

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

**PROGRESS REPORT  
JANUARY – JUNE 2012**

**Submitted to**

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

|      |  |
|------|--|
| MVF  | Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation  |
| CRPF | Child Rights Protection Forum          |
| RTE  | Right to (Free & Compulsory) Education |
| MPDO | Mandal Parishad Development Officer    |
| MEO  | Mandal Education Officer               |
| SMC  | School Management Committee            |
| SHG  | Self-Help Group                        |
| BC   | Backward Caste                         |
| KGBV | Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya       |
| VO   | Village Organisation                   |

## ***The Background***

MVF has been working on the agenda of eliminating child labour and protecting child rights in Kurnool district for over five years now. Employment of children in hybrid cottonseed farms is one of the key issues being addressed by the organisation. This sector accounts for more than 1.5 lakh children aged 7-14 years. Girls are often employed as contract labourers against advance payments or loans at usurious rates of interest to their parents. They are made to work for up to 11 hours a day in subhuman work conditions. Some of them are accommodated at the workplace during the peak season. Large scale national and multinational companies are a key player in these operations. Players such as Bayer, Syngenta, Unilever, Emergent Genetics, Advanta, etc. have a stake of up to 50% in the investments made in the sector.

During the course of its campaign, MVF collaborated with lobbyists and social activists to reach out to multinational seed manufacturers and held several rounds of meets with their representatives with the objective of ensuring that no child aged below 14 was employed in farms that produced seeds for these companies. Though this step has had some impact, the system of employing children continued due to insufficient efforts at mobilising community and lack of initiative by the government. MVF succeeded in improving the situation to an extent by catalysing the formation of campaign committees such as the CRPF and by forming alliances with other key groups such as the Gram Panchayat and trade unions.

It is against this background that the organisation entered into an MoU with M/s. GEW to reach out to about 1300 children that are employed in cottonseed farms in Dornipadu mandal of Kurnool district and nearly 2600 migrant children, over a period of 3 years beginning January 2012.

### ***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***

#### *Introducing the project to mandal officials*

As a first step in the intervention, senior community organisers Sudhakar and Naga Pullaiah met the Tehsildar, the MPDO and the MEO in the first week of January 2012 and introduced the project to them. They sought details of Panchayats and revenue villages in the mandal from the Tehsildar and the MPDO. They also gathered information on cropping patterns with focus on cottonseed and on the demography of the villages. The MEO was also contacted for information on the number of schools, hostels and other educational institutions and the school-going status of children in the mandal.

The Tehsildar and the MPDO were already familiar with the organisational intervention and readily agreed to support the team. However, the MEO was not very receptive and stated that there were only 18 out-of-school children in the mandal and that there was no need for any external intervention because the education department was already following them up. He was told that the programme targeted in-migration into cottonseed farms. He replied that it would be better to work at the source. The organisers replied that it was more sensible to lobby with cottonseed farmers and try to address the demand for child labour rather than look at the supply side.

The organisers also asked the MEO for details of SMCs, replying to which he informed that there was not much response from the members to meetings held at the school level, as SMCs had not been formed as per the norms of the RTE Act. He added that the implementation of the midday meal scheme in schools of the mandal was up to the mark.

### *Interaction with community*

Subsequent to their interactions with the officials, the organisers undertook personal visits to all villages of the mandal during the latter half of January 2012 to introduce the project to community. The organisers individually contacted elected representatives, Gram Panchayat Secretaries, teachers, youth association members, fair price shop dealers, SHG members, members of caste based associations and representatives of teacher unions and trade unions and introduced the project to them, seeking their cooperation in implementing it.

The overall response was positive but the organisers noted that the parents of more than 60% of children in the school-going age had been sending their wards to private school, as they had a negative opinion of the quality of education in government schools. They also stated that teachers were highly irregular to their duties. Some of them informed that immigrant children often accompanied their parents to work in cottonseed farms and that they were not in a position to do much. The former Sarpanch of Kothapalle stated that farm owners often concealed working children from others' eyes and that it was, therefore, difficult to reach out to them. He offered to extend all help to the organisers. He added that it would be possible to withdraw children from work in cottonseed farms if line departments took the initiative.

