Details of organisers and *mestris* (contractors) were collected as part of this exercise. A meeting with cottonseed organisers was held in the MPDO's office, Dornipadu on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012 to share these details. Middlemen and representatives of M/s. Monsanto, Bayer, Nuziveedu, Kaveri, Tulasi, Mallika, Rasi, Tata, Yashoda, Roshni, Teja, US, Bioseed and Superseed were present. Officials present include Mandal Special Officer Mr. Mallikarjun Shetty, MPDO Ms. Murali Kalyani and MEO Mr. Subba Reddy. State Asst. Coordinator from MVF Mr. J. Bhaskar, MVF intern Elke and CRPF members were among the participants. 160 people turned up on the occasion in all.

Addressing the participants, the officials cautioned them against using children's services in their farms and warned them of legal action if they did so. They were asked to pass on this information to their respective organisations. Most of the middlemen refused to acknowledge that they were in the wrong and informed that the families had got their children along with them. They also opined that there were no rehabilitation schemes for these children. A few of them claimed that their own children had been working in the farms and not others' children. The officials responded stating that they did not need to worry if they were not guilty. However, steps would be taken against them if it were proved that they had employed children. A discussion was also held on child labour legislation.

The second round, which involved the identification of children by MVF, trade union members, the CRPF and youth, was taken up from September onwards. The teams raided cottonseed farms for the purpose. Most of the farmers tried to conceal the children and also misrepresented their ages. Girls were dressed to look older than their age and farmers were unwilling to reveal the children's names and addresses. They also claimed that the children were there to care for their siblings. Petitions were submitted to the Tehsildar, the SI of Police and the MEO. The District Collector and the RDO were also involved in the issue in addition to Asst. Commissioner of Labour, Nandyal. They took up an enforcement drive in these farms during end November.

The National Child Labour Elimination Project team and the Labour Department had earlier taken up a field study and had shared the outcomes of this exercise with the District Collector. 8 charge sheets were prepared but not handed over to the Collector's office. 1, 2, 3 and 4 cases were filed respectively in Allagadda, Rudravaram, Dornipadu and Uyyalawada. The mandal officials wrote to the District Collector that there were no child labourers in Rudravaram but he did not accept their version and told them that he had personally seen many children working. He held a review in Rudravaram a few days later, to which he invited the Tehsildars of all 7 mandals and asked them to undertake surveys. They publicly announced the conduct of surveys through mike and the *Dandora*. A local satellite channel also telecast this information.

4386.5 and 2624.2 acres of land respectively were identified in Dornipadu and Uyyalawada. 1577 and 408 children were found to be working in these mandals.

Meetings were held with trade unions at the mandal and division levels to plan follow up action. A division level meet was held in Allagadda on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012 with 45 members including representatives of Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Students Federation of India, All India Trade Union Congress, All India Students' Federation, the CRPF and MVF. The decisions taken on the occasion are as under:

- A sample survey would be taken up in all mandals
- Petitions would be submitted to the officials in the context of child labour in cottonseed farms
- People's organisations would undertake monitoring visits at 10-day frequency to the field
- Pressure would be brought on owners of farms to free children that they had employed
- Officials would be urged to enforce the law stringently

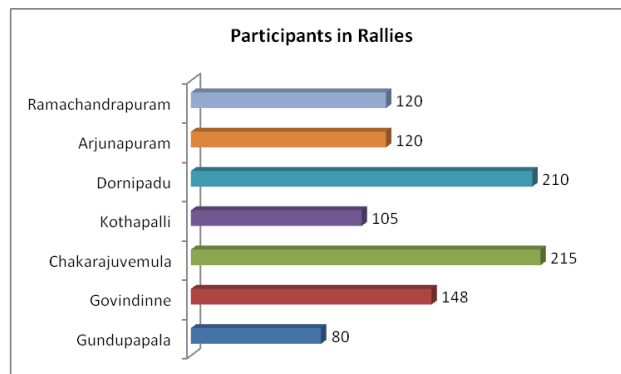
Mr. Bhaskar reminded the companies that they had pledged not to employ children and added that doing so was not an ethical practice.

