

## 11 DROPPED OUT CHILDREN REJOINED SCHOOL

Eleven children (6 girls and 5 boys of 7th and 8th standard) from marginalized communities of Pathara village in Dura Gram Panchayat have re enrolled in school. They belong to dalit families with a below par family background, poor education, and family issues. Chronic health issues of parents forced them to drop out from school even though few of them have interest in completing high school education.

In the process of enabling child-friendly gram panchayat initiative, 'advika' group members of anganwadi centre and the coordinator of Youth for Social development (YSD) facilitated the process of identifying the dropout issues of children living in the marginalized communities through preparation of the 'children action plan' using the vulnerability mapping. The block education officer through the ward member of the locality also raised the issue with the community during the meeting with the children (bal sabha) at the gram sabha.

Sarpanch of Dura Gram Panchayat, Mrs. Bishnu Priya Sahu also stepped into the issue with grave concern and requested the school teacher of Dura high school to visit the families and investigate the situation by mobilizing them to re enroll these children into high school. PET teacher and ward member, Mrs. Sasi Das counselled the families to send their children back to school.



Finally, these 11 children joined in an open school i.e. Balaji High School, Kanisi, but due to a significantly far distance between the school and their habitation, few parents were reluctant to send their children even for one day i.e. Sunday. Looking at this situation, Sarpanch Mrs. Sahu went an extra mile and arranged transportation for the children from their homes to school. She allocated the budget from the untied funds of Gram Panchayat for the payment of auto-rickshaw. Her crucial step regarding this has been praised by the parents, school and the gram sabha.

## CHILD RIGHTS : CHILD-FRIENDLY ECO-SYSTEM

These 11 children attend classes every Sunday and have aimed to attain higher education and vocational training through this arrangement. This remarkable achievement has been attained as a result of children's participation in 'advika' group meeting, in preparation of 'action plan' and sharing of views in gram sabha.

The concerted efforts of the local government, school, parents and children have not only resulted in the successful re-enrollment of students but has also fostered a sense of responsibility and sensitivity toward children and their development among the duty bearers and rights holders. Through this shared commitment, they endeavor to build a more inclusive and equitable society where every child have the opportunity to thrive and realize their full potential.

Moreover, the ripple effects of this initiative extend beyond Pathara village, inspiring neighboring Gram Panchayats to take proactive measures in addressing dropout issues and creating safe commute from children to children.

Sarpanch Mrs. Sahu has shown her commitment towards the protection of child rights and has shown all kinds of efforts to make Dura, a child-friendly gram panchayat.

This case stands as a remarkable example of hope as well as inspiration for the children. It also reflects the collective responsibilities of school and local government to achieve the sustainable goal till the last mile, ensuring no one if left behind.