The organisers later met District Joint Secretary of Maala Mahanadu Mr. Dara Pullaiah, Krishna Yadav of the BC Sangham, Obilesu of All India Students' Federation, Ravi Kumar of Students Federation of India, Pushparaj of Vyavasaaya Kooli Sangham, Sudhakar of Confederation of Indian Trade Unions, Venkateswarulu and Maddileti Yadav of Vikalangula Hakkula Porata Samithi, Vijay Kumar of the Division Consumer Forum and Sanjiva Kumar of the Madiga Rashtra Porata Samithi individually and shared the goals and objectives of the project with them, seeking their cooperation in implementing it.

Most of the members contacted offered unstinted support to the agenda, especially as it dealt with children's rights. Some of them, however, opined that children from poor families would find it difficult to attend school, as their families needed their support. Yet more of them suggested that vocational skills ought to be included in school curricula. A few respondents highlighted the need to pressurise the government for improved service delivery.



*MVF State Asst. Coordinator Mr. Bhaskar speaks at a mandal meet*

### *School Visits*

The organisers next visited all schools of the project area to gather information on pupil strength, status of absenteeism and dropout and active teachers/education volunteers. They were accompanied by village elders and proactive women's group members. They physically observed gaps in the functioning of these schools and availability of physical infrastructure. They introduced the project to the teachers and sought their cooperation in implementing it. Most of them were

familiar with the work being done by MVF in the context of child rights and consented to extend the necessary cooperation.

The organisers visited 30 schools and one KGBV from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2012. They took up a pilot headcount exercise in 10 schools, during which they noted that 399 children were present in class during the visits as against 202 absentees. However, the school registers claimed that 481 children were in school and 120 of them were absent from class.

The below are some of the other key findings of the visits:

- Most children had dropped out of government schools to enroll in private school
- The names of some children that had shifted to private school had still been continuing in the local school registers
- Some children had not been partaking of the midday meal but the money due on their count were being claimed by midday meal agencies and school managements
- 70% of midday meal agencies had been cooking the meal away from school
- Some head teachers had been projecting members of the erstwhile Academic Monitoring Committee as SMC members
- Some SMC members were unaware of their status, as their names had been included in the Committee without any intimation to them
- Toilets were defunct or unused in most schools
- The Urdu Aided School in W. Govindinne had 39 children on rolls but practically none of them had reported at school during a visit by the organisers
- Health checkup facilities were unavailable in most schools
- The Urdu medium Elementary School in Chakarajuvemula was being run by a volunteer, as no teacher had been appointed there

*BC Elementary School, Dornipadu had no building and the 26 children enrolled there were being seated on the verandah of a house nearby. Only 14 of them were present f|during a visit by the organisers there. Some domestic animals had been trespassing and the villagers had been disturbing them. The head teacher had been paying the rent of Rs. 200 every month from her own pocket.*

#### *Community Meetings*

A mandal level meeting was held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at the MPDO's office in Dornipadu with nearly 35 members to share the outcomes of the school visits and introduce the project to them. Key participants include MPDO Ms. Murali Kalyani, MEO Mr. Subba Reddy, MVF State Asst. Coordinator Mr. J. Bhaskar and an internee with MV Foundation. Elected representatives, SHG members, village elders and youth were also present on the occasion in addition to members of community based organisations. A brief presentation was also made on the status of children in cottonseed farms, the norms of the RTE Act and the experiences of MVF in the district. The role that line departments and community were expected to play in the campaign were also highlighted. It was decided at the end that a baseline survey would be taken up to identify the number of children in and out of school. This effort would be taken up during the period March-April 2012.

A series of village level community meetings in 8 villages of the project area followed, the details of which are as follows:

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Village</b>   | <b>Members</b> |
|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| 14-3-12     | Kristipadu       | 20             |
| 16-3-12     | Chakarajavemula  | 35             |
| 28-3-12     | Ramachandrapuram | 25             |
| 29-3-12     | Arjunapuram      | 26             |
| 30-3-12     | Kondapuram       | 28             |
| 1-4-12      | Gundupapala      | 18             |
| 2-4-12      | Buraredipalle    | 25             |
| 5-4-12      | Dornipadu        | 23             |
|             | <b>Total</b>     | <b>200</b>     |

These meetings were used as a platform to share MVF's experiences with them and to discuss the concepts of child labour and child rights, the RTE Act and hindrances to children's education. The members were also urged to identify issues of concern.