A mandal level meeting was held in Dornipadu on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2012 with the participation of 25 people including representatives of the All India Students' Federation. It was planned to submit petitions to officials and to undertake field visits to identify child labour. Farmers would also be sensitised to the issue of child rights. Farmers' meetings were held in Dornipadu, Bhagyanagaram, Ramachandrapuram, Uyyalawada, Chakarajuvemula and Kristipadu villages of Dornipadu and 3 villages of Uyyalawada mandal with 180 members. Members of the CRPF undertook a field visit in Arjunapuram and Ramachandrapuram. Teachers accompanied them in Arjunapuram. They interacted with farmers in these villages and warned them against employing children.

### **UN-CRC Week**

Rallies featured in 7 villages of Dornipadu mandal with 998 participants to mark UN-CRC Week. SI of Police Mr. Satish Kumar, MEO Mr. Subba Reddy, CRPF members, youth, women's groups, the SMC, village elders, teachers and MVF volunteers took part in the event. Meetings were held in some of the villages at the end of the rallies. Prizes were given away to winners of various competitions held at the school level. Children from Arjunapuram staged a skit and also sang inspirational songs. Toffees were sponsored for children in all 7 villages through village contribution. The details of the rallies are given below:

| <b>Village</b>   | <b>Participants</b> |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Gundupapala      | 80                  |
| Govindinne       | 148                 |
| Chakarajuvemula  | 215                 |
| Kothapalli       | 105                 |
| Dornipadu        | 210                 |
| Arjunapuram      | 120                 |
| Ramachandrapuram | 120                 |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>998</b>          |



Rallies were held in 8 villages of Uyyalawada mandal on the occasion of UN-CRC Week with 750 participants. Elocution and essay writing competitions on the RTE Act, child rights and elimination of child labour were held in 2 schools and prizes given away to the winners. A mandal level rally was held on 20<sup>th</sup> November with 325 members including the MEO, the SI of Police, the former Mandal Parishad and head teachers. They resolved to ensure that no child aged 6-14 was out of school and that no child worked in cottonseed farms.

### **Training Sessions**

68 youth took part in a mandal level training session held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2012. They were given inputs on the RTE Act, child rights, elimination of child labour and their responsibilities in the context of addressing these issues. A 22-member mandal level *Balala Vidya Hakku Parirakshana Yuvajana Committee* was formed at the end of the session. They resolved to form village level committees and to monitor schools regularly. They also promised to reach out to children employed in cottonseed farms and to ensure effective implementation of the RTE Act. The SI of Police also took part in the session.

A 2-day training session was organised for the CRPF in Mahanandi on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2012. 54 members were present. Mr. Bhaskar provided the resource on the occasion. Issues on the agenda included the RTE Act, child rights, the MVF strategy and the role of the CRPF in the campaign. They were given a detailed description of the Act, its various sections and components of the Act that were most relevant to them.



### ***Enrolment and retention of children in school***

The volunteers compiled separate lists of out-of-school children aged 6-8 years and 9-14 years and undertook special drives to link them to educational institutions. Children aged 6-8 were enrolled directly in school. Girls aged 9-14 were admitted in KGBV and boys in this age group were sent to school. 11 boys and 7 girls aged 6-8 were admitted in school and 8 girls aged 9-14 were sent to KGBV.

The volunteers also categorised dropouts from school into 2 groups. Children that were away from school for more than a month were treated as dropouts whereas those absent from school for a lesser period were termed irregular. 31 boys and 53 girls aged 6-14 were thus followed up.

