

A DREAM HOUSE FOR CHANDRAMA

Chandrama Maharana, 46, lives with her husband and two children in Balia Village, K.N. Pur. They reside in a two-room thatched house with a tin roof and no proper toilet facilities. Both Chandrama and her husband are daily wage laborers with a meager income. They have lived in this ancestral house for over 60 years.

In 2013, a devastating cyclone completely destroyed their tiny mud house, washing away the roof and two walls. Helpless during the disaster, they sought refuge in a temporary cyclone shelter provided by the government. A revenue inspector later inspected their house and recommended them for benefits under the Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) housing scheme. However, due to nepotism, someone close to the local Sarpancha bypassed her, leaving Chandrama and her family without the promised aid.

Despite this setback, Chandrama and her husband slowly rebuilt their two-room house with low-cost materials and a tin roof. Even after ten years since Cyclone Phailin, they were never included in the IAY housing scheme again. Their house, situated near the Rishikulya River, faces numerous challenges. During the rainy season, the area floods, weakening the mud walls and posing a risk of collapse. The lack of electricity hampers her children's studies.



In summer, the tin roof's temperature soars to 48 degrees Celsius, making it unbearable to live inside. The house's open location also increases the threat of snake bites. During emergencies, they often seek shelter in a neighbor's porch.

CITIZENSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Chandrama learned about the Mahila Adhikar Mancha (women's rights group) facilitated by YSD volunteers. She attended a session on housing schemes and learned about the Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY) and Biju Paka Ghara Yojana (BPGY). Despite applying four times and requesting help from the Sarpancha, she received no concrete assurances or benefits.

With the group's support, Chandrama wrote a grievance to the Block Development Officer (BDO) of Purusottampur block, detailing her struggles and providing evidence. During that period, the government introduced a grievance redressal scheme called 'Mo Nivedana' (my request), where senior officials address grievances via video conferencing.

Upon reviewing her case, the BDO identified her as an eligible beneficiary who had been overlooked for the past ten years.

Chandrama is now listed for PMAY housing benefits and has started constructing her house with local government assistance. She regularly participates in the women's rights group meetings and acknowledges the support she received.

"Without the support of the women group members and the volunteer, I could not have been able to include in the housing scheme and my situation would not have improved,"

Chandrama shared during a group meeting.