The issues raised by them are as under:

- The implementation of the midday meal scheme was not up to the mark in 4 schools. Children were not only being denied their quota of eggs but were also given the responsibility of cleaning the premises of the local school.
- Parents from 3 villages had been sending their children to private school, as they wanted English medium education for their children.
- The quality of teaching was not up to the mark in 3 schools.
- Most teachers were irregular to their duties, as the school supervisory mechanism was poor
- Very few members were aware of the RTE Act
- One of the teachers from BC School, Chakarajuvemula had often been reporting to school in a drunken state and had been punishing the children on trivial grounds

An Action Plan was later chalked out for the conduct of a survey and the support of the villagers sought. Some youth came forward to take part in the survey.

It was not easy to get volunteers to work full time, as the wage levels in the mandal are quite high and very few people were willing to work for the low remuneration offered. The incidence of faction feuds in W. Kothapalle was quite high and the organisers had to seek the permission of the local leaders for any activity that they proposed to take up.



*Participants at the mandal meet*



*Village level meet in Gundupapala*

#### *Baseline Survey*

The staff members took up a month long survey<sup>1</sup> in all 14 villages of the project area during March and April 2012 to gather information separately on children aged 0-2, 3-5, 6-14 and 15-18 years. Data were also compiled on the educational status of children aged 6-14 and 15-18. Three teams of two volunteers each were formed for the conduct of the survey in each village. They were assisted by some locals, especially youth and SHG members. An orientation session was held earlier on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2012 for 10 staff members on various aspects of the survey such as Survey Methodology, troubleshooting and the Survey Form.

Youth played an active role in the conduct of the exercise in Kristipadu, Chakarajuvemula, Kondapuram, Burareddipalle, Gundupapala and Dornipadu. They owned up the entire process in Kondapuram. The former Sarpanchs of W. Kothapalle, Burareddipalle, Arjunapuram, Kristipadu and

<sup>1</sup> The outcomes of the survey are annexed in a separate sheet

Chakarajuvemula made valuable contributions in this regard. Mandala Mahila Samakhya members undertook the responsibility in Ramachandrapuram.

A number of respondents felt that there was no use in parting with any information, as they would receive no benefits of any kind. Some members from W. Kothapalle suspected that the team members had come there with the intention of seeking donations. Quite a few people expected benefits under various government schemes through the survey. Youth in some villages suggested that the team could directly get the necessary information from the school or the Anganwadi Worker. Some parents of children employed in cottonseed farms manipulated the ages of their wards, as they suspected they would be withdrawn from work. This would adversely affect their economic status. There were differences between the ages of some children in the Ration Card and their names in the school registers. Some parents had no idea of the class in which their children were studying.

The below are the key findings of the survey:

- More boys were attending private schools in comparison to girls
- More than 75 children from 5 villages had migrated to Guntur to work in chilli farms there
- The incidence of child labour was high among the age group 12-14 years
- A number of parents had a low opinion of government schools, which had adversely affected retention levels
- Muslim girls were being withdrawn from school at the upper primary level
- Corporal punishment was stated to be one of the key factors resulting in children's dropout from school
- Children had been employed in works under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in

*10-year old Nakkaladinne Salamma, the daughter of Obilesu from Dornipadu had hardly passed out of Class 10 when her father pledged her services to a cottonseed farmer in return for an advance payment of Rs. 5000. The organisers identified the girl's case during the course of the survey and spoke to Obilesu. They asked him the details of the farmer but he refused to divulge any information. He also stated that he could not afford to send the girl to school because he had to repay the debt. His wife, however, promised to reenroll her in school during the next academic year*

#### *Summer School*

The organisers noted during the course of the campaign that the incidence of absenteeism was quite high in 5 schools. The issue was brainstormed and it was decided at the end of the discussions that Summer Schools ought to be conducted for children with learning gaps. Lists of irregular children from these schools were accordingly compiled and the matter discussed with the MEO, who was quite in favour of the idea. Small group meetings were held with youth, women and parents in all 5 villages to plan the event. They promised all support from their side.