### ***Teachers' Day***

3 teachers and volunteers each from Arjunapuram were felicitated by the CRPF, the SMC and village elders for their contribution to school strengthening. A meeting was later held in the village with 20 community members and 4 MVF organisers. The head teacher addressed them on the importance of the occasion and went on to acknowledge the contributions of the MVF team and the CRPF in strengthening the school and solicited their continued support. The MVF team had convened an SMC meet on the previous day to plan the event. Mandal Coordinator Ramakrishna appreciated the efforts being made by the teachers to improve standards of English in the school.

### ***Petitions***

The details of petitions submitted by stakeholder groups to officials from Dornipadu and other mandals during the reporting period are as follows:

| <b><i>Village</i></b>             | <b><i>Petitioner</i></b>            | <b><i>Recipient</i></b>        | <b><i>Issue</i></b>              |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Chakarajuvemula, Dornipadu mandal | Youth, CRPF                         | Tehsildar                      | Child labour in cottonseed farms |
|                                   | SMC, Parents                        | DEO                            | Regular teacher in Urdu School   |
| Kondapuram, Dornipadu mandal      | Youth                               | Tehsildar                      | Child labour in cottonseed farms |
| Kristipadu, Dornipadu mandal      | CRPF                                | MEO                            | Toilets in school                |
| Dornipadu                         | Mandal CRPF, People's organisations | Tehsildar                      | Child labour in cottonseed farms |
| Allagadda                         | Trade Unions                        | Tehsildar, SI of Police, MEO   | Child labour in cottonseed farms |
| Koilakuntla                       | Trade Unions                        | Tehsildar, SI of Police, MEO   | Child labour in cottonseed farms |
| Rudravaram                        | Trade Unions                        | Tehsildar, SI of Police, MEO   | Child labour in cottonseed farms |
| Chagalamarri                      | Trade Unions                        | Tehsildar, SI of Police, MEO   | Child labour in cottonseed farms |
| Uyyalawada                        | CRPF, Trade Unions                  | Tehsildar, SI of Police        | Child labour in cottonseed farms |
| Nandyal (Division level)          | CRPF, Trade Unions                  | RDO, Asst. Labour Commissioner | Child labour in cottonseed farms |
| Division level                    | CRPF, Trade Unions                  | District Collector             | Child labour in cottonseed farms |



|                |   |  |   |
|----------------|---|--|---|
| Division level | CRPF                                      | MPDO   | Hostel facilities                             |
| Division level | CRPF, ICDS Supervisors, Anganwadi Workers | Division and mandal officials – Praja Darbar | Government buildings for 30 Anganwadi Centres |

### Visitors

A three-member team from GEW comprising M/s. Steffen Wezel, Hilgarde and Ulrich Theone visited KGBV Ammireddynagar, Chakarajavemula and Arjunapuram on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2012. They interacted with the Special Officer of the KGBV on the vision of the institution, the kind of children that it reached out to and strategies adopted to retain children there. They also took some children's case studies and spoke to them on the quality of education.

Discussions were held with teachers and community groups in Arjunapuram on the role of community in school development, the role of the CRPF in freeing children from work, the quality of school education, best practices of the school, school-community relations, role of the CRPF and teachers in motivating parents to educate their children and changes brought about at the ground level after the launch of the project. Discussions in Chakarajavemula focused on the means by which issues of concern were being identified and on the steps that were being taken to strengthen community-school relations. They later assembled at the mandal level with the MPDO, the MEO, members of the State Teachers' Federation, the State Teachers' Union and the Progressive Recognised Teachers' Union, trade unions and the mandal CRPF. Members of the State Teachers' Federation felicitated the visitors and made a presentation on the adoption of a convergent approach to address existing problems.

The visit concluded with the conduct of a Round Table Meet in Hyderabad on Teachers' Unions Against Child Labour. 25 members of the TFCR and teachers unions took part in the Meet that was held in Sundarayya vignana Kendrem Hyderabad on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2012. Both teams reviewed the status of education in their respective project areas. The TFCR members spoke on their association with MVF, their achievements and the challenges faced by them. National Convener of MVF Mr. R. Venkat Reddy was also present.



## ***TFCR Meetings***

Teachers' meetings were held on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2012 and 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2012 at the mandal level. 24 members were present at the meeting held in August. They discussed steps to transform schools into child friendly institutions. The MVF team identified some active teachers and invited them to attend the meeting. They were briefed on the background of the TFCR and invited to form a TFCR. They were asked to propose 3 names for the formation of an AdHoc Committee. S. Srinivasulu from Dornipadu was named Convener. N. Giri Babu from Arjunapuram and Srinivas Reddy from Gundupapala were named Co-Conveners. State TFCR Executive Committee member Srinivasulu, who was present, spoke on the aims and objectives of the TFCR. The decisions were taken at the end of the meeting are as under:

- The members would assemble on the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month
- The members would strive to abolish corporal punishment in their schools
- Schools would be transformed into model to institutions that uphold child rights

The first review meet of the TFCR was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2012. Issues discussed on the occasion include involvement of community in the campaign and the role of the TFCR in strengthening schools. Feedback was also sought from the TFCR on steps that could be taken to involve community more actively in the campaign. They suggested that it was important to streamline the functioning of SMCs and sought the help of MVF in strengthening them. They also opined that community was not fully prepared to educate children. The MVF team called upon them to address the agenda of quality education.

There have been a number of changes in teacher attitudes subsequent to the formation of the TFCR. Most of them had been non-cooperative earlier but have now begun welcoming the organisers and are also sharing information on absenteeism. They have been regularly inviting the organisers to their meetings.

Members of the TFCR in Arjunapuram formed children's committees in the local school and have been promoting the agenda of personal hygiene. They have organised various competitions for children and have been regularly conducting SMC meetings. They have done away with their chairs and either stand or sit on the floor. Sanitation standards have also improved in the school. TFCR members from Ramachandrapuram were indifferent to absenteeism earlier but are now accompanying staff during motivation drives and have been using some Compact Discs to instruct and entertain children. They have also been inviting parents to share their children's problems with them. The head teacher of the school in Kristipadu has the telephone numbers of all parents and rings them up whenever a child is absent. 13 teachers from the mandal have quit resorting to corporal punishment.

## ***CRPF Meetings***

35 CRPF members attended a mandal meet on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012. Issues discussed include child rights, the RTE Act and expansion of the CRPF. It was resolved at the end of the meeting that CRPFs would be formed in all villages. It was also decided that petitions would be submitted to the officials in the context of problems identified by them during the course of the campaign.

A mandal level CRPF meeting was held on 7<sup>th</sup> November with 29 members. Conveners and Co-Conveners from all 11 villages of the project area were present. They discussed elimination of child labour, school problems, status of the midday meal scheme, serving eggs in Anganwadi Centres, school monitoring, child absenteeism, motivation of parents and training programmes. The resolutions passed are as below:

- Training sessions would be organised for the members
- Village level meetings would be organised regularly
- Key issues of concern would be identified and officials would be updated on these issues

## ***Information Education Communication Material***

Slogans publicising the RTE Act and denouncing child labour in cottonseed farms were painted at 250 public locations through the initiative of the CRPF and youth. Wall posters designed to educate

community on the ill effects of employing children in cottonseed farms were also displayed at 160 locations in 14 villages of Dornipadu and Uyyalawada mandals having high incidence of child labour.

### ***Pilot Survey***

Pilot surveys were taken up in 5 villages to identify the number of children enrolled in private and government schools. 60 boys and 34 girls enrolled in Classes 1-7 were identified in Arjunapuram. 17 boys and 18 girls were enrolled in Classes 8-10. 97 boys and 74 girls from Ramachandrapuram were enrolled in Classes 1-7 and the corresponding numbers for Classes 8-10 were 25 and 34. Categorisation has not been made across government and private schools. Data have not yet been tabulated for Gundupapala, Kristipadu and Chakarajuvemula.