The Centres were inaugurated from 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012. The MEO, elected representatives, teachers, SHG women, Anganwadi Workers, youth and village elders were present at the inaugural ceremonies. Mandal level meetings were held in Kristipadu, W. Govindinne and Arjunapuram with 42, 40 and 28 members respectively on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012 and with 45 and 20 members respectively in Chakarajuvemula and Dornipadu on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2012 to publicise the programme. The organisers also spoke to the head teachers and teachers of all 5 schools.

The community meetings were used as a platform to identify volunteers for running the Schools. They assisted the organisers in mobilising children. They were later oriented in pedagogy, children's assessment, community mobilisation and child retention through daylong sessions. A Telugu Module developed by Prof. Bh. Krishnamurthi and two Modules named *Rhyme2Write* and *Padandi Badiki* designed by MVF were transacted during the course of Summer School.

Weekly review meetings held with the volunteers to identify problems and plan for solving them. The children were involved in a wide range of informal activities such as making earthen toys and drawing sketches. They were taught the concept of numbers using seeds and pebbles. They also prepared placards. Charts containing various pictures and words describing them were hung inside the classrooms. Their works were later displayed at the school level for their parents and others to see. The CRPF, elected representatives, (head) teachers, youth and SHG members were invited to visit the Centres. They made valuable suggestions to the volunteers in the context of running the Schools.



*The MEO inaugurates the School in Kristipadu*



*The MEO is felicitated in Kristipadu*



*District Coordinator Mr. Krishna speaks in Kristipadu*



*Mr. Krishna interacts with children at the School in Kristipadu*

The overall impact of the Summer School Programme has been quite positive, as evidenced by the below:

- Parents have begun visiting their children's schools regularly
- Children attending private school, regular school-going children and children aged 4-5 years also began coming to the School
- Community members sponsored 4 fans for the school in Kristipadu after a visit to the Summer School
- The Education Department responded to a petition from community and provided an electrical connection to the school in Kristipadu
- Teachers have been highly appreciative of the programme and have suggested the yearly conduct of Summer Schools
- 101 children that turned up at the Summer Schools began attending their classes regularly from the new academic year on
- 17 children aged 5-6 years attended Summer School and were shifted directly to formal school
- 6 out-of-school children were mainstreamed to formal school
- 10 boys and 3 girls shifted from private to government school after attending Summer School

- Links between school and community have been strengthened
- Community has begun owning up the government school
- Campaign committees and support groups such as the CRPF have been regularly visiting schools to keep track of their functioning

An amount of Rs. 7000 was mobilised from community members for the Summer School programme, the details of which are as under:

*Kristipadu*

|                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Mr. Venkatarama Reddy | Rs. 5000 |
| Mr. Narayana Reddy    | Rs. 300  |
| Mr. Ramakrishna Reddy | Rs. 200  |

*Chakarajuvemula*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mr. Chandrasekharaiah<br>Volunteer Chandrasekhar | Rs. 1000<br>Rs. 500 (for stationery to children) |
|--|--|



*Review of the programme in Arjunapuram*

The details of Summer School are as follows:

| <b>Inaugural</b> | <b>Centre</b>   | <b>Participants</b>  | <b>Children enrolled</b> | <b>Children regularised</b> | <b>Visitors</b> |
|------------------|-----------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 24-4-12          | Kristipadu      | MEO, MVF District Coordinator, teachers, former Sarpanch, village elders                   | 40                       | 20                          | 23              |
| 25-4-12          | W. Govindinne   | Parents, youth, MVF Mandal Coordinator   | 35                       | 20                          | 20              |
| 25-4-12          | Chakarajuvemula | MVF District Coordinator, teachers, village elders, parents                                | 39                       | 24                          | 41              |
| 25-4-12          | Arjunapuram     | Teachers, MVF Mandal Coordinator, village elders, parents, VO members                      | 40                       | 19                          | 39              |
| 26-4-12          | Dornipadu       | Parents, MVF District and Mandal Coordinators, teachers, parents, Anganwadi Workers, youth | 35                       | 18                          | 41              |
| <b>Total</b>     |                 |  | <b>189</b>               | <b>101</b>                  | <b>164</b>      |