### ***Enhance the capacities of Gram Panchayats to review the status of children and their rights in the respective constituencies and to negotiate with the government for bridging the gaps***

Gram Panchayats have not yet been reconstituted in Andhra Pradesh. The volunteers interacted with Village Special Officers on an ongoing basis and involved them in all campaign activities.

### ***Ensure formation of SMCs that are crucial to implementation of the RTE Act***

13 SMC meetings were held to discuss the RTE Act, roles and responsibilities of the members, child rights, strengthening of SMCs, school monitoring and petitions.

The following are the key issues identified during the meetings:

- Very few members knew that they were members on the SMC
- Hardly any members knew in which class their children were studying
- Very few members knew what issues were supposed to be discussed during the meetings
- Unavailability of drinking water was an issue of concern in most schools
- The quality of the midday meal scheme below par in practically all schools of the mandal
- Wrong size of uniform had been distributed to children in government schools
- First generation learners in a number of cases were facing problems, as their teachers were irregular
- Teachers had not been sharing information on children's academic progress and school problems with parents
- Teachers had not been trained properly on CCE methodology
- SMC members were largely unfamiliar with entitlements and facilities available to their children in school

The major decisions taken are as under:

- SMCs would be reconstituted wherever members had not been informed about their selection
- SMC meetings would be held every month without fail
- SMC members would interact regularly with teachers to keep track of their children's academic progress and to identify school problems
- SMC members would be oriented on the RTE Act and on their children's entitlements under the RTE Act

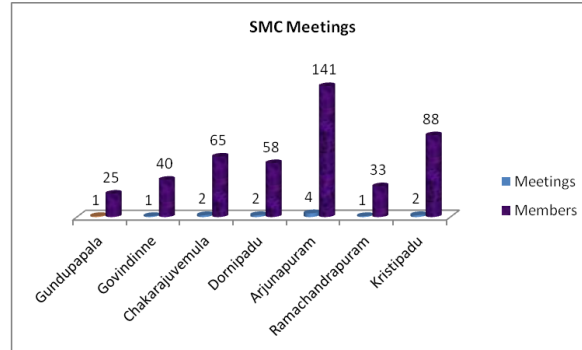
The below are the outcomes of the meetings:

- The frequency of SMC meetings has improved
- Relations between school and community have improved in most schools
- More parents have begun questioning teachers about their children's academic progress and are sparing more time for their children's education
- Retention levels of children in school have improved

The details of meetings held and participants are as follows:

| <b><i>Village</i></b> | <b><i>Meetings</i></b> | <b><i>Members</i></b> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Gundupapala           | 1                      | 25                    |
| Govindinne            | 1                      | 40                    |

|                  |           |            |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Chakarajuvemula  | 2         | 65         |
| Dornipadu        | 2         | 58         |
| Arjunapuram      | 4         | 141        |
| Ramachandrapuram | 1         | 33         |
| Kristipadu       | 2         | 88         |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>13</b> | <b>450</b> |



### **School Monitoring Visits**

Two school monitoring visits each were taken up in Arjunapuram, Chakarajuvemula and Govindinne in addition to one meeting each in Ramachandrapuram, Dornipadu, Gundupapala and Kristipadu. Issues on their checklist included the quality of education, status of the midday meal, absenteeism, usage of toilets, school cleanliness and computer utilisation by children.

The major observations made during the course of the visits are as under:

- Backbenchers and children with learning gaps were being neglected by teachers in some schools
- Teachers had been overstating the number of children in their schools during the midday meal hour
- Most teachers of English were not able to cope with the English subject
- Teaching Modules being adopted for instruction in schools need to be revised
- The implementation of the CCE method was not being monitored effectively

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

*Y. Raju, the only teacher posted in the Mandal Parishad PS – BC Colony, Chakarajuvemula was a sworn alcoholic and used to turn up drunk at school most of the time. He used to get the children to fetch alcohol for them every now and then. Upon coming to know of this, their parents complained to the MEO twice or thrice. He promised to replace the teacher but took no action. He turned up inebriated at the school during the SMC's visit on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012. They questioned him strongly but he refused to acknowledge his mistake and challenged them to come to the school and talk to him. They went there but he spoke rashly to them. They retorted by locking up the school, having sent him out. The Vidya Volunteer and the local volunteers later rang up the MEO. He arrived at the school an hour later. The parents informed him that he had not been heeding their words and that was why they had to take this decision. The issue was also covered in the newspapers and the MEO was constrained to suspend the teacher and replace him.*

\*

*Four children aged 12-14 from SC Colony, W. Govindinne had dropped out of school and were unwilling to return. The volunteers had been following them up for 6 months and their parents had been promising to send them to school but never did so. The children had been working as daily wage labourers in the agricultural fields nearby. They stayed overnight in the village on one occasion and convened a meeting with 30 members. Some caste elders were also present. The children's parents were summoned to the meeting and were asked in the presence of the elders if they would send their daughters to the KGBV. The issue had been discussed with the elders before the meeting. They advised the parents to visit the KGBV once and decide if it would be worth enrolling their children there. Both the parents and the elders went to the KGBV a couple of days later, after which all 4 girls were enrolled there.*

\*

*30 children from Gundupapala had been commuting to study in HS Revanur two kilometers away. Four girls from Class 9 dropped out after their Telugu teacher beat them. The volunteers asked their parents why they had dropped out, in reply to which the parents reported that he was a ruthless man. 20 of them turned up at the school proposing to beat him up. Upon coming to know of this, the volunteer went to the school and spoke to the teachers and the head teacher in charge. One of the girls had attempted to meet the head teacher but the Telugu teacher had yanked her shirt. The volunteer asked the children what they planned to do about the issue but they opined that it was not necessary to punish him. The teacher was castigated and he apologised for his behaviour. He was also counseled on the RTE Act. No complaints have come up against the teacher so far.*

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*A private school had been running in the government school premises in Arjunapuram. The management had been 30 children from the latter school had been studying there. A rally was also held in the village, at the end of which a meeting was held with the teachers. The villagers informed that a Vidya Volunteer posted in the same school had been teaching in the private school. He had been collecting fees from 30 children enrolled in Classes 1-5. He and his wife had been teaching only these children and had been neglecting the other children. The villagers were, however, reluctant to act on the issue because he was good at his job and a number of children had passed competitive exams through his help. The teacher had tried to bring about a change in the volunteer's mindset but the villagers had not supported him. Even the MEO did not heed them and the head teacher could also not do much. The organiser broached the issue with him casually on one occasion but he feared that the MVF team would take the issue to higher levels. He wrote to the MEO, who arranged for the volunteer to be replaced. The villagers came to know of this and spoke strongly to the volunteer, who denied being involved in the issue. He informed that the Education Department had acted against him. The villagers gradually changed their stance. In the meantime, the volunteer shifted to nearby Nandipalli, where he began implementing his agenda. The new volunteer and the teachers took the issue seriously and improved their standards, following which all 30 children returned to the school. The volunteer had earlier approached the local MLA and had sought his support but the MLA was convinced by the MVF team's argument and he refused to oblige the teacher. MVF has appointed a support person to enhance the quality of education in the school.*

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*UPS Kristipadu has been sanctioned building but no one had come forward to construct it for 3 months, as no place was available. The owner of the adjoining piece of land had been unwilling to let them take up the work. They did not even consent when the CRPF offered him Rs.10000. Another reason was that enough money was not available for the purpose of constructing the building. The CRPF finally got along a builder and introduced him to the head teacher and the Dy. Engineer. A discussion was held on the budget that was necessary for the task. Some options were discussed, at the end of which consensus was arrived at and the contract was awarded to the builder. Work on the building has commenced.*