## *Enrolment Drive*

Lists of children eligible for direct entry in Class 1 and out-of-school children aged 6-14 years were compiled on the basis of the survey taken up earlier during the year. The organisers later undertook special group motivation drives in all 14 villages, involving local youth where necessary. Schools were cleaned and decorated with mango leaves on School Reopening Day – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Community groups welcomed and felicitated active teachers in some villages. Role play was taken up in a few villages to send across messages to community in the context of the right to education. The ill effects of employing children in cottonseed farms were denounced through slogans during the course of the rallies.

Door-to-door visits were taken up late in the evenings, during which the organisers highlighted the merits of government schools over private schools. The Mandal Special Officer, the Tehsildar, the Sub-Inspector of Police, the MEO and Mandal Resource Persons took part in the School Reopening Day celebrations apart from elected representatives, the CRPF, teachers, youth associations, SHG members and children. The organisers took up a cohort analysis exercise to track the school-going status of all children that had passed out of school during the previous academic year. The reasons for their absence from school, wherever applicable, were identified in this manner. Rallies were also held in 5 villages on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012 to mark Anti- Child Labour Day. The details of rallies that featured in the villages are as under:

| <b>Date</b>  | <b>Village</b>  | <b>Children</b> | <b>Adults</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 14-6-12      | Kristipadu      | 70              | 20            | 90           |
| 16-6-12      | Chakarajuvemula | 105             | 18            | 123          |
| 18-6-12      | Arjunapuram     | 65              | 22            | 87           |
| 19-6-12      | Dornipadu       | 120             | 16            | 136          |
| 20-6-12      | Govindinne      | 80              | 12            | 92           |
| <b>Total</b> |                 | <b>440</b>      | <b>88</b>     | <b>528</b>   |

The details of enrolment in school are as follows:

| <b>Village</b>  | <b>5 + years</b> |           |            | <b>Out-of-school (9-14)</b> |          |           | <b>Shifted from private to govt. school</b> |          |           | <b>Total</b> |           |            |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|---|----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------------|
|                 | <b>B</b>         | <b>G</b>  | <b>T</b>   | <b>B</b>                    | <b>G</b> | <b>T</b>  | <b>B</b>                                    | <b>G</b> | <b>T</b>  | <b>B</b>     | <b>G</b>  | <b>T</b>   |
| Kondapuram      | 1                | 2         | 3          | 0                           | 0        | 0         | 0   | 0        | 0         | 1            | 2         | 3          |
| Kothapalle      | 11               | 8         | 19         | 0                           | 0        | 0         | 0   | 0        | 0         | 11           | 8         | 19         |
| Govindinne      | 8                | 9         | 17         | 4                           | 0        | 4         | 1   | 0        | 1         | 12           | 9         | 21         |
| Dornipadu       | 14               | 16        | 30         | 4                           | 7        | 11        | 0   | 1        | 1         | 19           | 24        | 43         |
| Arjunapuram     | 2                | 5         | 7          | 1                           | 1        | 2         | 0   | 0        | 0         | 3            | 6         | 9          |
| Gundupapala     | 4                | 8         | 12         | 0                           | 0        | 0         | 0   | 0        | 0         | 4            | 8         | 12         |
| Chakarajuvemula | 7                | 14        | 21         | 0                           | 0        | 0         | 6   | 2        | 8         | 13           | 16        | 29         |
| Kristipadu      | 3                | 9         | 12         | 2                           | 0        | 2         | 2   | 1        | 3         | 7            | 10        | 17         |
|                 | <b>50</b>        | <b>71</b> | <b>121</b> | <b>11</b>                   | <b>8</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>9</b>                                    | <b>4</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>70</b>    | <b>83</b> | <b>153</b> |



Rally in progress in Arjunapuram



View of a rally in Ramachandrapuram



*A parent being counseled in Burareddipalle*



*Rally in W. Govindinne*

*The organisers noted during the cohort follow up exercise that 24 of the 104 children enrolled in Main School W. Govindinne had been detained in the same class. 18 of them looked overage in comparison with their fellow classmates. A heated discussion ensued between the teachers and the District Coordinator, who observed that the children's learning levels were not up to the mark. The teachers opined that an additional volunteer was needed but one of the organisers noted that the four teachers that had been posted in the school were sufficient for the children. The teachers, however, stuck to their demand. The issue is currently being followed up.*

#### *Community Meetings*

4 village level CRPFs with 5 members each were formed in Chakarajuvemula, Ramachandrapuram, Arjunapuram and Kristipadu during the reporting period. 20, 45, 18 and 16 members took part in the formative meetings respectively. They were given inputs on the concepts of child labour and child rights, the RTE Act, community mobilisation, school monitoring and their role in the campaign.

A women's meet was held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in Arjunapuram with 15 VO and SHG members to introduce the programme to them. A presentation was made on the aims and objectives of the project and on MV Foundation's experiences in the district. They were also given inputs on the key provisions of the RTE Act, gender equity, child marriage, girl child rights, the importance of unity and the structure of the SMC. They were exhorted to form federations and to get associated with the SMC.

The organisers undertook an exercise to identify cottonseed organisers and labour contractors engaged in outsourcing children for work in cottonseed farms in eight Panchayats of the mandal.

The outcomes of this exercise are as below:

| <b>Panchayat</b> | <b>Organisers</b> | <b>Contractors</b> |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Kristipadu       | 11                |                    |
| Gundupapala      | 5                 | 8                  |
| Ramachandrapuram |                   | 3                  |
| Dornipadu        |                   | 9                  |
| Arjunapuram      | 4                 |                    |
| Chakarajavemula  | 5                 | 3                  |
| W. Kothapalle    | 7                 | 4                  |
| W. Govindinne    | 2                 | 5                  |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>34</b>         | <b>32</b>          |

A two-member team comprising Mr.Bhaskar of MVF and MVF intern from Germany Ms. Elke visited Kristipadu on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Ms. Elke interacted in detail with the villagers on their lifestyles, the kind of crops grown, the use of manpower in agriculture and the wage levels offered to them.



*Ms. Elke interacts with community during her visit*

***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***

The Gram Panchayat has been dissolved and Village Special Officers have replaced Sarpanchs. The organisers involved these Officers and ward members in all campaign activities including Summer School, the survey, School Reopening Day and child tracking/monitoring.

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

The organisers were formally invited to extend resource support during orientation sessions held by the State government for SMC members in 8 villages of the mandal prior to the commencement of the Summer School programme. Nearly 400 members were covered through this effort. The status of out-of-school children was also shared with them after the survey and they were reminded of their responsibilities as SMC members.

## **STORIES FROM THE FIELD**

*P. Rebecamma and Bandenna, the children of Elisha from Kristipadu quit school while in Classes 2 and 3 respectively during 2011. They were both aged 10. Their mother had committed suicide due to some personal problems. Elisha took to alcohol after his wife's death. He had been unemployed at the time of her death and there were frequent quarrels between the both of them. She consumed some poison but he did not take the issue seriously and her condition worsened, leading to death. Elisha remarried over time and his second wife began neglecting the children, who began living with their paternal uncle. They worked as agricultural farmhands and paid for their maintenance. When contacted by the organisers, Elisha initially refused to let both his children study. They went back and returned to his place the next morning with some village elders, teachers and youth. He was in a drunken state and spoke to them rashly. They came back the next day when he was sober and rebuked him for his indifferent attitude towards the children. He agreed to educate the boy after a fortnight's effort, but not the girl. Her case is being followed up. The head teacher sponsored books for the boy, who is presently in Class 6.*

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*12-year old Orvakanti Nirmala from Govindinne had dropped out of school and had been working as a seasonal wage labourer. The organiser visited her home during the school enrolment drive and asked her if she would enroll in KGBV. Nirmala's father was willing to send her to school but was unready to educate his younger daughter, who had just attained puberty. However, Nirmala's stepmother was against her education and had been neglecting even her basic needs. The girl was so weak and emaciated that she could not even walk on her own. A group of 8 organisers went to her house but her stepmother shooed them away. Her husband, on the other hand, was supportive of their efforts. The entire team persisted in the endeavour and kept going to Nirmala's house continually for nearly 3 weeks. Some of the locals later counseled the woman, at the end of which Nirmala to the KGBV. 2 more girls from the village enrolled in KGBV.*

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*14-year old J. Mounika from Chakarajuvermula was forced to quit school, as her teachers felt that she was not mentally capable of coping with her curriculum. She was enrolled in Class 5 when the incident took place in 2011. She was forcibly sent out of school. Her father got all kinds of tests performed but the result did not reveal anything significant. The organiser spoke to Mounika's father and convinced him to get her enrolled in KGBV. The Principal, however, was hesitant to take the girl in and asked the organiser to take her to a Special School and return two months later, after which he promised to take her in. The issue was taken to District Coordinator Krishna's notice. He spoke to the Principal and told him that the RTE Act made it binding upon him to enroll her. He yielded and Mounika was admitted in Class 6. Krishna personally guaranteed the Principal and Mounika's father that she would be able to cope with the demands of her curriculum.*

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*10-year old T. Jayalakshmi from Govindinne had been withdrawn from Class 3 in 2001, as her alcoholic father was not in favour of her education. His wife was willing to send the girl to school when the organisers approached her during the school enrolment drive but he sent them away, as he was in a drunken stupor. They met him a couple of days later when he was in a sober condition and counseled him. He opined that there was no use educating her because this would not guarantee her employment and he could also not afford her dowry. The organisers involved the village elders in an intensive special drive over the next 10 days, after which Jayalakshmi's father sent her back to school.*

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*14-year old Jogi Ramesh from W. Kothapalle had dropped out of the local school during Class 8, as he had been beaten by his teacher. The organisers identified his case during a routine motivation drive that they took up in May 2012 and spoke to his father. The latter told them that his son was willing to study but only in a hostel. He was, however, keen that Ramesh ought to study in the local school. The*

*organisers took up the issue with the head teacher, who came to the boy's house along with the Science and Mathematics teachers and the Physical Education instructor and guaranteed him that he would have no problem. He finally consented to return to school, where he is enrolled in Class 9.*

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*Kotakonda Ramanaiah, the father of 12-year old Kotakonda Narayamma from Dornipadu was addicted to alcohol and both he and his wife used to often get drunk as early as 9 a.m. They had 4 children, none of who was in school. Their two daughters had been forced to assist them in their domestic chores much against their will though they were keen on studying. The organisers identified their case during the school enrolment drive and visited their home. The children expressed unhappiness at their plight and stated that they regretted their birth in the family. The organisers counseled the husband and the wife at length for more than an hour, at the end of which they consented to enroll Narayamma in school.*

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*12-year old L. Balachandramma, the daughter of Ramaiah from Sarvaipalle had been working as an agricultural farmhand. The functionaries of an RBC run by another NGO in the mandal had withdrawn her from school, promising to get her enrolled in a residential school. She consented to this. They, however, took her to their own RBC. They demanded Rs. 3000 from her parents to get her shifted to KGBV after she had passed out of camp. Her father was in no position to do so and he was forced to send her to work. The organisers identified her case and linked her to the KGBV, where she is currently studying in Class 9. Her father is a happy lot.*

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*Chintala Anand from Dornipadu had lost his father and had dropped out of Class 6 in 2011. He had fallen into bad company and had got used to smoking and consuming other tobacco products. This got him disinterested in education and ultimately resulted in his dropout. The organisers identified his case during the school enrolment drive and counseled him at length, following which he enrolled in Class 7 in ZPHS Dornipadu. However, some of his classmates began ridiculing him and he became irregular to his classes. He took to alcohol later on. His parents were met and persuaded to send him to school but they replied that he was strongly against this. He had actually threatened his mother that he would commit suicide if she forced him to study. The case is being followed up.*